

Mrs. Carrie Lam, GBM, GBS
Chief Executive
1 Tim Wa Avenue, Tamar,
Admiralty, Hong Kong Island
Hong Kong S.A.R.

Paris, July 25th, 2019

Madam Chief Executive,

Reporters Without Borders (RSF), an international organization defending freedom of information, is extremely alarmed by the current climate of violence against journalists in Hong Kong.

During the mass demonstrations over the last two months, police and pro-Beijing demonstrators have attacked journalists on numerous occasions. Violence culminated on July 21st at the Yuen Long MTR station when mobsters viciously attacked civilians, including journalists, while the law enforcement looked the other way.

In a report published on July 7th, the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) deplored “one of the worst years” for journalists since the handover and denounced “a deliberate policy” to restrict journalistic freedoms. In the RSF World Press Freedom Index, Hong Kong’s ranking has plummeted from 18th in 2002 to 73rd this year.

We urge you to take immediate and proactive action in order to reverse this decline and ensure the full enforcement of Freedom of the Press, a right that is spelled out in the Basic Law and of which it is your duty as the Chief Executive to uphold.

We suggest focusing on five key points:

1. Unequivocally withdraw the Extradition Bill, which is widely feared to pose a major threat to journalists and their sources in Hong Kong.
2. Ensure that the law enforcement refrain from any violence or coercion against journalists and protect them anytime their safety is threatened.
3. Ensure that those who call for, order, perpetrate, or glorify violent acts against journalists are being prosecuted and punished ; establish an independent commission to investigate brutality acts.
4. Enforce the highest level of transparency on public affairs for the media.
5. Give clear instructions to all members of the Hong Kong administration to support freedom of the press and facilitate the work of journalists by all means.

We are convinced that these five measures, if set up under your mandate, would contribute to reinforcing the trust between the Hong Kong residents and the administration and strengthening the international prestige of Hong Kong.

Our association would be happy to put its expertise at your service so that your administration can get the quickest and most effective results implementing our proposals.

Please accept, Madam Chief Executive, the assurances of my highest consideration,

Christophe Deloire
Secretary-General

