



# **BI**ANNUAL WORK REPORT

**SEPTEMBER 2021 -  
AUGUST 2023**





## PREFACE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Hong Kong Democracy Council (HKDC) is a Washington, D.C.-based nonpartisan, nonprofit organization for Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement and Hong Kongers in the United States. It was founded on September 17, 2019, amid massive protests in Hong Kong that saw millions of people marching on the streets in opposition to an unpopular plan to establish extradition arrangements between Hong Kong and China proposed by then-Chief Executive Carrie Lam. But those demonstrations also reflected the broader, longstanding discontent with Beijing's increasing suppression of everything that once made the city unique.

To advance the cause of freedom in Hong Kong, the HKDC team pushed for the successful passage of several landmark pieces of legislation: the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019, the PROTECT Hong Kong Act of 2019, and the Hong Kong Autonomy Act of 2020. We also worked with the executive branch to implement these laws, including the imposition of targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for Hong Kong's deterioration. This culminated in then-Secretary of State Michael Pompeo's decertification of Hong Kong's special status on May 27, 2020, given that it no longer enjoyed meaningful autonomy. The following month, Beijing imposed the sweeping National Security Law (N.S.L.) on Hong Kong, effectively spelling the final demise of One Country, Two Systems and forever changing the fate of Hong Kongers.

HKDC embarked on a new chapter on September 21, 2021, when we transitioned into a brand new team led by Brian Leung, who oversaw operations, and Alex Chow, who headed the Board. Their partnership resulted in a more robust institutional foundation and sustainable development. I took on the role first of Strategy and Operations Associate and then of Strategy and Campaign Director, consolidating and significantly expanding our work under three pillars: policy advocacy, community building, as well as research and education. To strengthen the global resistance against Chinese authoritarianism, we also placed a strong emphasis on public outreach and joint campaigns. We collaborated with not only Hong Kong groups in the U.S. but also many international human-rights organizations.

I was humbled to take the helm at the end of 2022 and assume my position as Executive Director. When I first joined HKDC, I was the only woman on the executive team. In the two years since, we have welcomed strong women colleagues, including Huen Lam, Carmen Lau, and Beatrice Wu. Women have always been an irreplaceable part of Hong Kong's decades-long pro-democracy movement. I am thinking not just of brave leaders — like Chow Hang-Tung, Gwyneth Ho, Carol Ng, Chu Wai-Ying, Wong Yuen-Lam, Winnie Yu, Claudia Mo, Tiffany Yuen, Wong Ji-Yuet — but also the many unnamed women detained for exercising their basic rights.

As I write, our organization just commemorated our fourth anniversary. But this is no occasion to celebrate. The largest N.S.L. trial thus far, which involves close to four dozen leading opposition figures, is ongoing. At the end of August 2023, our own database recorded 1,615 political prisoners since 2019. Those of us engaged in international advocacy must continue to keep the issue of Hong Kong alive and empower our growing diaspora.

The pages that follow — authored by my colleagues Huen Lam and Jeffrey Ngo — inform you of the full scope of HKDC's work over the full two-year period after the aforementioned transition in September 2021. I am proud of what we have achieved, and there is so much more to which we can all look forward. As always, thank you for supporting the Hong Kong Democracy Council, Hong Kongers around the world, and the fight for global freedom and democracy.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Kwok". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Anna Kwok,  
*Executive Director*





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**1.**  
**REBUILDING**  
**THE**  
**ORGANIZATION**

## 1.1 Key Milestones

HKDC embarked on a major leadership change in the fall of 2021, after we accepted on August 22 the resignations of our outgoing Managing Director and two staff members. Effective on September 21, Anna Yeung-Cheung retired as our Board President. We were pleased that Alex Chow — a leader of the Umbrella Movement of 2014 and a Nobel Peace Prize nominee in 2018 — succeeded her as our Board Chair. June Lin stepped in as our Board Secretary, bringing to us her extensive nonprofit experience in the promotion of global democratic development. Joseph Ng stayed on as our Board Treasurer. Brian Leung, a prominent figure in the anti-extradition protests, moved from the Advisory Board into the new role of Executive Director, with a mandate to steer the organization through a period of transformation.

Anna Kwok joined the executive team as a Strategy and Operations Associate, having led several important campaigns as an anonymous online organizer in 2019. Sunny Cheung, Ted Hui, and Teng Biao entered the Advisory Board, which continued to be convened by Nathan Law, the most internationally-recognizable face of Hong Kong's youth resistance in exile. These additions represented our effort to make HKDC a more collaborative platform with stronger ties to the pro-democracy movement on the ground. In November, Jeffrey Ngo, a founding member of the Advisory Board with seven years of advocacy experience on Capitol Hill and a Ph.D. candidate in history at Georgetown University, became a Policy and Research Fellow.

The organization's expansion continued throughout 2022. Anna was promoted to Strategy and Campaign Director in April. Huen Lam joined the staff team as a Public Relations Associate in May. Maya Wang of Human Rights Watch joined the Board in June. We recruited Mason Wong as a Research Associate in September. This was followed by the twin

promotions of Huen to Senior Communications Associate and Jeffrey to Senior Policy and Research Fellow.

We underwent a carefully-coordinated personnel reshuffle at the end of 2022 following a 15-month journey of transition, overseen by Brian and Alex, from instability and vulnerability to institutionalization and growth. First shared with guests at our Advocacy Reception on November 16 and officially announced to the public on December 15, Anna was promoted to Executive Director with unanimous approval from our hiring committee tasked with searching for Brian's successor. Led by Brian himself, it comprised Joseph, Maya, Nathan, and Sunny. In so doing, HKDC made history by being the first major U.S.-based Hong Kong nonprofit headed by a female Hong Konger. Brian moved once again to a different part of the organization when he became Board Chair, succeeding Alex, who remained as part of the new, five-member Board.

In 2023, we welcomed three new members of the staff team. Kennedy Wong joined us as a Diaspora and Research Fellow in January, bringing with us his expertise in the overseas Hong Kong community as a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at the University of Southern California. Beatrice Wu joined us as an Administrative Associate in March to facilitate our daily operations on multiple fronts. Carmen Lau — formerly an elected representative in the Wong Tai Sin District Council — joined us in May as a London-based International Advocacy and Program Associate, our first staff member outside the United States. We were proud that each team member brought to us their unique background that personified the heterogeneity of our diaspora at large, from election campaigning, public office, and anonymous protest organizing in Hong Kong to Congressional advocacy, academic research in Hong Kong Studies, and local community building in the United States.

## 1.2 Transitional Accountability

We believed that a mature organization — one that was inclusive to new talents and able to grow — should be resilient to personnel changes. Our first priority once the new team began work on September 21, 2021, was to create robust institutional practices that could promote accountability and withstand transitions, moving away from the personalization of organizational responsibilities, community resources, and public information. Multiple malpractices and hurdles we discovered and encountered exemplified this need for transparent and sustainable practices to ensure the organization's stability. The Board and the executive team spent months designing better processes to put us on the path to future success. One emphasis was to create proper documentation and internal policies that allowed for responsible and accountable leadership.

The many challenges we initially faced included being denied access to HKDC's internal archive, email, social media, online donation, contact list compiled since the 2019 movement, and file-sharing and newsletter accounts. Much of their content was deleted, missing, or incomplete. The retrieval process was particularly turbulent with repeated attempts by external parties no longer affiliated with the organization to remove material or alter ownership. To address these serious issues, the new HKDC team worked immediately to establish an internal governance and accountability system for the organization. We secured ownership of all HKDC-related digital accounts and assets, completed a full audit of our finances, resolved all overdue invoices, and established a comprehensive set of internal regulations to which all team members must adhere. Most importantly, we created internal guidelines and checkpoints to ensure that critical documents and assets were controlled by the organization, rather than a few individuals. By developing such practices, we made a commitment to ensure that HKDC as an organization would be resilient and growth-oriented for years to come.

## 1.3 Sex-Based and Gender-Based Discrimination

Another code of conduct that had been neglected under the previous leadership concerned all forms of discrimination. To redress that omission, the organization moved to ensure that gender identity, sexual orientation, or pregnancy would not affect all future decisions regarding the hiring process or compensation. We further instituted an anti-harassment policy applicable to HKDC personnel as well as participants in all HKDC events. We established a dedicated email address at [csvsh@hkdc.us](mailto:csvsh@hkdc.us), monitored by our Internal Committee on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, for any individual to file a formal complaint or come forward with experiences they would like to share. These steps reflected our deep commitment to the well-being of our team members, project partners, and allies in the human-rights community.

On June 12, 2023, Teng Biao submitted his resignation from HKDC's Advisory Board, citing personal reasons. It was effective immediately, and we removed his affiliation across all our platforms within 24 hours. After we learned of troubling accusations against him in media reports, we further issued a statement on June 23 to announce that we were immediately suspending him from participating in all future events and reiterate our responsibility to create a safe space. We believed in a movement that protected and respected all individuals was integral to the success of our fight for freedom and democracy in Hong Kong. This zero-tolerance approach would continue to be our guiding principle moving forward.



**2.**

# **INFORMING STAKEHOLDERS**

Among HKDC's important priorities is to "provide the public, the media, and policymakers with the critical information necessary to understand the current state of Hong Kong," as our mission statement states, "raising international support for the advancement of its democracy and human rights." In October 2021, we inaugurated our monthly newsletter that offered a summary of our team's work. We revamped our website in October 2022 to better communicate our work and launched a separate monthly news briefing in February 2023 with a focus on developments in Hong Kong. These periodical updates are complements of our research projects and education outreach, as outlined below.

## 2.1 Research Reports

In early June 2019, just as the anti-extradition movement began, there were 26 political prisoners in Hong Kong. Protest-related arrests were plentiful throughout 2019 and early 2020 due in no small part to British colonial-era laws retained and repurposed by the Chinese government. The N.S.L.'s subsequent enactment paved the way for the next stage of political crackdown, often targeting high-profile opposition leaders. We released our debut research report, "Hong Kong Reaches a Grim Milestone: 1,000 Political Prisoners" in May 2022 to document that trajectory as the city descended further into authoritarian violence, rivaling the likes of Belarus, Burma, and Cuba. Among other things, it analyzed and presented in graphs the age breakdown of defendants, the number and nature of charges they faced, and the length of their sentences. We simultaneously launched the widely-cited Hong Kong Political Prisoners Database on our website, which we would continue to update at least every month, to track the rising number of political prisoners: those who were arrested, prosecuted, and convicted.

Early in the Covid-19 pandemic, the Hong Kong government introduced a digital contact-tracking mobile application. The city's residents must download and use it in order to access hospitals, markets, shopping malls, and many other locations. This sparked widespread concern that LeaveHomeSafe was a trojan horse that facilitated the state's espionage apparatus in the name of public health. In July 2022, a new report

initiated by HKDC, sponsored by the Open Technology Fund, and authored by 7ASecurity was published after a 17-day black-box security review and privacy audit. It exposed several of the application's vulnerabilities and major cybersecurity loopholes, contained especially in its Android version. While there was no proof that every user was systematically surveilled, our findings laid out the foundation of Hong Kongers' anger that they were forced to choose between going about their daily lives and putting themselves at real risk of being tracked.

As the strictest pandemic measures wound down following China's lead, the Hong Kong government was eager toward the end of 2022 to shift its policy messaging, which no longer emphasized its alleged success in containing Covid-19 but the city's return to normalcy. To that end, it organized the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit in hopes of co-opting bankers and transnational corporate executives to serve its propaganda campaign that downplayed the political crackdown. In October, just ahead of that occasion, we published our third report, entitled "Business Not as Usual: International Companies in the New Authoritarian Hong Kong." It cataloged major expected participants as well as their firms' names and countries of origin. In addition, it documented instances of the complicity of corporations in Hong Kong's human-rights crackdown. We launched the complementary International Corporate Bad Actors Database, which we would also continue



From left to right:

1. “The LeaveHomeSafe App: A Pentest Report”
2. “Business Not as Usual: International Companies in the New Authoritarian Hong Kong”
3. “Hong Kong Reaches a Grim Milestone: 1,000 Political Prisoners”
4. “The Counter-Lobby Confidential: How Beltway Insiders Do the Hong Kong”

Read Our Reports:



to update at least every month. In its wake, the HKDC website was reportedly banned in Hong Kong by several internet-service providers.

In July 2023, we published our fourth report, entitled “The Counter-Lobby Confidential: How Beltway Insiders Do the Hong Kong Government’s Bidding.” As attention to foreign influence in the U.S. generally and China-related foreign influence operations specifically became an increasing focus of American policymaking, we draw attention to the Hong Kong aspect of this issue, collecting data on the extent of S.A.R. government-led efforts to influence American

legislation and highlighting collaborations between S.A.R. government actors and American social as well as cultural institutions. We found that heavyweights and the well-connected in Washington, including two former committee chairs in the House of Representatives, had played an active role in advancing Beijing’s interests on American soil. Specific interactions were further outlined in the complementary S.A.R. Government Lobbying Influence Database. Our findings were reported widely, including in *Politico*, the *Washington Post*, *Nikkei Asia*, and the *Voice of America*.



## 2.2 Educational Outreach

To mark the first anniversary of the February 28 mass prosecution in 2021, when close to four dozen prominent activists and politicians were charged with a conspiracy to commit subversion for simply having been involved in opposition primaries the year before, HKDC commissioned a video campaign to raise awareness of this major N.S.L. case. Our advisors Nathan Law, Sunny Cheung, and Ted Hui each shared fond memories with those behind bars. Two additional former District Council representatives — Timothy Lee of Kowloon City and our future team member, Carmen Lau of Wong Tai Sin — were interviewed as well about their role in the election campaigns. Through these narratives, we hoped to humanize and publicize the defendants' stories.

HKDC also held several virtual town halls, streamed live on our social-media platforms, that covered a broad range of newsworthy items, often bringing the perspectives of experts and esteemed guests to inform our viewers. On October 26, 2021, Brian Leung spoke one-on-one with Anwen Hughes, Director of Legal Strategy of Refugee Programs at Human Rights First, to unpack President Joe Biden's new Deferred Enforced Departure (D.E.D.) program for Hong Kongers. Brian and Jeffrey Ngo talked in February 2022 about the conferencing process of the America COMPETES Act — based on the latest-available information coming out of Congress — when the bipartisan China package was making its way through the legislative process.

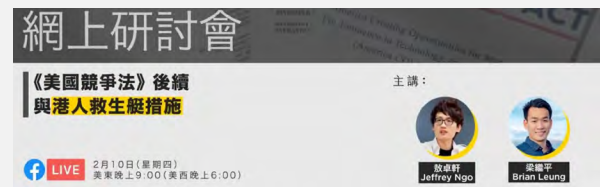
### Virtual Town Halls



*Understanding the Rights and Benefits for Hong Kongers Under D.E.D.*



*The Russian Invasion of Ukraine: Implications on Global Democracy and Security in the Pacific*



*The Prospects and Challenges of the Conferencing of the America COMPETES Act*



*What the Crackdown on Stand News Says About Press Freedom and Rule of Law in Hong Kong*



*The Russian Invasion of Ukraine: A Conversation with a Hong Kong Reporter in Kyiv*

That same month, shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Sunny led two conversations about the war's implications on global democracy and security in the Pacific: one featuring Kaoru Ng, a Hong Kong reporter in Kyiv; and another featuring Wang Ting-Yu, a Taiwanese parliamentarian who served on the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee. Some of our other virtual panels responded to political developments back in Hong Kong itself. After Stand News was shuttered, Brian hosted a rapid-

response discussion on December 30, 2021, with Mark L. Clifford, president of the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong (C.F.H.K.) Foundation and former editor-in-chief of the *South China Morning Post*, and Thomas E. Kellogg, HKDC's advisor and the executive director of Georgetown Center for Asian Law, on the press-freedom crackdown. Anna Kwok discussed with Sunny and Ted the appointment of John Lee on May 8, 2022, as the territory's next chief executive.

## Virtual Panels



主持：



郭鳳儀  
Anna Kwok



張嘉得  
Sunny Cheung



許智峯  
Ted Hui



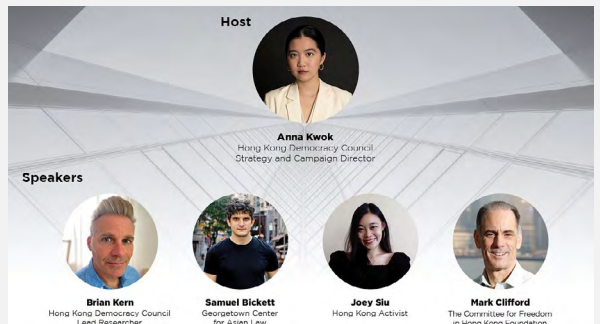
*The Appointment of John Lee as Hong Kong's Next Chief Executive*



*The Disappearance of Hong Kong's June 4 Vigils*



*Third Anniversary of the June 12 Protest*



*Business Not as Usual: Hong Kong's Whitewashing*



*Resilience and Revival of Hong Kongers: Forging Our Pathways*

On June 12 — a major Hong Kong protest anniversary — Alex Chow moderated a discussion in both 2022 and 2023 to discuss the resilience and resurgence of diasporic Hong Kongers. And to mark the publication of “Business Not as Usual: International Companies in the New Authoritarian Hong Kong,” Anna hosted a Twitter Spaces livestream on November 1, 2022, with Brian Kern, the report’s author; Sam Bickett, a lawyer and former political prisoner in Hong Kong; Joey Siu, a prominent Hong Kong activist; and Mark Clifford. Taken together, the aforementioned trilingual webinars showcased not just our team members’ experiences and areas of expertise but also reflected how our work intersected with issues directly relevant to the concerns of the Hong Kong diaspora.

We consolidated our video communications in April 2023 when we launched a new YouTube channel, HKDC Backstage Production. Hosted by Huen Lam and Kennedy Wong, it inaugurated a multi-episode set of D.E.D. webinars to answer common questions — such as applying for a driver’s license, an employment authorization document, and an advance-parole travel document — related to the humanitarian program for Hong Kongers that Biden had recently renewed. It also featured a discussion with Mason Wong on “The Counter-Lobby Confidential” report he authored as well as several other vlogs that showcased our daily work in a more lively format. Our regular tweets provided real-time updates on Hong Kong’s situation and the diaspora’s overseas activities. Last but not least, key anniversaries of protests over the past decade inspired an ongoing series of Instagram posts.





# 3. ADVOCATING FOR HONG KONGERS

HKDC works across the aisle in Washington to advocate for effective responses to Hong Kong's situation and benefits to Hong Kongers. We engage regularly with both the legislative and executive branches of the U.S. government. Our specific attention in the 117th Congress turned to a bipartisan China package passed in the Senate as the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act and in the House as the America COMPETES Act. While these two bills differed considerably, one or both versions contained key Hong Kong-related clauses on critical issues. For the 118th Congress, we focused on the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (H.K.E.T.O.) Certification Act and the Hong Kong Business Integrity and Transparency Act. These items have been championed in addition to our top priority: immigration policy. We have also spearheaded our Hong Kong Government Overseas Monitor, which led to two triumphant campaigns against the Smithsonian Institution's questionable partnerships and Chief Executive John Lee's entry to the United States.

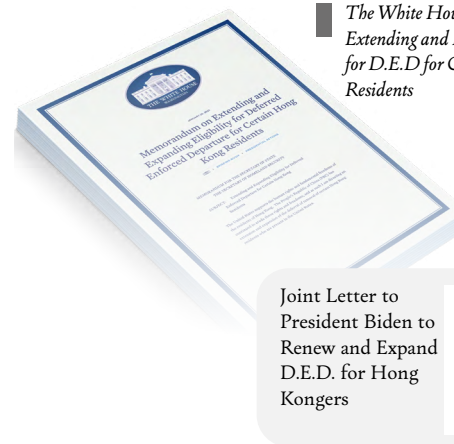
### 3.1 Deferred Enforced Departure

President Joe Biden first granted Deferred Enforced Departure (D.E.D.) to Hong Kongers on August 5, 2021, citing the political instability in Hong Kong. The program allowed eligible individuals already in the U.S. to remain in the country for 18 months. In response to Federal Register Notice 86 FR 58296 on October 21, we wrote to the Director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (U.S.C.I.S.) and sought clarification on whether regulatory requirements with respect to F-1 visa holders would be suspended. That inquiry was answered by the Federal Register Notice 86 FR 67485 posted on November 26. Together, these documents delineated the specifics of Biden's program that offered thousands of Hong Kongers a deportation reprieve and employment permits. Throughout the program's duration, we maintained direct communication channels with government officials who oversaw it, kept community members informed, and took on casework to assist individuals needing help to navigate the immigration system or to reach their political representatives.

As the initial 18-month period came close to ending, we urged Biden to renew and expand the program. The reasons for doing so, including evidence that Hong Kong's situation had not improved, were outlined in a letter we sent to

the White House on December 23, 2022. It was co-signed by 46 other Hong Kong diasporic and advocacy groups in the U.S. and further endorsed by 14 organizations in the China human-rights space. The president responded positively to that request in his January 26, 2023, memorandum. Specifically, he renewed the program for 24 months and expanded eligibility to cover newer arrivals from Hong Kong. He also cited data in HKDC's Hong Kong Political Prisoners Database to outline the gravity of the crackdown. At the same time, we worked with Department of Homeland Security officials to issue an automatic, blanket renewal of D.E.D.-related Employment Authorization Documents so they would not expire on the initially-listed date of February 5, a crucial lifeline to the livelihoods of Hong Kongers in need.

*The White House's Memorandum on Extending and Expanding Eligibility for D.E.D. for Certain Hong Kong Residents*



Joint Letter to President Biden to Renew and Expand D.E.D. for Hong Kongers



## 3.2 Permanent Humanitarian Pathways

HKDC members with Congress



HKDC members with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi

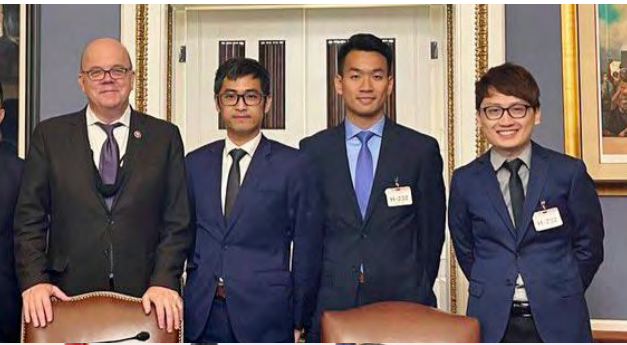
HKDC had been fighting for a Hong Kong-specific immigration bill since the early summer of 2020. Two of the four bills unveiled in the 116th Congress — authored, respectively, by Senators Ben Sasse of Nebraska and Tom Cotton of Arkansas — would not be reintroduced; the other two that enjoyed substantial bipartisan support would be throughout 2021 and 2022. The Hong Kong Safe Harbor Act, which designated Hong Kongers as Priority 2 Refugees, was co-sponsored by 17 Republicans and 11 Democrats in the House. Its Senate companion was led by Bob Menendez of New Jersey, Marco Rubio of Florida, Jeff Merkley of Oregon, and Chris Coons of Delaware. This group of senators filed the bill as an amendment to the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, but the effort was struck down by the Judiciary Committee.

The Hong Kong People’s Freedom and Choice Act fared better. Authored by Congressmen Tom

Malinowski of New Jersey and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, it granted Temporary Protected Status (T.P.S.) to Hong Kongers; reinstated the differentiation between Hong Kong and China, revoked by the previous administration in 2020, specifically for immigration purposes; demanded that the secretaries of state and homeland security submit to Congress an annual report on Hong Kong and immigration; instructed the federal government to collaborate with allies to accommodate Hong Kongers fleeing political persecution; clarified the criterion by which Hong Kongers can be admitted as refugees, not to be counted against the annual numerical limitation on refugees overall; and permitted 5,000 high-skilled special immigrants — along with their immediate family members — to enter the U.S. per year for five years. With the additional backing of 14 Democrats and eight Republicans, it gained enough momentum to be incorporated into the America COMPETES Act.



man Jim McGovern of Massachusetts



HKDC members with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell



HKDC members with Senator Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee

HKDC members with U.H.R.P.'s Julie Milsap and Peter Irwin

The bipartisan, bicameral conference committee created in the spring of 2022 to reconcile differences between the Senate's U.S. Innovation and Competition Act and the House's America COMPETES Act provided the best opportunity for Hong Kongers to make a case in favor of humanitarian pathways for Hong Kongers. Since one of these two bills contained immigration provisions pertaining to the situation in Xinjiang, HKDC teamed up with the Uyghur Human Rights Project (U.H.R.P.) to set up more than two dozen Congressional meetings, at which we underscored the urgency of this issue. Separately, along with 25 other U.S.-Hong Kong groups, we wrote to Speaker Nancy Pelosi as well as Leaders Chuck Schumer, Kevin McCarthy, and Mitch McConnell urging them to retain Hong Kong provisions.

However, the two chambers in the end could agree only on the lowest common denominator. Rather

than an ambitious legislative package that would have more comprehensively addressed the U.S.-China relationship and upheld core American values, a slimmed-down bill to fund the research and manufacturing of semiconductors was passed on August 9, 2022, as the CHIPS and Science Act. Our work toward humanitarian pathways thus resumed in 2023 in two ways. On the executive side, we continued to press for the granting of T.P.S. and Priority 2 Refugee Status to Hong Kongers, both of which could be implemented by the president's authority alone. On the legislative side, we sought a consensus immigration bill to include provisions from various previous bills in hopes of garnering the necessary bipartisan support for passage.



### 3.3 Issues in the China Package

Other legislative priorities with strong bipartisan consensus likewise made it to the China package but failed in the end to become law because they were dropped by the conference committee. One of these was the Safeguarding Internet Freedom in Hong Kong Act, which had first been introduced by Senators James Lankford of Oklahoma and Tim Kaine of Virginia in 2021. It attempted to develop firewall-circumvention options for Hong Kongers on the ground to maintain their connection to the global information economy amid the slow imposition of a Chinese-style “great firewall.” More specifically, it instructed the secretary of state to convene a working group that aimed to bolster internet resiliency and online access in Hong Kong, as well as appropriated funds for two years to the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and the independent Open Technology Fund nonprofit to develop relevant programs. As we returned to the standalone bill, we sought further co-sponsors and a House companion version.

Another more important issue concerned a weapons ban to the Hong Kong Police Force. When Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Congressman Jim McGovern of Massachusetts first passed the PROTECT Hong Kong Act — alongside the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act — in 2019, they prevented the export of U.S.-made tear gas and other crowd-control technology to Hong Kong. However, they managed to do so during the anti-extradition protests only with a one-year sunset clause. We successfully advocated for these provisions to be extended for another year, which was folded into the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. But the same problem resurfaced after it expired once again at the start of 2022. The bipartisan China package contained a provision that would permanently reauthorize it so Congress would

not have to do so every year, making it effective and hassle-free in the long term until revoked by the president. With commitment from Merkley, we sought to do that in a future National Defense Authorization Act so that the U.S. would never be complicit in Hong Kong’s ongoing police brutality.

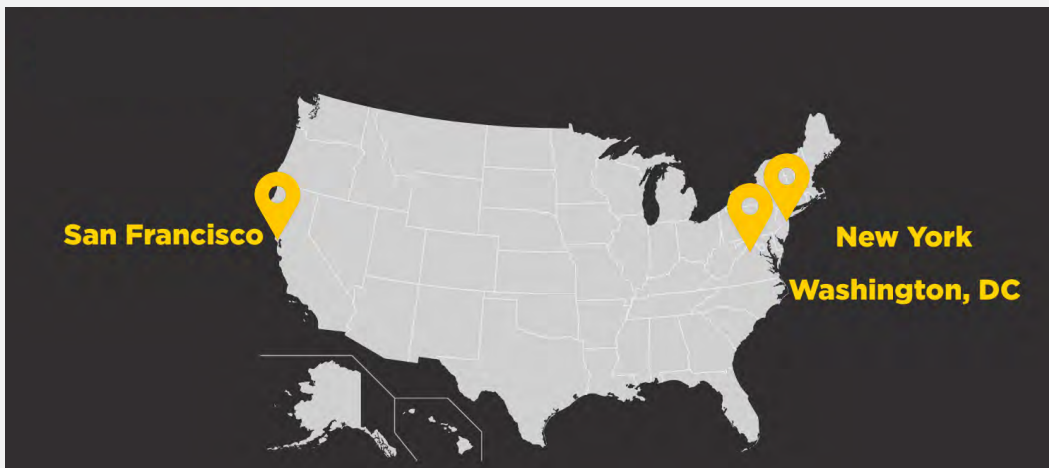


### 3.4 Issues Beyond the China Package

Two major bills were introduced in both the 117th and 118th Congresses outside of the China package’s purview. First, on August 23, 2022, Congressmen John Curtis of Utah and Scott Peters of California unveiled the Hong Kong Business Integrity and Transparency Act. It sought to improve the Department of Commerce’s federal oversight of American companies abroad to prevent them from aiding and abetting the Hong Kong government’s human-rights abuses — whether deliberately or inadvertently — through the handling of consumer data. We had worked with both of their offices on the language earlier and endorsed it once unveiled. “The sweeping National Security Law,” as Brian Leung wrote in the Congressional press release, had “dismantled the freedoms that once made Hong Kong unique [and] tarnished the city’s reputation as a global financial hub.” The bill reflected the reality that local and transnational corporations alike now faced constant pressure to facilitate Beijing’s political objectives. It was reintroduced on April 25, 2023.

Second, on December 14, 2022, Senator Marco

Rubio of Florida and Congressman Chris Smith of New Jersey put forward a new bill to target the three U.S.-based H.K.E.T.O.s, in Washington, New York, and San Francisco. They had been established during the British colonial era to develop commercial ties. Through Executive Order 13052, President Bill Clinton gave them the legal status enjoyed by other international bodies like the United Nations (U.N.) and the World Health Organization beyond 1997. However, they since became tools of Beijing’s transnational repression, and their existence could no longer be justified after the U.S. declared Hong Kong no longer sufficiently autonomous from China to justify differential treatment in 2020. The H.K.E.T.O. Certification Act required the president to, 30 days after its enactment, declare whether these Hong Kong government outposts merited the privileges, exemptions, and immunities they currently enjoyed. If not, their operations must be terminated within six months. The bill was reintroduced to both chambers in February 2023, with the Senate version passing the Foreign Relations Committee in July.



H.K.E.T.O.s in the U.S.

In addition to working with our allies to advance both aforementioned bills through the regular legislative process on Capitol Hill, we launched an original research initiative to complement each with the goal of educating policymakers and the public at large. “Business Not as Usual: International Companies in the New Authoritarian Hong Kong” and the International Corporate Bad Actors Database suggested that the problem identified by the Hong Kong Business Integrity and Transparency Act was widespread. “The Counter-Lobby Confidential: How Beltway Insiders Do the Hong Kong Government’s Bidding” and the S.A.R. Government Lobbying Influence Database exposed the scale of foreign authoritarian political interference that the H.K.E.T.O. Certification Act sought to eradicate. These reports also empowered the Hong Kong diaspora across the U.S. to make a stronger case for Washington to take action. Together, they epitomized how our different pillars of work — policy advocacy, community building, as well as research and education — operated in sync with one another.









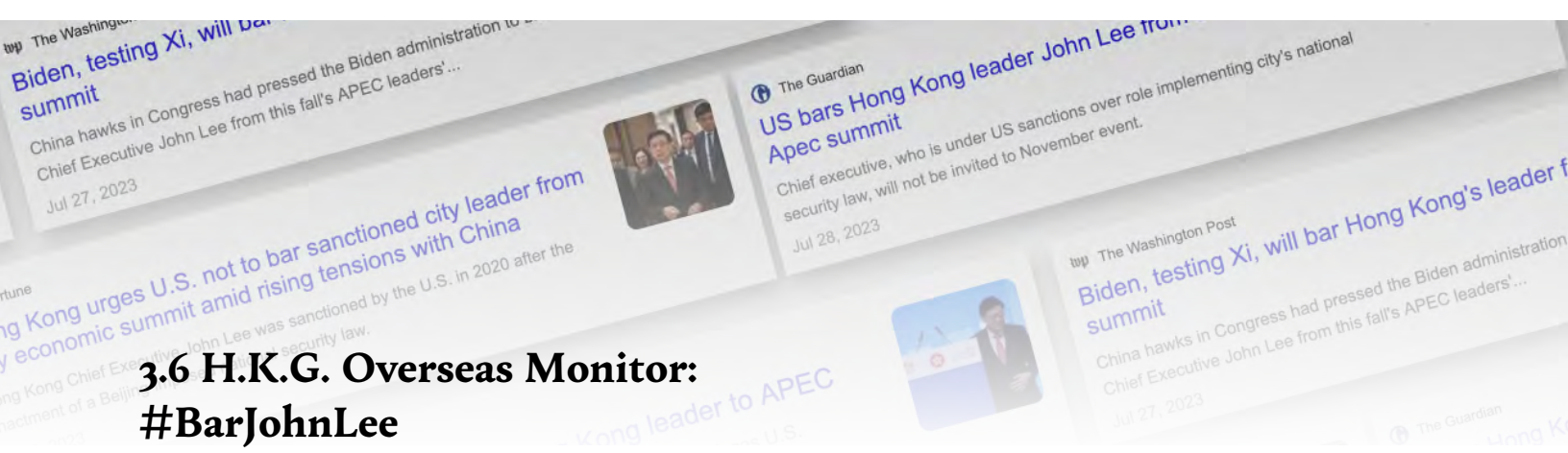
### 3.5 H.K.G. Overseas Monitor: Smithsonian Ties

Long before the introduction of the H.K.E.T.O. Certification Act, the three aforementioned Hong Kong government outposts — which were widely believed to keep tabs on pro-democracy figures as well as participants of demonstrations and events — had been a serious concern among the diasporic community. To curb transnational repression and overseas propaganda, we launched a new initiative to keep track of their U.S. activities in a more systematic fashion. Once we began, we were troubled by the annual Made in Hong Kong Film Festival, which was sponsored by the Washington H.K.E.T.O. and hosted by the National Museum of Asian Art. That partnership had begun during the colonial era, in 1996, and renewed without question year after year. But signs of Hong Kong’s post-handover situation deteriorating were ubiquitous, including a new film-censorship law that passed in October 2021 to “safeguard national security.”

On July 8, 2022, the opening night of the festival’s 27th run, we collaborated with DC4HK to stage a demonstration ahead of an outdoor screening of *The Way of the Dragon*, the 1972 classic starring Bruce Lee, at the Freer Plaza. We called attention to the disturbing fact that the Washington H.K.E.T.O. wanted to invoke Hong Kong’s more liberal past for branding and public-relations purposes, even misrepresenting the occasion on its website as a special celebration of one-quarter century of the territory under Chinese rule. And yet, the soft power that attracted the audience had been accumulated by the freedoms of expression and cultural production now crushed by the very same regime. The H.K.E.T.O. should not be allowed to have it both ways, we argued, and certainly not while being endorsed by a public U.S. institution. We then joined 14 other advocacy groups five days later on a follow-up letter to the Smithsonian’s secretary and board of regents.

Our coalition of advocates elaborated on these points and shed light on the scale of Hong Kong’s political crackdown in subsequent emails and a meeting with Smithsonian representatives. We were informed in November 2022 that they no longer had plans to host a 28th Made in Hong Kong Film Festival and in January 2023 that the National Museum of Asian Art’s relationship with the Hong Kong government had come to an end. While we celebrated the milestone, the coalition lodged a separate protest against the Renwick Gallery for leasing its venue to the Washington H.K.E.T.O. for a Lunar New Year event and vowed to keep on monitoring future events of this nature.





### 3.6 H.K.G. Overseas Monitor: #BarJohnLee

In his previous capacity as secretary for security, John Lee had been instrumental in the violent suppression of the Hong Kong protests and implementation of the National Security Law, causing the Department of the Treasury to sanction him in August 2020. His ineligibility, according to U.S. law, to enter the country thus predated his appointment in July 2022 as chief executive. But in early 2023, he expressed his desire to be in San Francisco for the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting scheduled for November. We started a #BarJohnLee campaign against his visit in May: After all, if individuals could be blacklisted for the abuses they committed when they were not traveling anyway, only to be granted a waiver when it mattered, targeted sanctions were meaningless in the first place.

Our crusade led to a strong bipartisan, bicameral letter from Congress to Secretary of State Antony Blinken on June 7. Citing Wendy Sherman, his deputy who had indicated her intention to grant Lee a waiver in the name of “foster[ing] regional economic dialogue” and “maintain[ing] global macro-economic stability,” the lawmakers reiterated Blinken’s own determination that Hong Kong was not even autonomous enough to be considered separate from China. On June 14, a State Department spokesperson backtracked on Sherman’s words, clarified that a decision was in fact pending, and claimed

that the misunderstanding stemmed from “an incorrect version” of her response that had been “inadvertently transmitted to Congress” earlier.

Working closely with our allies, we ramped up our call to #BarJohnLee in the weeks that followed, including in meetings with the legislative and executive branches. That push culminated in a public letter dated June 30 to President Joe Biden that we spearheaded. Signed by 52 other Hong Kong community groups, advocacy organizations, and civil-society partners, it argued that welcoming Lee would “send the exact wrong signal that human-rights violations will not be met with lasting consequences.” We further cited the good precedent of the administration excluding Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela from the most recent Summit of the Americas held in Los Angeles because these governments were undemocratic. Letting Lee into the U.S., in contrast, would set a bad precedent. On July 27, the *Washington Post* broke the news that the White House stepped in and decided that John Lee would, after all, indeed be barred.

### 3.7 Hearings, Events, and Other Collaborations

The expertise of HKDC team members was often sought after, including at three separate hearings convened by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (C.E.C.C.). On October 19, 2021, Sunny Cheung testified at “Protection From Persecution: Establishing Humanitarian Pathways for Hong Kongers and Uyghurs” to make a strong case for executive and legislative immigration actions. On February 3, 2022, Nathan Law testified virtually at “The Beijing Olympics and the Faces of Repression” to explain why human-rights conditions in Hong Kong should disqualify Beijing from hosting a major international sports event. On May 11, 2023, Anna Kwok testified at “One City, Two Legal Systems: Political Prisoners and the Erosion of the Rule of Law in Hong Kong” to portray the human consequences of Hong Kong’s devolution from a vibrant civil society to the epitome of yet another failed international agreement negotiated with China.



■ Anna testified at “One City, Two Legal Systems: Political Prisoners and the Erosion of the Rule of Law in Hong Kong”

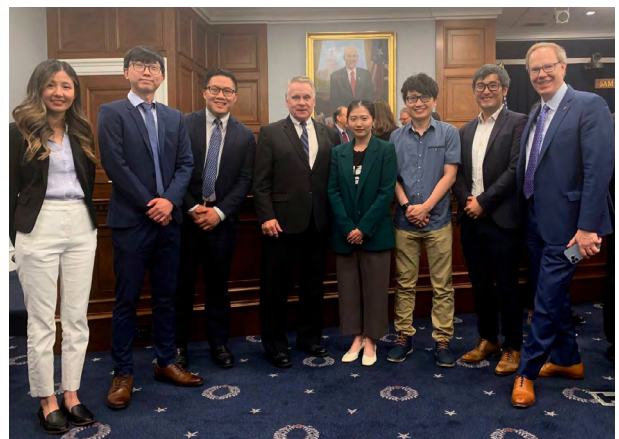


■ Sunny testified at “Protection From Persecution: Establishing Humanitarian Pathways for Hong Kongers and Uyghurs”



■ Nathan testified virtually at “The Beijing Olympics and the Faces of Repression”

Our collaboration with the C.E.C.C. extended to other aspects as well, including encouraging the executive branch to utilize legislation already in effect. Pursuant to the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 and the Hong Kong Autonomy Act of 2020, the Donald Trump administration imposed sanctions on such individuals as now-Chief Executive John Lee, who, in his previous capacity as secretary for security, had helped enact the N.S.L. and authorized unprecedented levels of police violence. In July 2022 and May 2023, the C.E.C.C. published staff research reports identifying, respectively, six N.S.L. prosecutors and 29 N.S.L. judges most responsible for the rise of political prisoners in Hong Kong. We endorsed both sanctions lists featuring these names, which bipartisan, bicameral Congressional members asked President Joe Biden to implement.



■ HKDC members with C.E.C.C. Chairman Chris Smith and Director of Policy and Media Relations, Scott Flipse



Our working relationship extended as well to the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party. On February 28, 2023, we collaborated with the new House panel to organize a press event outside the Capitol to mark two years since the mass arrests of close to four dozen opposition leaders in Hong Kong. Chairman Mike Gallagher specifically endorsed legislative items pertaining to H.K.E.T.O.s and humanitarian pathways for Hong Kongers. Sunny Cheung delivered remarks while three other members of the team — Huen Lam, Jeffrey Ngo, and Mason Wong — joined him by the podium. Congressmen Dusty Johnson of South Dakota and Neal Dunn of Florida acknowledged the importance of partnering with nonprofit organizations like HKDC to promote human rights.



Anna with Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton of Virginia



HKDC members with Chairman Mike Gallagher of the Select Committee on the C.C.P.



Anna with C.E.C.C. Chairman Chris Smith



Press event with Chairman Mike Gallagher — as well as Congressmen Neal Dunn of Florida and Dusty Johnson of South Dakota — of the Select Committee on the C.C.P.



# 4. BUILDING BRIDGES

While Hong Kongers, a very cosmopolitan people, boast a long history of global travel and immigration, these movements were rarely involuntary or permanent before 2019. The dramatic rise in political arrests and the onset of the N.S.L. amid a global pandemic presented new circumstances, however, forcing tens of thousands of Hong Kongers to flee persecution with an understanding that returning home in the foreseeable future would be difficult. Organizing the growing diaspora abroad thus becomes necessary to sustain the movement's momentum, foster a collaborative and cohesive community that continues to advocate for freedom and democracy abroad, and cultivate next-generation leaders. With these goals in mind, HKDC coordinated two rounds of nationwide film screenings, organized three flagship events to bring diaspora leaders together in Washington, pioneered several new programs, and embarked on numerous community visits.



## 4.1 Film Screenings

Directed by Kiwi Chow, *Revolution of Our Times* premiered at the Cannes Film Festival on July 16, 2021. HKDC obtained exclusive rights to screen this important documentary on the 2019 protests — which would go on to win the Golden Horse Award in Taiwan despite being censored in Hong Kong — from the production team. In partnership with 11 Hong Kong community groups, we coordinated the world's first round of public screenings from December 10, which coincided with Human Rights Day, to December 19 across seven American cities: Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington. There were 47 sessions in total, including 21 in New York and 14 in Los Angeles alone, as well as two late-breaking additions in San Francisco on December 25 and December 26 due to popular demand. In selected New York and Washington sessions, our team members Anna Kwok, Brian Leung, Alex Chow, and Nathan Law attended in-person post-screening discussions with audience members.

A second round of public screenings in the U.S. took place four months later, throughout April 2022, as *Revolution of Our Times* garnered wider global attention. This time, we brought the film

to 20 locations, 13 of which were new: Austin, Texas; Castro Valley, California; Dallas; Houston; Las Vegas; Oakland, California; Philadelphia; Phoenix; Pittsburgh; Portland, Oregon; Sacramento; San Diego; and Tucson. While the majority of our partners were groups founded by local Hong Kongers in 2014 or 2019 to support uprisings back home, we were proud that this occasion brought hitherto unknown community members together, fostering the establishment of Philly4HK, PDX4HK, and the University of Arizona's Hong Kong Student Association.

Hsiao Bi-Khim, the Taiwanese representative to the U.S., delivered an opening address at a screening on April 9 organized by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in Washington. Anna, Alex, Sunny Cheung, and a representative from DC4HK spoke at a post-screening panel on April 16 in Gaithersburg, Maryland, organized by the Greater Washington chapter of the Taiwanese Association of America. We also participated in similar discussions beyond the East Coast: Audience members heard from Brian in Seattle, from Anna and Jeffrey Ngo in Houston, and from Sunny in New York.

## 4.2 Hong Kong Summit 2022

Although local Hong Kong organizers had known one another well, rarely had there been an occasion for them to meet those across state lines; this had been made all the more difficult by the Covid-19 pandemic. An annual conference bringing everyone together, similar to what many other diasporic communities had done, would be important to gather Hong Kongers' ideas and energies. In the spring of 2022, HKDC began working with Fight for Freedom. Stand With Hong Kong. (S.W.H.K.) to organize our flagship Hong Kong Summit. This collaboration, supported in part by a generous grant from the Open Society Foundations, allowed us to gather close to 120 participants in Washington between July 23 and 25. They hailed from almost every corner of the continental U.S., while others represented Hong Kong groups based in Canada,

the U.K., and Europe. Dozens of Washington-based human-rights advocates, policymakers, and researchers who specialized in Hong Kong and China also participated in various parts of our program.

Day 1 began with opening remarks delivered virtually by Senators Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Marco Rubio of Florida and in person by Dr. Miles Yu, a top aide to former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Representatives from each local group presented their stories and projects. We then split up to attend capacity-building workshops led by our friends at the Human Rights Foundation, the National Democracy Institute, the Coalition for a Prosperous America, and other organizations. The Federal Bureau of Investigation shared invaluable resources to





counter China’s efforts to dissidents on American soil. Day 2 contained several closed-door strategizing sessions to consider how the U.S.-Hong Kong community could empower itself. In between, Anna Kwok and June Lin engaged in a conversation with three distinguished allies with first-hand experience in organizing their respective diasporic communities: Leopoldo Lopez, the prominent Venezuelan opposition leader; Omer Kant, Executive Director of the Uyghur Human Rights Project; and Tenzin Barshee, former President of the Capital Area Tibetan Association.

Participants chose between an advocacy track and a foreign-policy track on Day 3. The former crowd discussed China policy with retired Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle over breakfast

and learned the basics of how Congress worked, before meeting in smaller delegations with Hill staffers in the afternoon. To the extent possible, we arranged for participants to call on offices representing the states in which they resided, such as Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California as well as Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York and Whip Dick Durbin of Illinois. The latter crowd attended three informative panels — on Beijing’s economic coercion on the world stage, the Russian invasion of Ukraine’s implications for Taiwan, and Chinese techno-authoritarianism — featuring experts in these respective areas. The summit concluded with a joint evaluation session with dinner held at the National Endowment for Democracy.





### 4.3 Capitol Hill Reception

To commemorate the third anniversary of the passage of the landmark Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act and to honor the contributions of international allies to Hong Kong’s ongoing fight for freedom, HKDC held the Hong Kong Advocacy Reception on November 16, 2022. Members of DC4HK and many other Hong Kongers in the Washington area showed up, as did Hong Kongers from Austin, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Close to 100 participants gathered on a heated rooftop overlooking the Capitol at night and listened to HKDC’s team members share their first-hand experiences from 2019. Sunny Cheung, then a spokesman for Hong Kong Higher Institutions International Affairs Delegation, recalled rallying support for the bill on the ground amid the protests. Jeffrey Ngo, then a standing-committee member of Demosistō in Washington, recalled knocking on doors to ensure the bill could clear both chambers of Congress.

Four distinguished speakers also spoke: Nathan Law, convener of HKDC’s Advisory Board; Senator Jeff Merkley, chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China; Lisa J. Peterson, the principal deputy assistant secretary who oversaw the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; and Ivan Kanapathy, the former deputy senior director for Asian affairs at the White House’s National Security Council. This line-up reflected our organization’s deep connections to the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong as well as to policymakers in both the legislative and executive branches. Anchored by Huen Lam, the reception ended with a pair of concluding remarks by Brian Leung and Anna Kwok, HKDC’s outgoing and incoming Executive Directors.



*Lisa J. Peterson, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State*







■ *Jeff Merkley, C.E.C.C. Chairman and Oregon Senator*

■ *Ivan Kanapathy, former Deputy Senior Director for Asian Affairs, National Security Council*







## 4.4 Hong Kong Summit 2023

HKDC organized a second Hong Kong Summit in Washington from July 23 to 25, 2023, to continue the dialogue between diasporic leaders in the U.S. and beyond. This year, our number of participants increased to over 150, representing over 40 organizations from at least 25 cities across seven countries. It was sponsored by S.W.H.K. and the C.F.H.K. Foundation and supported by the National Endowment for Democracy and the Solidarity Center. We also collaborated with *Flow HK* and *Reporters sans frontières*.

On Day 1, we mapped out the Hong Kong diaspora with a focus on regional similarities and differences. We then split into four groups for panels and discussions on various aspects

of the movement: the Hong Kong identity and culture, pathways to liberation, advancing Hong Kong on the global agenda, and countering the Chinese Communist Party's global influence and the United Front. Participants got to know one another better during our afternoon networking hour before our opening dinner, where they heard from guest speakers including Pema Doma of Students for a Free Tibet, Dolkun Isa of the World Uyghur Congress, and Minze Chien of the Formosan Association for Public Affairs. We learned from the Federal Bureau of Investigation about transnational repression and from movement allies about mediating internal divisions on Day 2. In a general session conducted in Cantonese, we delved into mock case studies to





explore resolutions to disagreements and unpack the meanings of accountability. We wrapped up with an open debate on matters of identities and theories of change.

Day 3's programming, held at the famed Congressional Auditorium, focused exclusively on policy advocacy. In the morning, Jeffrey Ngo delivered a keynote lecture, "Hong Kong in the U.S. Congress: A 40-Year Chronicle." It offered a comprehensive survey of Hong Kong in the ever-evolving legislative agenda and Hong Kongers' role in shaping it from 1982 to the present. Participants then got to experience something essential to a day in the life of a Hill staffer: grabbing lunch and talking policy

at the Capitol Cafe. They returned for an afternoon session co-hosted with the C.E.C.C. Vice Ranking Member Jim McGovern reaffirmed his commitment to scrutinize the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices with the increase of Beijing's transnational repression. In their extensive remarks, respectively, Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi and Chairman Chris Smith recounted their long journey to hold Beijing accountable for human-rights abuses since the 1980s. Senators Marco Rubio of Florida and Jeff Merkley of Oregon, as in the previous year, each delivered a virtual address. The summit once again concluded at the National Endowment for Democracy.





Nancy Pelosi, Speaker Emerita of the House



Photo by Lamp of Liberty







*Damon Wilson, President, National Endowment for Democracy*



*Jim McGovern, C.E.C.C. Vice Ranking Member and Massachusetts Congressman*



## 4.5 New Programs

To further our mission of nurturing young talent to partake in our many lines of work, HKDC recruited our first cohort of three interns and two non-resident fellows in Summer 2022. We guided them through assignments to develop their specific areas of interest and expertise, while also offering them ample opportunity to collaborate with one another. The entire group came to Washington for two weeks that coincided with the Hong Kong Summit 2022, providing invaluable logistical assistance to us before and during the event. Other highlights of their program while in town included a roundtable discussion at the Global Taiwan Institute; a tour of the Tiananmen 1989 exhibit, led by Zhou Fengsuo, the prominent pro-democracy leader, at the new Victims of Communism Museum; and a visit to the Twin Oaks estate — a mansion run by the Taiwanese government to host diplomatic events — in Cleveland Park.

Our second cohort of three interns and two non-resident fellows worked with us in Fall 2022 and traveled in mid-November to Washington for the Advocacy Reception. Our third cohort in the spring and fourth cohort in the fall, comprised of three interns and one non-resident fellow each, overlapped at the Hong Kong Summit 2023. In each case, they enjoyed a trip to Washington combining meaningful travel and work, including a wide array of workshops hosted by staff members. These opportunities to gain hands-on experience in working at a U.S. organization like HKDC were unique and invaluable for individuals interested in contributing to the Hong Kong democracy movement. Beatrice Wu, who would later become our Administrative Associate, first began working with us as an intern; Kennedy Wong did so as a non-resident fellow before assuming his current role.



Our internship and fellowship events in Washington



In May 2022, we launched a seed fund to subsidize small initiatives that aligned with our advocacy or community-building objectives. Our first beneficiary was a team of Hong Kongers who competed in the annual Washington, D.C., Dragon Boat Festival sponsored by TECRO. They won gold in the 250-meter race and bronze in the 500-meter race. Another project we backed was a pair of “freedom shoes” — which featured the words “No Dictators” overlaying the Ukrainian national flag’s colors on the left and Hong Kong’s protest-themed Black Bauhinia flag on the right — designed by a young Tibetan artist, Khenzom Alling. Nathan Law wore them to the TIME100 summit in New York.

Last but not least, we developed a scholarship in November 2022 alongside three partner Hong Kong community groups: the Hong Kong Professional Network, the Hong Kong Collaborative Academic Network, and Students for Hong Kong. We wished in particular to support Hong Kong students in the U.S. who could demonstrate both their academic excellence and enthusiasm to promote Hong Kong in their own institutions. Accordingly, a central piece of the application was a written proposal for an on-campus activity or campaign, which they could work with HKDC to deliver. The awards, announced on December 23, went to two undergraduate and one graduate students.



“Freedom Shoes” designed by the Tibetan artist Khenzom Alling



## 4.6 Community Visits

HKDC's team members frequently visited cities across the U.S. to engage with Hong Kongers from all walks of life. They had different backgrounds — varying greatly in terms of age, profession, and duration of residence in the U.S. — but shared a passion for supporting Hong Kong's democracy and freedom in their local communities. Alex Chow and Jeffrey Ngo attended the Philly4HK inaugural picnic on September 17, 2022. Then, on the October 1 Global Day of Action marking Chinese national celebrations, Jeffrey spoke at the rally in Chicago. Anna Kwok did so in New York, while Sunny Cheung and Huen Lam went to Los Angeles. In January 2023, Anna and Kennedy Wong visited Austin and were greeted, along with other Hong Kongers in Texas, by Senator John Cornyn and Congressman Greg Casar at two separate community events.

A number of formal and informal meetings with local organizers — who walked us through their grassroots activism and shared with us their thoughts on HKDC's work — took place during additional trips to Boston, Houston, Las Vegas, Phoenix, San Francisco, Seattle, Tempe, and Tucson. To facilitate a more substantial exchange of views, we launched the Overseas Hong Kongers' City Forum in March 2023. We hoped to provide a platform for participants, whose attendance must be verified to ensure adherence to the Chatham House Rule, to deliberate the future of Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement abroad. We made our first stop in New York for a discussion co-hosted with three other organizations: the Hong Kong Student Advocacy Group at New York University; NY4HK - New Yorkers Supporting Hong Kong; and Lion Rock Café. With an attendance of about 30, it was facilitated jointly by Kennedy Wong from the University of Southern California and Shiro Wong from the University of California, Berkeley.



*Anna with Senator John Cornyn of Texas*



*Anna with Congressman Greg Casar of Texas*



*Austin community visit*





San Francisco community visit



Tempe community visit



Overseas Hong Kongers' City Forum in New York



**5.**  
**FIGHTING**  
**ALONGSIDE**  
**ALLIES**

While HKDC often works specifically to advance our objectives on policy advocacy and community building, we also realize that these pillars intersect in ways that empower each other. Sometimes, a unified effort among diasporic Hong Kongers could affect developments back in the city itself. We likewise believe that meaningful solidarity benefits our movement and others that help to create a world safer for human rights and democracy.

## 5.1 A United Hong Kong Network

In October 2021, we joined forces with two organizations — S.W.H.K. and Hong Kong Watch — to mobilize constituents across the U.S. to contact their elected representatives in both the House and the Senate. The collective action focused on shoring up support for various humanitarian-pathways legislation that were making their way through the legislative process. During the earlier anti-extradition movement, the U.S.-Hong Kong community had helped to build support for such bills as the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, the PROTECT Hong Kong Act, and the Hong Kong Autonomy Act that eventually passed. Now, with that experience in mind and using the Call4HK platform — which facilitated outreach efforts — seven additional co-sponsors endorsed the Hong Kong Safe Harbor Act, among other notable achievements.

From November 1 to 3, 2022, the Hong Kong government hosted the Hong Kong Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit in hopes of projecting an image of post-pandemic normalcy. Major U.S. financial institutions were invited to speak at the panels and meet with U.S.-sanctioned Hong Kong officials. HKDC was joined by 19 Hong Kong advocacy groups in a joint letter requesting the federal government to inquire the executives from major U.S. financial institutions about their decision to participate and warn them that meeting with sanctioned Hong Kong officials would result in legal and regulatory consequences. Concurrent with the release of our report, "Business Not

as Usual: International Companies in the New Authoritarian Hong Kong," we hosted a Twitter Spaces livestream that featured members from Hong Kong community and advocacy groups.

Beyond targeting Smithsonian ties, HKDC team members often worked with — and participated in events hosted by — DC4HK and other Hong Kongers based in the Washington metropolitan area. Often, these were rallies and awareness-raising campaigns that either responded to the latest political developments in Hong Kong or marked major movement anniversaries. On June 12, 2023, we organized with DC4HK a "Glory to Hong Kong" sing-along demonstration outside the Washington H.K.E.T.O. with two purposes in mind: to oppose the Hong Kong government's attempt to ban the protest anthem on the internet through a court injunction and to underscore generally why these outposts on American soil were problematic.

## 5.2 Pillar of Shame

Jens Galschiøt, an eminent Danish visual artist, created a series of sculptures each known as a Pillar of Shame — featuring torn and twisted bodies deformed by the brutal C.C.P. crackdown — after the Tiananmen Massacre of 1989 to memorialize the loss of pro-democracy Chinese lives. In 1997, the Hong Kong installation was erected for the first time in Victoria Park, with these words engraved into the base: “The old cannot kill the young forever.” After several exhibitions, it was transferred to the University of Hong Kong (H.K.U.), where it would be on permanent display just outside the Haking Wong Podium. In the years since, it would be cleaned annually before June 4. But the ritual began to irk Hong Kong authorities in the N.S.L. era.

In October 2021, the pro-government H.K.U. administration hired Mayer Brown in its attempt to remove the Pillar of Shame from campus, which the Chicago-headquartered law firm described as a “real estate matter.” We co-signed a public letter with 27 other overseas organizations — including those founded by Hong Kongers in Canada, the U.K., and the Netherlands — to protest Mayer Brown’s complicity in erasing memories of the Tiananmen Massacre. The strong, global pressure, combined with condemnation by lawmakers like Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, compelled it to terminate work for the case within days. Although the sculpture was nevertheless taken down in December, widespread awareness of that incident as a blatant attack on student activism and academic freedom was unmistakable. We also helped raise the reputational cost for prestigious institutions like Mayer Brown, which had issued statements on police accountability and civil rights in the U.S., for actions abroad that contradicted their professed values.

We likewise found renewed relevance to talk about 1989 at a time when the world-famous annual candlelight vigils were no longer allowed in Hong Kong. To mark the 33rd anniversary of the massacre, Anna Kwok explored in a webinar on June 4, 2022, the politics of disappearing memories with Teng Biao, our advisor; Sophie Richardson, China Director at Human Rights Watch; and Lee Wing-Tat, the former chairman of Hong Kong’s Democratic Party. To mark the 34th anniversary of the massacre, we collaborated with NGO DEI — a Europe-based Hong Kong advocacy group focused on culture and the arts — on a social-media initiative, “Pillars of Shame in Exile.” It allowed Instagram users to recreate the sculpture anywhere through an augmented-reality filter. With the physical object now confiscated, we hoped to ensure that it would live on, even in digital form, as a symbol internationally.





## 5.3 Cross-Movement Solidarity

The most important cross-movement campaign we participated in from late 2021 to early 2022 aimed at boycotting the Olympic Winter Games in Beijing. Together with allies, we asked President Joe Biden not to send an official U.S. delegation to the event, a demand to which the White House announced on December 6, 2021, that he assented. On January 24, 2022, as part of the campaign, we attended a press conference hosted by Senator Rick Scott of Florida to condemn abuses in Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang. We co-signed a joint statement on January 27 with 242 other organizations that called on governments around

organizations that called on governments around the world not to offer diplomatic endorsement of the games. We also co-signed another joint statement, “Threats to Athletes, Human Rights Crimes Define Beijing Games,” on February 2 with 132 other organizations that urged the International Olympic Committee to ensure athletes’ free expression.

We took our message to the streets as well. Brian Leung and Anna Kwok joined the #NoBeijing2022 rally organized by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation with



Cross-movement press conference hosted by Senator Rick Scott of Florida



Outreach initiative with Students for a Free Tibet: Meeting with Congressman Mark Takano of California

Congressman Chris Smith of New Jersey. Alex Chow delivered remarks at a Manhattan rally alongside Congressman Tom Suozzi of New York. Jeffrey Ngo spoke in Boston. All actions were coordinated with cross-movement allies who recognized the Chinese Communist Party's longstanding interest to divert attention away from its human-rights abuses by hosting international events, as had been the case of the Summer Olympics in 2008 and the Shanghai Expo in 2010.

Our team's strong alliance with Tibetans was especially noteworthy. We launched an outreach initiative with Students for a Free Tibet targeting the Congressional Progressive Caucus. That effort aimed to ensure that supporting communities repressed by the Chinese government would remain robust and bipartisan. This was most important at a time when malign actors manipulated the anti-A.A.P.I. hate discourse to tone down legitimate criticisms of a foreign dictatorship. Our delegation met with more than a dozen Congressional offices and, during an in-person visit to Capitol Hill in March 2022, discussed the complexity of these overlapping issues with Congressman Mark Takano of California. Separately, Jeffrey Ngo attended a celebration of the 11th Panchen Lama's birthday co-organized by the Office of Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet, and the Capital Area Tibetan Association on April 25. He met with Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration and discussed the importance of solidarity building between the Hong Kong and Tibetan diasporic movements.

On March 31, 2022, ahead of the E.U.-China Summit, we initiated a joint letter signed by 46 Hong Kong, Taiwanese, Uyghur, Tibetan, and other human-rights group. We urged the E.U. to stand firm against China, which continued to stand behind Russia during its invasion of

Ukraine, threaten Taiwan with military force, and commit long-standing atrocities in Hong Kong and elsewhere. This appeal to universal values was embodied as well by our endorsement of other causes, such as when Anna signed a statement on January 12, 2023 that called for the immediate release of Munkhbayar Chuluundorj, a Mongolian activist critical of China but imprisoned in Ulaanbaatar.



Jeffrey Ngo at the Boston rally





Alex Chow at the Manhattan rally alongside Congressman Tom Suozzi of New York



Brian Leung and Anna Kwok at the Washington, D.C. rally with Congressman Chris Smith of New Jersey



# 6. GOING INTERNATIONAL

As a Washington-based nonprofit, HKDC focuses primarily on U.S. work. But we also recognize the global nature of Hong Kong's pro-democracy cause, particularly in an era when dissent in the city itself is silenced. To that end, we embark on trips around the world and extend our advocacy efforts to the U.N. to further our mission.

## 6.1 Trips Abroad

Lithuania, which had endured decades of Soviet occupation before gaining independence in 1990, emerged in recent years not only as one of Europe's friendliest Taiwan allies but also among the loudest champions of liberty. At a time when many other countries seemed headed in the opposite direction, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs went against the grain and inaugurated the Future of Democracy Forum held in Vilnius from November 19 to 21, 2021. The convener of our advisory board, Nathan Law, spoke at a session with Linas Kojala of the Eastern Europe Studies Centre and Jonas Parello-Plesner of the Alliance of Democracies. He shared crucial lessons from Hong Kong to offer a case study of how freedoms could rapidly deteriorate.

That Baltic State was in the spotlight again the following year. In November 2022, three prominent pro-democracy leaders who had fled repressive countries — Masih Alinejad from Iran, Leopoldo López from Venezuela, and Garry Kasparov from Russia — established the World Liberty Congress. It served as a platform to advance four universal principles: free and fair elections; the rule of law; respect for human rights; and the restoration of

freedom and democracy. HKDC supported the network as a founding partner. We also co-hosted the inaugural meeting under the theme, Building an Alliance for Freedom: How to Confront Autocracies Today, in Vilnius. It brought together activists representing a wide array of movements in different regions to strategize and learn from one another's experiences.

In May 2023, Alex Chow, our board member, joined fellow activists to tour four cities in three democracies across Latin America: São Paulo and Brasília, Brazil; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Santiago, Chile. Organized jointly with the World Uyghur Congress and the International Service for Human Rights, the two-week trip sought to explain the nature of the Chinese Communist Party to policymakers and civil-society organizations alike. It marked a paradigm shift as Hong Kong advocates had hitherto seldom reached out to the Global South despite its growing influence and dealings with China. The delegation was comprised of Zumretay Arkin, Dolkun Isa, Omer Kanat, and Raphaël Viana David.







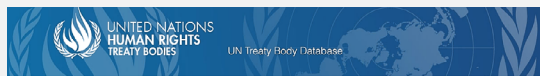
We co-hosted the inaugural World Liberty Congress meeting under the theme, *Building an Alliance for Freedom: How to Confront Autocracies Today*, in Vilnius.

## 6.2 The United Nations

We collaborated in May 2022 with Chinese Human Rights Defenders to file a joint submission to the Human Rights Committee, a body of independent experts that monitored the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which Hong Kong had been a signatory since 1976. Our report focused on the inconsistency of the N.S.L. with the territory’s treaty obligations given the severe crackdown on four main areas of concern: the freedom of expression, the freedom of peaceful assembly, the freedom of association, and the freedom to participate in public affairs. Separately, Anna Kwok’s testimony on the experience of on-the-ground female protesters during the 2019 anti-extradition protests was included in a joint submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. It was filed by Hong Kong Watch, Freiheit für Hongkong e.V., and Hongkonger in Deutschland e.V. in March 2023.

Our U.N. advocacy efforts were subsequently strengthened under the coordination of Carmen Lau. In July 2023, she oversaw our submission to the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review on China. The comprehensive, 96-page document highlighted the same aforementioned areas of concern. We further asked that the U.N. urge Hong Kong authorities — among our 11 recommendations — to immediately release all political prisoners, revoke the N.S.L., repeal provisions in the Public Order Ordinance that restrict assembly, abolish “patriotic” electoral reforms, and respect international human-rights standards to safeguard promised freedoms to Hong Kongers.

Hong Kong, of course, was never an independent nation-state and therefore not a U.N. member. But the territory’s current political system was itself enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which had been registered at the U.N. on May 27, 1985. Reporting done by the HKDC team and our allies consistently reflected the reality of the Chinese Communist Party’s utter failure to fulfill its responsibility outlined in that binding international agreement. Should conditions in Hong Kong continue to deteriorate, we would be committed to reminding the global community of the “principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples,” once denied to Hong Kongers, should not be empty rhetoric. Rather, that bedrock U.N. principle had been enshrined in numerous documents, including the founding charter itself, that demanded concrete, collective action to reaffirm.



CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women  
85 Session (06 May 2023 - 20 May 2023)

General Documentation

Document type	Symbol	Title	Overview
Provisional Agenda	CESWAT/CAH/1	Provisional agenda	<a href="#">View document</a>
Programme of Work		Programme of Work	<a href="#">View document</a>
Schedule of dialogue		Schedule of dialogue	<a href="#">View document</a>
Information from secretariat		Registration to the session	<a href="#">View document</a>

Read Anna's testimony on the experience of on-the-ground female protesters during the 2019 anti-extradition protests



# 7. ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC

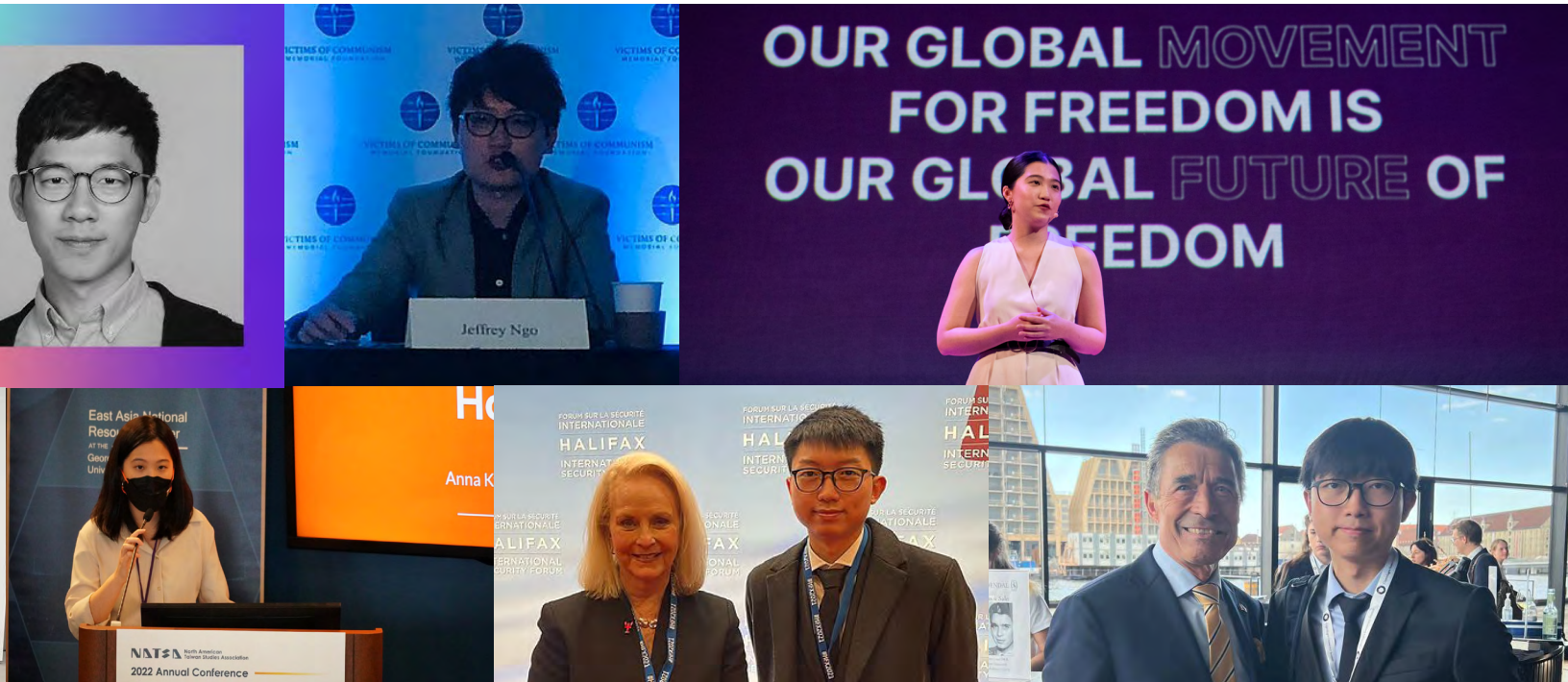
The lists below showcase the HKDC team's record of speaking about Hong Kong at major conventions; panels, talks, and presentations; as well as podcasts and virtual discussions.

## 7.1 Major Conventions



Event	Location	Date	Host	Team Member
Oslo Freedom Forum	Miami	Oct. 4–5, 2021	Human Rights Foundation	Alex
China Forum	Washington	Oct. 27, 2021	Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation	Jeffrey
Future of Democracy Forum	Vilnius, Lithuania	Nov. 19–20, 2021	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania	Nathan
Halifax International Security Forum	Halifax, N.S.	Nov. 19–21, 2021	Halifax the Forum	Sunny
Sedona Forum	Sedona, Ariz.	April 28–30, 2022	McCain Institute	Sunny





Event	Location	Date	Host	Team Member
Copenhagen Democracy Summit	Copenhagen	June 9–10, 2022	Alliance of Democracies Foundation	Sunny
World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet	Arlington, Va.	June 22–23, 2022	International Network of Parliamentarians on Tibet	Jeffrey
Oslo Freedom Forum	New York	Oct. 3, 2022	Human Rights Foundation	Anna
Oslo Freedom Forum	Taipei, Taiwan	Nov. 3, 2022	Human Rights Foundation	Nathan
Open Technology Fund Summit	Austin, Tex.	Jan. 24–26, 2023	Open Technology Fund	Anna

## 7.2 Panels, Talks, and Presentations

Title	Location	Date	Host	Team Member
Memory as Resistance: Social Movements and Cultural Preservation in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet	Washington	July 10, 2022	North American Taiwan Studies Association	Anna
Hong Kong Amidst the U.S.-China Competition	Claremont, Calif.	Sept. 29, 2022	East Asian Political Society of the Claremont Colleges	Sunny
港台交流 與張崑陽見面會	Los Angeles	Oct. 2, 2022	Formosan Association of Public Affairs, Los Angeles Chapter	Sunny
In Defense of Democracy: An Inside View on Hong Kong Protests	Los Angeles	Oct. 3, 2022	International Refugee Assistance Project; International Human Rights Clinic & International Law and Relations Organization, University of Southern California	Sunny
The 2019 Hong Kong Pro-Democracy Movement and Its Implications	Derwood, Md.	Oct. 16, 2022	Taiwanese Presbyterian Church of Washington	Anna, Huen, Alex, and Sunny
Confronting China's Transnational Authoritarianism: How the Transatlantic Community Can Respond	Washington	Nov. 17, 2022	Atlantic Council	Nathan
Fight for Freedom Under Chinese Communist Party Oppression	Washington	Nov. 30, 2022	National Endowment for Democracy	Alex
Dinner Reception in Honor of the Honorable Nury Turkel	Washington	July 20, 2023	Uyghur Human Rights Project	Alex

## 7.3 Podcasts and Virtual Discussions

Title	Platform	Date	Host	Team Member
Academia and Activism With Hong Kong Diaspora	Zoom	Feb. 23, 2022	Hong Kong Student Advocacy Group, New York University	Jeffrey and Alex
China's Xinjiang Region: How Should the International Community Respond?	YouTube	April 27, 2022	Initiative for U.S.-China Dialogue on Global Issues, Georgetown University	Jeffrey
Transnational Repression on Campus (Conference: The Challenge of China: Protecting Human Rights and Democracy in the Global Institutions of the 21st Century)	Zoom	June 2, 2022	Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa	Jeffrey
612:回顧與前瞻	Clubhouse	June 12, 2022	NY4HK	Anna and Alex
Silenced: Alex Chow	Spotify	July 4, 2022	Article 19	Alex
Dissidents & Dictators: Hong Kong Today	Spotify	July 22, 2022	Human Rights Foundation	Anna and Sunny
Youth Mobilizing in Exile: Standing Up Against the CCP	Twitter Spaces	Aug. 17, 2022	Human Rights Foundation	Anna
香港人，盡做啦! :HK Summit 主辦 HKDC & SWHK, Pt. 1	Spotify	Aug. 19, 2022	H.K.Y.J.J.L.	Anna
香港人，盡做啦! :HK Summit 主辦 HKDC & SWHK, Pt. 2	Spotify	Aug. 26, 2022	H.K.Y.J.J.L.	Anna
Hong Kong: A Democracy Movement in Exile	YouTube	Sept. 22, 2022	World Affairs	Anna and Alex



<b>Title</b>	<b>Platform</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Team Member</b>
Fighting for Democracy	Spotify	Nov. 11, 2022	Simple Heart	Anna and Alex
Why Protests in China Are Spreading and How We Can Support Them	Clubhouse	Nov. 27, 2022	Teng Biao	Sunny
Global Week of Remembrance Townhall	Webex	Nov. 12, 2022	Students4HK	Anna
#FreeToProtest Campaign	Twitter Spaces	Nov. 21, 2022	Article 19	Alex
Dissent in China: Analysis From Tibetan, Uyghur, Hongkonger & Chinese	Twitter Spaces	Nov. 28, 2022	Students for Free Tibet	Alex
Towards a Free and Open China: Voices From the Trenches	Zoom	Feb. 24, 2023	Asia Freedom Institute	Anna
Youth Activist Peer Exchange	Zoom	Feb. 24, 2023	Asia Freedom Institute	Anna
Empowering the Youth for Democracy, Peace, and Justice	YouTube	May 25, 2023	Asia Freedom Institute	Anna

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### **Our Executive Team**

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Biannual Work Report  
*September 2021 – August 2023*

Publisher: Hong Kong Democracy Council  
Authors: Huen Lam and Jeffrey C. H. Ngo  
First issued in November 2023

*Published by*  
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