



**Immediate Release**

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**HKDC Publishes Report and Launches Online Political Prisoners Database**

*Washington, D.C.* (May 23, 2022) — In its debut research report, “Hong Kong Reaches a Grim Milestone,” HKDC examines a new, troubling phenomenon in Hong Kong: the exponential growth in the number of political prisoners since the start of the 2019 mass protests.

In under three years, the city has gone from having only a handful of political prisoners to recently crossing the 1,000 mark. That figure is poised to increase substantially, as 1,159 other individuals are facing ongoing trials.

The full report is [here](#). It is supplemented by the [Hong Kong Political Prisoners Database](#), maintained and regularly updated by HKDC to facilitate human rights monitoring and advocacy. To accompany the report and online database, HKDC issues the following statement and summary.

From HKDC’s Executive Director, **Brian Leung**:

“This report is the first of its kind to provide a comprehensive overview of political prisoners in Hong Kong. Drawing data from HKDC’s original database, the report illustrates the human costs of Hong Kong’s rapid descent into authoritarianism. Hong Kong now has one of the fastest-growing populations of political prisoners in the world, rivaling Belarus, Burma, and Cuba — other societies where authoritarian governments have recently cracked down on protest movements.”

“The numbers will continue to rise despite the world no longer seeing mass protests on the streets. Some individuals are still in the middle of their trials; some — on bail or behind bars —

are waiting for that to begin. Others continue to be arrested for what they did two or three years ago. The world must act now to save the ones who have not been arrested. A further delay will propel us towards another grim milestone.”

## **KEY FINDINGS**

- Among the 1,014 political prisoners are leaders of non-governmental organizations and trade unions, journalists, activists, teachers, professors, students, opposition politicians, protest leaders, and lawyers — a virtual cross-section of Hong Kong civil society. While many of the political prisoners are well-known, most are ordinary Hong Kong citizens who had no public profile prior to their arrests.
- Young people have been disproportionately targeted. More than three-fourths of Hong Kong’s political prisoners are under the age of 30, more than half under 25, and more than 15 percent are minors.
- Remand has risen as a means of keeping political opponents in long-term pre-trial detention. Largely due to the imposition of the National Security Law (NSL) in June 2020, the number of political detainees remanded in custody has increased to a record high of 179 today. Sixty-nine political prisoners have been languishing on remand for more than one year, and the average time on remand is currently 12.4 months.
- With the trials of 1,159 political defendants ongoing, the current number of 1,014 political prisoners is almost certain to increase substantially. Most of the trials yet to conclude are for rioting, NSL crimes, and sedition.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The United States government should sanction designated NSL judges and members of the Committee for Safeguarding National Security.
- The United States government should expedite the creation of humanitarian pathways for politically-persecuted Hong Kongers.
- All ten of the remaining Overseas Non-Permanent Judges on the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal should resign.
- The United Nations Human Rights Committee should investigate reports of human rights abuses and recommend to the Hong Kong government that indefinitely suspended, unreasonably restricted, and abolished political and civil rights be restored.
- The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention should urge the Hong Kong government that all political prisoners be immediately released.