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Hong Kong

Support for Hong Kongers in struggle for their democratic rights

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It was indeed Beijing and the head of the local Government Executive, Carrie Lam, who took responsibility, almost four months ago, for opening up this crisis by calling into question the status enjoyed by this territory as a Special Administrative Region, a status that stems from the handover agreements of the former British colony. This ensures it a significant degree of autonomy in many fields. This status was due to remain in force until 2047 at least.

The five main demands of the protesters all relate to fundamental democratic rights:

- The final withdrawal of the Bill authorising Beijing to request the extradition of any person in Hong Kong for trial on the mainland. They would no longer be entitled to the minimum guarantees provided by the Hong Kong judicial system;
- The withdrawal of the characterisation of the demonstrations as “riots”, a term that disqualifies them politically and which could serve to justify particularly severe repression;
- The unconditional release without charge of all arrested demonstrators;
- The establishment of an independent inquiry into the police use of force and abuse of power;
- The resignation of Carrie Lam, and the implementation of universal suffrage. The current Legislative Council is in fact only partially elected by universal suffrage, which reinforces the weight of the business community and of elements supportive of the Beijing regime.

For years now, the Beijing regime has been working to strengthen its direct control over Hong Kong. We have reached a turning point today. A defeat of the ongoing democratic struggle would have very serious consequences.

This is in no way a confrontation between a “communist” power (Beijing) and a “capitalist” enclave (Hong Kong). Xi Jinping’s China is a capitalist power and does business with International Capital! The restraint that Donald Trump has shown so far on the current crisis, despite the showdown with Beijing, and the great discretion of Emmanuel Macron are witness to this!

The representativeness of the current democratic movement has been demonstrated more than once during these four months of mobilization.

- More than two million people were on the streets on June 16, constituting the majority of inhabitants of an age to demonstrate;
- Right In the middle of August, 1.7 million Honkongers were in the street on Sunday 18 in the pouring rain, despite the ban on this new demonstration;
- To open this day of action on Sunday, August 18, a specific demonstration of teachers had previously brought together 22 000 participants;

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- On August 5, Hong Kong was partially paralysed by a general strike that particularly affected two such flagship sectors as air transport and the financial sector, as well as by roadblocks;
- Civil servants, who had massively mobilised on the 2nd and 5th of August, initiated new militant actions;
- Among students and high school students, there are calls to boycott classes at the beginning of the next school year.

Beijing's military intervention is only a last resort. While waving this threat, the Chinese regime is able to intervene in many ways from within the territory while biding its time, sowing division and hoping for the decay of the current movement.

In any event, the fight for basic freedoms in Hong Kong deserves our full support.

Montreuil (France) Monday 19 August 2019

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