

CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

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IMAGE OF THE MONTH

Hong Kong Primary Participation

Social media platforms and news outlets were replete with [images](#) such as this one over the weekend of July 11–12, as Hong Kongers lined up at venues across the territory to place their vote in primary elections for pan-Democrat political parties ahead of legislative elections in September. By the end of the weekend, over [half a million](#) people had placed their votes either online or in person at the polls, where voters practiced social distancing due to rising rates of COVID-19 infection. The voting took place amid an environment of uncertainty and fear that has accompanied the implementation of a repressive National Security Law.



Credit: [Hong Kong Free Press/Apple Daily](#)

ANALYSIS

Through Hong Kong, Beijing Funnel Its Repression to the World

By Sarah Cook

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Individuals and institutions are scrambling to adapt to the Chinese Communist Party's growing extraterritorial reach.

There are many unprecedented and [appalling](#) dimensions to the new [National Security Law](#) that Beijing has imposed on Hong Kong. In one stroke, China's unelected leadership stripped away the freedoms and legal protections that have long set the city apart from the mainland. Among the law's most startling provisions is [Article 38](#), which effectively applies criminal penalties for vague political offenses to anyone, anywhere in the world, regardless of whether they have a substantial connection to Hong Kong. As [legal experts](#) have noted, this extraterritoriality makes the measure even more expansive than the mainland's own National Security Law.

But Article 38—with all its implications—is only one of several steps that Chinese authorities have taken over the past month to assert control over views expressed abroad and to intimidate both foreign and Chinese citizens overseas. Taken together, these moves are forcing people around the world to reassess travel itineraries, business models, and communication methods. While some policymakers, foreign leaders, and civil society groups have been outspoken in their criticism of Beijing's actions, they may ultimately be the outliers in a new global wave of self-censorship.

Overseas students and critics in Beijing's crosshairs

Among those immediately affected by the new National Security Law are the many thousands of Hong Kong students currently overseas who have publicly supported the territory's prodemocracy protesters on foreign university campuses and social media. There is also a small contingent of mainland Chinese students at foreign universities who have expressed support for the democratic aspirations and rights of Hong Kongers, including in [interviews](#) with international media.

It is not clear whether Article 38 will be applied retroactively, punishing speech from before the law took effect. But given how far the Chinese and Hong Kong governments have already drifted from international norms on the rule of law, many of these young people may be reluctant to gamble with their freedom, education, and future by returning home under such circumstances. Even if past activism is exempt, students who wish or need to return home will have to keep their views to themselves going forward in order to avoid harsh penalties. In [November 2019](#), a student from the University of Minnesota was sentenced to six months in prison in China over a series of tweets with unflattering references to Chinese president Xi Jinping. By contrast, the Hong Kong law carries a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Students are hardly the only ones at risk. Article 38 exposes a much wider array of individuals—including this author—to detention and prosecution should they travel

to Hong Kong, mainland China, or any country where the rule of law is weak and the government is eager to curry favor with Beijing. As Donald Clarke, a law professor at George Washington University, notes in a detailed analysis of the [provision](#) and its potential applications, “I don’t recommend Thailand if you’re in the PRC government’s sights.”

Citizenship renunciations and foreign hostages

The dangers that foreign citizens could now face are illustrated by a series of recent cases from the mainland. On June 30, a court in Beijing sentenced Canadian citizen and [businesswoman Sun Qian](#) to eight years in prison for practicing Falun Gong, the meditation and spiritual discipline banned in China but practiced freely in Canada and elsewhere around the world; she had been in custody for more than three years already. The harsh sentence itself is unfortunately not unusual for [Falun Gong](#) adherents in China, but another aspect of the case stands out: Sun was apparently coerced into renouncing her [Canadian citizenship](#), with relatives and a former lawyer reporting that she suffered [torture](#) in custody.

This may be part of an emerging trend. In [February](#), Gui Minhai, a Hong Kong bookseller who was abducted from Thailand in 2015 to face politically motivated charges in China, reportedly renounced his Swedish citizenship just as he was sentenced to 10 years in prison. [Yang Hengjun](#), an Australian citizen and writer who was charged with espionage after being detained at a Chinese airport in January 2019, could be the next to receive such treatment.

All three of these detainees were born in China, allowing Chinese authorities to claim that they renounced the legal protection of their adopted countries and accepted the justice of their “motherland.” But Beijing has not hesitated to seize foreigners with no Chinese origins in order to achieve its political or diplomatic goals. On [June 15](#), Chinese prosecutors announced that the espionage cases against two native-born Canadians—former diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor—would soon proceed, meaning the defendants could face life in prison. The two have been held since December 2018 in what is widely seen as retaliation for Canada’s arrest of Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou for potential extradition to the United States, where the telecommunications executive stands [accused](#) of stealing trade secrets, obstructing a criminal investigation, and violating sanctions against Iran. In other words, Kovrig and Spavor are believed to be victims of Beijing’s “[hostage diplomacy](#),” which the National Security Law could now facilitate in the previously safe haven of Hong Kong.

Redlines without borders

For many years now, the Chinese Communist Party has wielded its control over access to the mainland as a cudgel to enforce self-censorship among the Chinese diaspora, journalists, academics, politicians, international corporations, and even Hollywood film studios. The events of the past month have dramatically escalated the threats emanating from Beijing. In one fell swoop, the Chinese leadership has demonstrated a willingness and ability to upend the established rules of permissible speech and activity in a matter of days; abruptly absorbed a major Asian hub for international finance, media,

and activism into its repressive jurisdiction; and added support for human rights in Hong Kong to an already long list of strictly taboo topics.

While much has been written about the new law's inevitable [chilling effect](#) within Hong Kong, its impact abroad should not be underestimated.

After news of the law and of Sun Qian's supposed citizenship renunciation emerged, [Alvin Cheung](#), an outspoken Hong Kong–Canadian legal expert, wrote on Twitter that he was preparing an affidavit “declaring that I am a Canadian citizen and would never renounce Canadian citizenship or any claim to Canadian consular assistance of my own free will.” The governments of the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada are among those that have updated their [travel advisories](#) for Hong Kong, adding warnings such as “You may be at increased risk of arbitrary detention on national security grounds and possible extradition to mainland China.”

A statement by the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong published [after adoption of the National Security Law](#) is significantly more subdued than [one published in May](#), when the pending legislation was first announced and the chamber warned of its potential damage. Meanwhile, [technology firms](#) with significant market share in Hong Kong are weighing whether to pull out or find ways to resist inevitable government demands to censor politically sensitive content and turn over user data.

This choice—whether to self-censor, withdraw, or resist—is also faced by countless other entities and individuals, including anyone planning to travel to China, Hong Kong, or a country with a pliant pro-Beijing government, or indeed anyone with relatives, employees, or associates in such locations whom they might put at risk through their own speech and actions.

The stakes of the choice are clearly highest for the people of Hong Kong themselves. But the fact that so many others around the world are confronting the same unpalatable options underscores the alarming reach of the Chinese Communist Party's program of political and social control.

Hong Kong's border with the mainland was once like a levee separating the un-free world from the free. After years of erosion, that barrier has now been decisively breached, and unless we all work together to hold the water back, we will all be less free as a result.

IN THE NEWS

Chinese activists arrested, jailed for “inciting subversion” in possible Hong Kong preview

As a National Security Law criminalizing “subversion” and other forms of dissent comes into effect in Hong Kong, activists in mainland China continue to be arrested and sentenced for similar offenses. These cases serve as a potent reminder of how China’s legal system punishes what would be considered run-of-the-mill civic activism or political critique in many countries, and, until recently, in Hong Kong as well. Notable cases from the past month include those of:

- **Yu Wensheng:** On June 17, a court in Jiangsu Province sentenced human rights lawyer Yu Wensheng to [four years](#) in prison for “inciting subversion.” The Beijing-based Yu had been detained in January 2018 after posting online a call for constitutional reforms and democratic elections. A [joint statement](#) released on June 19 and signed by more than a dozen rights organizations condemned the verdict as a violation of Chinese law and international human rights standards.
- **Ge Jueping:** On June 24, a separate court in Jiangsu Province sentenced activist Ge Jueping, a longtime advocate for people who lost property to forced demolitions, to four and a half years in prison for [inciting subversion](#). Ge had been detained in [September 2016](#) while peacefully protesting outside of the Suzhou Intermediate People’s Court over the alleged mishandling of a case involving a man who had killed two members of a demolition team that had come to destroy his home.
- **Chen Jiahong:** On June 24, rights lawyer Chen Jiahong was [put on trial](#) behind closed doors in Yulin, Guangxi, on charges of “inciting subversion.” Chen had been [detained](#) in April 2019 after posting a video online criticizing President Xi Jinping and the abolition of term limits, and calling for democratic political reforms.
- **Lu Yang:** Shandong poet [Lu Yang](#) was detained on May 13 after releasing a video online calling on President Xi Jinping to step down from office. On June 19, he was formally charged with “[inciting subversion](#).”
- **Ding Jiayi:** On June 19, human rights lawyer Ding Jiayi was formally arrested in Shandong Province for “[inciting subversion](#).” Ding had been already placed under residential surveillance in December 2019 after taking part in a [private gathering](#) of democracy advocates in Xiamen, Fujian Province.
- **Xu Zhiyong:** Prominent lawyer Xu Zhiyong was [formally arrested](#) in Shandong Province on June 20, following his earlier detention on February 15 for “[inciting subversion](#).” Xu’s arrest is based on his participation in the same meeting of activists in Xiamen in December 2019. A judge [has denied](#) Xu the right to receive visitors while in detention. Xu, a former university lecturer, has already served a four-year sentence in connection with his activism.

- **Liu Xianbin:** Human rights defender Liu Xianbin was released from jail in Sichuan Province on June 27. The Sichuan native and signatory of the Charter 08 prodemocracy manifesto had spent ten years in detention after being after being convicted of [“inciting subversion.”](#)

Separately, several online activists and one citizen journalist have been targeted with the lesser charge of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” These charges also often yield multi-year prison sentences. Recent cases include those of:

- **Chen Zong:** On July 7, Chinese Human Rights Defenders reported that Chen, from Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, had been sentenced to fifteen months in prison for [“picking quarrels”](#) after he set up WeChat groups to share information he had collected from blocked websites [using a virtual private network \(VPN\)](#).
- **Chen Mei and Cai Wei:** On June 14, the *South China Morning Post* reported that two Beijing-based online activists who had used GitHub to collect and share censored material related to China’s coronavirus outbreak [were charged](#) with “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” Chen Mei and Cai Wei were first detained in April by authorities in Beijing.
- **Zhang Zhan:** On June 23, the *Post* also reported that police in Shanghai [formally arrested](#) citizen journalist Zhang Zhan on charges of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” Zhang Zhan had originally been detained in [mid-May](#) after posting a video to YouTube criticizing the government’s response to the coronavirus outbreak.
- **Lu Yuyu:** In mid-June, activist Lu Yuyu was [released from prison](#) after spending four years in detention for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” Lu had been [arrested](#) in Yunnan Province in June 2016 after working with his wife on a popular blogging project cataloging protest activities around China.

As Beijing’s influence over Hong Kong’s criminal justice system tightens, watch for whether use of that provision too emerges in the territory.

Censorship updates: Deleted posts, trending suspensions, podcast removals, propaganda guidance, and blockchain preservation

Incidents related to censorship, and in some cases, netizen pushback that occurred over the past month served as a reminder of the breadth of topics and communication platforms the CCP seeks to control.

- **WeChat censors UK embassy:** On June 19, censors deleted a post about Hong Kong made by the [British Embassy](#) in Beijing on Tencent’s WeChat messaging platform. [The post](#), made from the embassy’s official account, pushed back against false

claims made in Chinese state press, including that the UK supported independence for the Special Administrative Region.

- **Weibo suspends “trending” list:** From June 10 to 17, the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) imposed a suspension of the trending topics list for the popular Sina Weibo microblogging service, saying messages on the platform had been “disrupting online communication order” and “spreading illegal information.” Nevertheless, during the suspension, netizens devised [creative ways](#) to make entertainment content go viral, including by publishing images of handwritten lists of popular hashtags.
- **Apple removes podcast apps that refused to filter content:** On June 12, the *Guardian* reported that Apple had removed [two podcast apps](#) from its Chinese app store after the creators refused to comply with government censorship directives. The CAC had demanded that Pocket Casts and Castro delete content it had deemed illegal. The apps said they had been contacted by the agency through Apple two days before the removal. “We believe podcasting is and should remain an open medium, free of government censorship,” Pocket Casts said. “As such, we won’t be censoring podcast content at their request.”
- **Blockchain preservation:** A leaked June 21 [censorship directive](#) published by the *China Digital Times* ordered online platforms to delete references to the alleged involvement of a leader at the Research Center for Strategy of Public Emotion in a web of corruption involving party members. Despite the deletions, censored material remains accessible on the blockchain-based forum [Matters](#).
- **Shandong directives on demolitions and gaokao score theft:** Another leaked June 28 [directive](#) published by the *China Digital Times* called on online platforms to take specific actions regarding two emerging stories from Shandong Province. One concerned a controversial program of relocating villagers into consolidated communities, and the other was about stolen university entrance exam scores, or gaokao scores, which students had acquired and used to enter prestigious universities on false pretenses. For the former, specific terms are to be used, such as “building a beautiful and livable countryside,” while newly banned terms like “village consolidation” are “to be pulled offstage.” Management of citizen reporting on platforms like Weibo and WeChat is to be tightened, according to the directive. On the exam story, media are to simply refrain from publishing any reporting or commentary on the issue.
- **Blocks imposed on Indian news websites:** Amid tensions between China and India following clashes along the countries’ disputed border, the *Times of India* reported on June 30 that China had [blocked](#) a number of Indian news websites. The move seems to have come prior to the Indian government’s decision to ban 59 Chinese apps, including TikTok, on national security grounds.

Surveillance updates: DNA database, COVID-19 monitoring, more real-name registration

- Reports reveal forcible DNA collection:** On June 17, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a think tank, published a [new report](#) revealing a program of police-led DNA collection targeting tens of millions of men and boys across China. Authorities have justified the program, which has targeted children as young as five for blood collection, as a tool to fight crime and ensure social stability. Yet both the report and a June 17 [New York Times](#) investigation revealed that police are forcibly collecting genetic data outside of criminal investigations—moves at odds with international human rights norms and China’s own criminal laws. The program, an expansion of earlier initiatives first implemented in Tibet and Xinjiang, is part of long-standing efforts to use [biometric surveillance](#) to increase the power of the Chinese state. Among the companies supplying Chinese police with DNA testing kits are [Thermo Fisher Scientific](#) and the Chinese company [Beijing Genomics Institute](#) (BGI). Both have been tied to genetic surveillance programs in Xinjiang, with BGI in particular coming under renewed scrutiny in the [United States](#) and [Australia](#) for its links to the Chinese state and its sales of coronavirus testing kits; officials have expressed concern that material collected for testing may be used for genetics-based surveillance.
- Variations in health surveillance and data collection, depending on COVID-19 outbreaks:** As the coronavirus outbreak is brought under control in China, digital health codes assigned to residents by numerous local governments in China, including Shanghai and Hangzhou, have been [rolled back](#). These systems, which involved scanning QR codes when entering venues like private residential complexes and restaurants, were implemented during the height of the epidemic in China. In other cases, authorities have sought out new data sources to track potential infections. Amid a new outbreak of the virus in Beijing, authorities in the city’s [Daxing district](#) partnered with major mobile phone carriers to send text messages to their customers who passed through the area after May 30.
- Real-name registration for online literature creators:** On June 5, Chinese authorities implemented [real-name registration](#) requirements for websites for online literature writers, a move that may encourage further self-censorship among Chinese netizens. The National Press and Publications Administration has [also called](#) for improvements to the content-review mechanisms on these literary sites, including issuing a warning that profit making should not override the political and social responsibilities of publishers. In recent years, many novelists have turned to online literature platforms to more freely discuss a range of sensitive subjects, including sexuality and official corruption.

HONG KONG

National Security Law deals a dramatic blow to internet freedom

On July 6, the government of Hong Kong enacted a new National Security Law. The law, drafted and enacted by Beijing's National People's Congress Standing Committee without public consultation, almost immediately began to undermine free expression in the Special Administrative Region. Within days, new restrictions like book bans at [schools](#) and [libraries](#) were announced, protest slogans like “Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Time” were deemed [illegal](#), and peaceful protesters were [arrested](#) under its provisions. Consequences of the law's rapid enforcement prompted the voluntary dissolution of the prodemocracy youth group [Demosisto](#), and the departure from Hong Kong of [Nathan Law](#), a well-known activist and former legislator.

Repression of offline activity under the new law is already having a profound impact on internet freedom in Hong Kong, and more restrictions are likely to come in the near future. Immediate concerns and other developments include:

- **Harsh offline implementation defining online crimes:** While no one has yet been charged under the National Security Law for online activity, its offline implementation, especially bans on slogans and books, may define the parameters of permissible speech [on the internet](#). If a book is banned from public libraries—as already is the case with works by [prodemocracy figures](#) like Joshua Wong—people could potentially be punished for reading an e-version of the book on their phone or computer. It already seems clear that Hong Kong authorities will treat online posts with [slogans](#) like “Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Times” as potential criminal offenses.
- **Implementing regulations:** On July 7, the Hong Kong government issued the first set of [implementing regulations](#) outlining guidelines for the National Security Law—and for Article 43 in particular, which deals with police handling of purported national security threats. In addition to providing police additional search powers and restricting those under investigation from [leaving Hong Kong](#), the rules include several provisions relevant to internet freedom. These include measures enabling the [blocking and deletion](#) of content at the behest of the police, and which grant police the power to [intercept communications](#). Those who do not comply with these provisions, including technology firm employees, [could face](#) fines or even jail sentences.
- **Tech firm responses:** Numerous major tech companies have reacted to the new law and implementing regulations. On June 6, Facebook, Twitter, and Google announced that they would [pause cooperation](#) with Hong Kong government requests for user data, and [LinkedIn](#) issued a similar statement the following day. TikTok has gone even further, stating on June 6 that it would [withdraw completely](#) from Hong Kong. Depending on how the legal and political interaction between the companies and

the Hong Kong and Chinese governments proceeds, users in the territory may face either reduced access to their favorite apps, or the risk of their personal data being turned over the authorities.

- **Self-censorship:** The imposition of the National Security Law has already had a [chilling effect](#) on life in Hong Kong, with [private businesses](#) removing any indications of support for the prodemocracy movement and [bankers](#) refusing to talk on the record to journalists about the impact of the new law. Even before the law came into effect, artists and cartoonists raised concerns about forthcoming [self-censorship](#), and Hong Kong social media users began [deleting posts](#) about their participation in the protests, which they feared could open them up to prosecution on national security grounds. After the law came into effect, internet users noticed that the public broadcaster [Radio Television Hong Kong](#) had republished on YouTube episodes of the recently pulled political satire show “Headliner,” and that each video was on average 3 minutes shorter than previously, indicating that the station likely removed segments that could now potentially be deemed criminal.

BEYOND CHINA

Twitter disinformation, TikTok suspicions, US regulatory scrutiny, journalist survey

- **More China disinformation on Twitter:** Chinese government-affiliated disinformation networks continue to operate on social media platforms. On June 12, [Twitter removed](#) 23,750 accounts said to be part of China-linked effort to publish disinformation on the site, along with 150,000 other accounts that boosted their activities. [Analysis](#) of the accounts’ activities reveals a focus on Taiwan, the Hong Kong protests, COVID-19, and exiled Chinese critic Guo Wengui, and indicates that the accounts were operated by users [based in China](#). The deletion of these accounts comes after Twitter identified in [September 2019](#) nearly 200,000 separate accounts involved in a disinformation campaign it attributed to the Chinese government. A separate investigation published June 8 by the *New York Times* found that thousands of suspicious Twitter accounts are being used to [amplify Tweets](#) sent out by Chinese government spokespeople, although some may be manned by patriotic Chinese users without formal links to the party-state.
- **Journalist union survey highlights global reach of Chinese media influence:** A [new report](#) by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) published on June 23 assesses continuing efforts by the Chinese state to strengthen links with journalists and news outlets overseas. The report—based on surveys with journalist unions in 58 countries and in-depth case studies of Myanmar, the Philippines, and Kenya—found that the Chinese government and Communist Party are increasing their [influence](#) on narratives in foreign media markets through the acquisition of outlets, and by providing training for journalists. The efforts span a wide array of countries and journalists’ unions from developed and developing economies, democratic and

repressive political systems, large and small states, and both countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative and those that are not.

- **TikTok encounters greater suspicion, bans:** TikTok continues to come under scrutiny from governments and users outside China. While the company has attempted to [distance](#) itself from ByteDance, its Chinese parent company, on July 5 it was reported that the [Australian government](#) plans to call on ByteDance representatives to appear before a Senate committee to answer questions concerning its potential sharing of user data with Chinese authorities. On June 29, TikTok was [banned in India](#), the app's biggest international market, following clashes along the Sino-Indian border and media reports that [hashtags](#) related to the conflict were being manipulated. (TikTok had over 120 million users in the country; 58 other Chinese-owned apps were also banned.) On July 6, [US secretary of state Mike Pompeo](#) announced the possibility of banning the app in the United States, although a blanket ban would likely run into legal hurdles. Journalists have also raised concerns about security lapses on the app that give TikTok greater access to user data. On June 23 it was reported that TikTok (along with other non-Chinese apps) was able to [secretly access](#) data input into an iPhone user's clipboard function.
- **Chinese firms face greater regulatory challenges in the United States:** Over the past month, numerous Chinese entities have come under greater scrutiny by US authorities as potential national security threats. On June 24, the US government opened up [20 Chinese companies](#), including [Huawei and Hikvision](#), to new financial sanctions after declaring them to be tied to the Chinese military. On June 30, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated [Huawei and ZTE](#) as threats to national security. Chinese state media organizations have also been subject to tighter regulation. On June 9, a US Senate subcommittee called for [greater oversight](#) of the operations of China Telecom, China Unicom, and ComNet within the United States, which the committee claimed had been subjected to only "[minimal oversight](#)" in the past. Later, on June 22, the US State Department declared that four Chinese state media outlets—China Central Television, China News Service, the *People's Daily*, and the *Global Times*—would be designated as "[foreign missions](#)," a designation that imposes certain additional transparency requirements. Chinese state media companies have been attempting to increase their reach among US consumers for years, with *China Daily* alone spending [\\$19 million](#) on printing or advertising in US papers since 2017.

FEATURED PUSHBACK

Hong Kongers Speak Out Carefully

Even as passage and initial enforcement of the new National Security Law have had a profound chilling effect on free speech, media, and internet freedom in Hong Kong, many residents, activists, and businesses have found creative ways to express their dissatisfaction with the law and their democratic aspirations without violating it. Social media and chat rooms are replete with ideas for how

to protest safely under the new legal reality. Within days of the law coming into effect, authorities declared a popular slogan of the protest movement—“Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of our Times”—as reflecting secessionist tendencies and therefore illegal. Almost immediately, netizens began using coded language reminiscent of their long-censored Chinese counterparts. This includes using the combination “[GFHG SDGM](#),” the first letters of the English transliteration from Cantonese of the banned slogan, or simply [eight underscores](#) separated in the middle by a comma.



Similarly, after businesses who had displayed Lennon Walls—walls of art and often small sticky notes with protest slogans and statements—were warned that they could be held in violation of the law, one café replaced the display with a wall of [blank sticky notes](#). Other Lennon Wall locations have since [followed](#). Some Hong Kongers who have continued to take to shopping malls to protest passage of the law have taken to holding up [blank pieces of paper](#) as well, symbolizing how they have been silenced.

Another example of linguistic subversion has involved the use of phrases that are effectively impossible for the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities to ban because of their literal meaning or origins, but which are infused with dissident symbolism. After a man was arrested for holding a “Hong Kong Independence” banner and it was discovered he had a small “no” in front of it, the phrase “No Hong Kong Independence” has reportedly gone [viral](#). [Graffiti](#) in a prominent location declares “Arise, ye who refuse to be slaves” in Chinese, the first line of China’s national anthem. Even Mao quotes have appeared, adopted as warnings that those seeking greater freedom in Hong Kong will not give up.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- **Hong Kong National Security Law implementation:** Watch for how harshly the new law is enforced, what implementing regulations follow, and how broadly the vague offenses in the law are interpreted to target political, social, or religious speech, including comments made by Hong Kongers and foreigners when they were overseas. Watch for whether any of those charged and convicted under the law are taken to China to face trial or imprisonment. Watch for whether international technology firms are able to push back against internet censorship and user-data requests, as well as what constraints are placed on candidates in the run-up to the September Legislative Council elections.
- **International response to Hong Kong law:** Several foreign governments, including the United Kingdom, the United States, [Australia](#), and Taiwan, have begun policy initiatives that would ease immigration restrictions for Hong Kongers wishing to emigrate or remain abroad if they are already residing outside of Hong Kong. In other cases, Chinese and Hong Kong officials or companies may face sanctions for their role in supporting or implementing the new National Security Law. Watch for what legislation passes, what additional measures are undertaken, and what assistance they provide, of any, to Hong Kongers, as well as if they prompt any scaling back of the law's enforcement.
- **Impact of sanctions, data security law, and exposés on state surveillance:** Over the past year, various reports have exposed the scale and intrusiveness of Chinese state surveillance, be it in terms of forcible DNA collection, “key individual” databases, or personal information left vulnerable to hacking. The US government has imposed sanctions on Chinese companies and officials—including CCP Politburo member and Xinjiang party secretary [Chen Quanguo](#)—over human rights violations and surveillance practices against Muslim minorities. As a new draft [Data Security Law](#) makes its way through the legislative process in China, watch for what its final version includes, how it is enforced, what data it protects, what remains easily accessible to state security agencies, and whether strong action from the United States and any other government prompts changes to surveillance practices in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China.

TAKE ACTION

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- **Support a prisoner:** Learn how to take action to help journalists and free expression activists, including those featured in passed issues of the *China Media Bulletin*, [here](#).
- **Visit the *China Media Bulletin Resources* section:** Learn more about how policy-makers, media outlets, educators and donors can help advance free expression in China and beyond via a [new resource section](#) on the Freedom House website.

For more information

- For archives, go to: www.freedomhouse.org/China-media
- For additional information on human rights and free expression in China, see: *Freedom in the World 2018*, *Freedom of the Press 2017*, *Freedom on the Net 2018*, and *The Battle for China's Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance under Xi Jinping*



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