

CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

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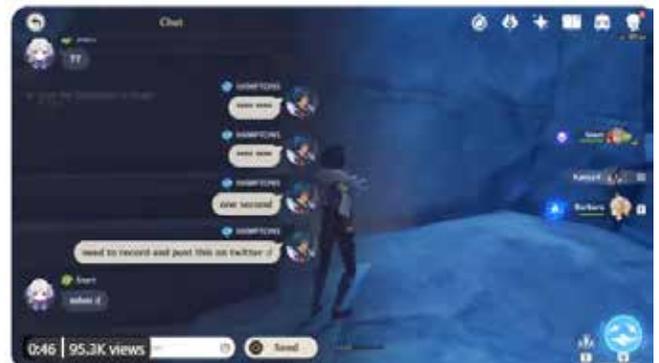
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IMAGE OF THE MONTH

Garbled Gaming

This screenshot from the newly released and highly popular video game Genshin Impact shows keyword censorship related to Hong Kong in the game's in-chat function. The image was posted to Twitter by gamer Kazuma Hashimoto, based outside China, alongside a declaration that he was planning to boycott the app by Chinese company MiHoYo. The clip was shared thousands of times and received almost 100,000 views, spurring several articles in gaming publications on the challenge of transnational Chinese censorship in games.

Credit: [@JusticeKazzy](#)



ANALYSIS

Recent Wins and Defeats for Beijing's Global Media Influence Campaign

By Sarah Cook

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THIS ARTICLE
WAS PUBLISHED
BY THE [DIPLOMAT](#) ON
NOVEMBER 9, 2020.

Some tactics have been productive, but others are fueling a backlash.

Over the past decade, the ability of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to influence global media has [expanded dramatically](#), including online. Since 2018, however, this effort has become more brazen and aggressive, often provoking pushback against Beijing when it veers toward especially coercive or underhanded behavior.

An analysis of developments from the last two months offers some insight on where the regime's campaign is gaining traction, where it is backfiring, and what to watch for in the months to come.

Beijing's upper hand

Revelations from October point to three areas where the Chinese government has developed a strong—and arguably growing—foothold, despite expressions of concern about its impact or concrete action taken by some individuals to push back.

First, Beijing has made progress in its bid to monitor and control international data traffic. The United Nations appears on track to open two data hubs in China: one for “Global Geospatial Knowledge” and the other for “Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals.” An article by researcher Claudia Rossett in the [Wall Street Journal](#) notes that memorandums of intent have already been signed, and two locations in Zhejiang Province have been selected. Thus even as an increasing number of countries move to exclude Chinese firms like Huawei from their telecommunications infrastructure or otherwise voice concerns about surveillance, the Chinese government is using its [powerful influence](#) at the United Nations to develop potentially massive access to satellite information and data flows from around the world. The partnership adds a UN stamp of legitimacy to Beijing's initiative and offers the regime an opportunity to more effectively shape technical standards according to its authoritarian vision or to monitor Communist Party critics abroad.

Second, the regime is stepping up interference in the domestic political discourse of foreign countries. On September 22, [Facebook](#) announced that it had removed a network of accounts, pages, and groups on its platforms that originated in China and had engaged in inauthentic behavior targeting Southeast Asian countries, in particular the Philippines. This campaign stands out among other efforts by China-linked accounts in that much of the activity went beyond the common focus on China-related content such as events in Hong Kong or the Philippines' territorial dispute with China, targeting local audiences with material in Filipino and English that appeared to favor or disfavor domestic political actors—for example by promoting President Rodrigo Duterte and criticizing the independent news organization Rappler. Moreover, relative to many of the accounts in similar campaigns that have been taken down recently, these ap-

peared to gain more traction, garnering over [130,000 followers](#) and millions of interactions. Several factors might have contributed to this success, including the widespread use of Facebook in the Philippines, the polarized political landscape, and [the already close relationship](#) Chinese state media have established with the presidential communications team.

Third, CCP political preferences are seeping ever deeper into the [international videogame industry](#). When Shanghai-based game developer miHoYo launched Genshin Impact in late September, it was hailed as the [biggest global launch](#) of a Chinese game to date. But the long shadow of CCP censorship soon became evident in the program's in-game chat function. Politically sensitive words ranging from “Hong Kong” and “Taiwan” to “Falun Gong” and even “Putin” are reportedly [converted](#) to asterisks. Well-known gamer [Kazuma Hashimoto](#) posted a clip on [Twitter](#) to illustrate the problem and announced that he “can’t play it in good conscience.” Hashimoto said last year that he was quitting games made by a US-based company, Blizzard, after it punished a Hong Kong e-sports player for expressing support for prodemocracy protesters. Despite such high-profile boycotts, however, the reality is that several internationally popular Chinese and foreign-made games—including Tencent’s lucrative PUBG Mobile game—have implemented similar restrictions for some time, marking a quiet victory for the globalization of mundane CCP censorship. Efforts to reverse this trend face an uphill battle given the scale of downloads in China—home to the world’s largest population of mobile web users—and apathy among many international gamers.

Emerging backlash

Other attempts by Chinese officials or companies to gain access to data or impose their preferred narrative on foreigners have met with refusals or galvanized counter-campaigns.

In France, Chinese officials attempted to pressure a museum in Nantes to rewrite portions of an upcoming exhibit on the medieval Mongol ruler Genghis Khan. Among other requests, they called for the removal of key terms like “Genghis Khan,” “empire,” and “Mongol.” The head of the museum refused and [announced](#) instead that the opening of the exhibit would be suspended “in the name of the human, scientific, and ethical values we defend,” tentatively postponing it to October 2024. The show was initially arranged in cooperation with a museum in China’s Inner Mongolia region. But according to the [French museum director](#), the central authorities in China tried to intervene and revise the exhibit synopsis in a manner that would “erase” Mongol history in keeping with a new, more aggressively assimilationist CCP policy that has prompted widespread protests and a subsequent [crackdown](#) in Inner Mongolia since August.

In India, the Chinese embassy sent a [letter](#) on [October 7](#) to approximately [250 local journalists](#), demanding that they “not violate the One-China principle” when reporting on Taiwan’s upcoming October 10 National Day and avoid referring to Taiwan as a country or to its democratically elected leader, Tsai Ing-wen, as a president. The letter included an implicit threat that noncompliant outlets could lose access to the Chinese embassy. However, after an Indian journalist with over 280,000 followers posted the letter to [Twitter](#), it circulated widely, provoked a tart reply from Taiwan’s minister of

foreign affairs, and drew a declaration from India's [foreign ministry](#) that “there is a free media in India, that reports on issues that they see fit.” The Chinese embassy's pressure also prompted Indian netizens to piggyback on the [#TaiwanNationalDay](#) hashtag, while Indian [journalists](#) with large followings shared a thank-you post from Tsai, helping the holiday go viral in India.

Such solidarity among prodemocracy forces and critics of Beijing has also extended to Hong Kong and Thailand. In what has been dubbed the Milk Tea Alliance, a loose network of activists from the two locations have offered mutual support for their respective political struggles on social media. The network gained strength in early 2020 as a way to push back against nationalistic Chinese users and bots swarming major platforms and trying to drown out prodemocracy voices. One Thai student leader told the [Atlantic](#), “Everyone [in the alliance] is the victim of China and its authoritarianism.” In late October, the associated hashtag [#MilkTeaAlliance](#) got a viral boost amid a new round of prodemocracy protests in Thailand, with Hong Kong activists expressing solidarity in posts that were shared and liked thousands of times.

In the realm of data access, what began as a US-driven campaign to encourage other countries, particularly in Europe, to exclude Chinese technology giant Huawei from their new fifth-generation (5G) mobile phone networks has taken on a life of its own. A growing list of countries have raised national security concerns and refused to grant the Chinese firm greater influence at a time when Beijing is aggressively attempting to impose its content standards abroad. [Romania](#) became the latest European state to announce a ban on Huawei on November 1, following [Sweden's](#) declaration last month that it would be banning Huawei and another Chinese company, ZTE, from its 5G infrastructure. Other countries, including Poland, Estonia, and Bulgaria, have agreed to work with the United States on 5G cybersecurity or otherwise collaborate on high-speed wireless network technology.

Jury is out

It is clear that Beijing has made a strategic decision to adopt a more aggressive posture towards foreign news outlets and global social media platforms, seeking to [manipulate conversations](#) even on topics not directly related to China. What remains to be seen is how they adapt, and whether they become adept at more subtle—and thus more effective—manipulation.

Such adaptation could help Beijing overcome a key stumbling block: its evident lack of understanding of global internet culture, democratic norms, and civil society engagement. Tactics deployed at home—like amplifying nationalistic netizens at the expense of prodemocracy voices—may be less effective in certain foreign contexts and even trigger a backlash.

[Looking ahead](#), it remains important to watch for any meaningful inroads the CCP and its proxies might make in influencing foreign news environments, how tactics are adjusted and improved, what obstacles they encounter, and whether these vary depending on the strength of democratic institutions in the target country. The most important developments may not always be the most visible.

IN THE NEWS

Chinese state media, netizens, apps react to US elections

- Shifting state media narratives, pre- and post-election:** Chinese state media remained [noticeably quiet](#) about the US election in the run-up to the November 3 vote. Propaganda authorities [warned](#) Chinese journalists against commentary that indicated a [preference](#) for a particular candidate or that suggested Chinese state efforts to intervene in the election. As early as October 22, just ahead of the 5th Plenum of the 19th Party Congress, the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) [instructed](#) online media to avoid “[h]armful information related to the US presidential election and comparisons with China’s electoral system;” another leaked directive [dated November 3](#), the day of the election, instructed media to “follow unified reporting” by basing stories on approved sources like Xinhua, not republishing foreign accounts, and avoiding content that could “hype public opinion.” Yet Chinese state media quickly moved to belittle the US democratic system as the results trickled in slowly, with no immediate outcome. State-owned and Beijing-backed outlets used terms like “[hopeless America](#)” (Xinhua news agency), referred to US democracy as a “joke” (Ta Kung Pao newspaper), and argued that the election reflected the United States’ decline as a global power.
- Netizens respond:** Despite limited Chinese state media coverage, netizens were permitted a perhaps surprisingly large amount of space to openly debate the merits of both US presidential candidates, share cartoons of them, and consider the possible impact of the election on US-China relations. Posts on Sina Weibo under the hashtag “[U.S. presidential election](#)” reportedly garnered over seven billion views by November 5. For some, the rancor of the election seemed to signal the [decline](#) of America’s global reputation to the [benefit](#) of China’s national interests. Yet while Chinese censors permitted [polling](#) of netizens on their preferences for the office of US president, any similar attempt at gauging public support for Xi Jinping, the Chinese Communist Party, or potential political alternatives remains strictly prohibited, certain to prompt censorship and harsh punishment.
- TikTok voter guide:** On September 29, TikTok—owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, and currently facing a potential US government ban from operating within the United States—launched an [in-app guide](#) to the November elections. The app provided voting information from state governments and US civic groups tailored to a diverse array of potential voters, including those with disabilities or past convictions. Observers noted the app could encourage TikTok’s young user base to vote, but also raised concerns that the guide could be used to collect and store information on users’ political leanings.
- Building long-term influence:** Behind the scenes, the Chinese government has been working to assemble long-term influence operations at both the national and [local levels](#) in the United States, and to use social media to amplify existing divisions in American society. An October 26 [Newsweek investigation](#) by former *New York Times* China correspondent Didi Kirsten Tatlow reported to have found roughly 600

US-based groups “in regular touch with and guided by China’s Communist Party” that could be called upon to advance Chinese government interests in the United States. The investigation also claimed to uncover somewhat clunky Chinese state-linked bot accounts on Twitter and Facebook that sought to amplify political discord ahead of the November election.

Censorship updates: Fifth Plenum restrictions, mobile browser crackdowns, limits on US media

- Controlling the message for the Fifth Plenum and Korean War anniversary:** Important political events and historical anniversaries in October prompted tightened information controls online. In the lead-up to the Fifth Plenum of the 19th Party Congress, held in Beijing from October 26 to 29, the CAC issued detailed [censorship directives](#) to media and social media platforms to “strengthen management at all levels” on topics like speculation about high-level infighting within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), mockery of CCP leaders, foreign criticism of China, and reporting on any unexpected incident that might portray the government’s rule in a negative light. Against a backdrop of rising Sino-US tensions, on October 22 the CAC had issued [similar directives](#) prior to the 70th anniversary of China’s entry into the Korean War, ordering online broadcasters of commemorative events to use official footage, refrain from changing headlines, and closely monitor user comments.
- Short-lived circumvention browser:** Early October saw the release and then rapid removal from Chinese app stores of an Android app allowing China-based users to access some websites blocked in China. Produced by the Chinese internet security company Qihoo 360, [Tuber](#)—along with a PC version called sgreenet.com—allowed users to visit sites like YouTube and Facebook while also requiring real-name registration and simultaneously censoring searches for sensitive terms like “Tiananmen Square” and “Xi Jinping.” Despite these controls, government authorities took the app [offline](#) within days of its release, after over 5 million downloads. This is not the first time that this has happened: in November 2019, web browser [Kuniao](#), which allowed China-based users to partially bypass internet censorship, was similarly taken offline within days of its release.
- Mobile browser crackdown:** On October 26, the CAC [ordered](#) mobile internet browsers to undergo a “self-examination” by November 9, during which they were to remove from their platforms rumors, sensational headlines, and other material deemed to violate “socialist values,” including content from unofficial “self-media” accounts. Targeted browsers include eight of the country’s most influential, including ones run by Huawei, Alibaba, Xiaomi, and Tencent.
- NetEase News app ordered to undergo “rectification”:** On October 10, the CAC ordered NetEase’s news app to undergo [“rectification”](#) after censors found commenters posting “inappropriate” content. Comment functions were suspended for a week,

and the CAC [fined](#) NetEase an unspecified amount. Previously, in [September 2018](#), the CAC had ordered NetEase's financial site to undergo rectification for unclear reasons.

- **US media rules tightened in reciprocal move:** In response to the US government requiring more Chinese state-owned media in the United States to register as foreign missions—a move that increases reporting requirements to the US government—the Chinese government [deepened scrutiny](#) on US media operating inside China. On October 26, the Chinese government ordered six US media organizations to provide information on their staffing, finances, and real estate in China. Many of these media organizations—which include the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), *Newsweek*, and the *Los Angeles Times*—in the past have published [content critical](#) of the Chinese government, including a *Los Angeles Times* profile on the rise of Xi Jinping and ABC's interviews with the relatives of Uighurs detained by authorities in Xinjiang.

Surveillance updates: Government procurements, monitoring minorities, digital currency, data-protection law

- **State of surveillance report from ChinaFile:** A massive research project conducted by [ChinaFile](#) has shed light onto Chinese state spending on surveillance equipment. Researchers examined more than 76,000 local government procurement documents published between 2004 and May 2020, and found that in 2019 alone authorities in nearly one third (998) of all of China's counties purchased surveillance equipment, including facial recognition-enabled cameras, databases for storing citizen information and images, WiFi sniffers, and more. Much of the equipment is connected to Project Sharp Eyes, which aims to cover all key public spaces in China by video surveillance. The report notes that China's local surveillance systems are not nationally integrated and that authorities in different localities focus their attention on different “key populations” deemed to be threats. However, government documents and expert analysis suggest that there is a clear trend toward national integration. The ChinaFile study provides three in-depth case studies of big-data surveillance projects in parts of Xinjiang, Guangdong, and Heilongjiang Provinces.
- **Surveillance targets religious and ethnic minorities throughout China:** Online and offline surveillance systems like those depicted in the ChinaFile report are being used, among other purposes, to target religious practitioners and ethnic minorities across China, sometimes resulting in detention. Since January, police have used the monitoring of WeChat communications and surveillance cameras to identify and detain numerous [Falun Gong practitioners](#) who had shared information about the practice, human rights abuses, or the coronavirus either via the mobile phone app or in public spaces, or who were identified as believers of the banned spiritual group when visiting a train station or hospital. Between July and September, Pub-

lic Security Bureaus installed around [250](#) facial-recognition enabled surveillance cameras at dozens of Christian, Buddhist and Daoist places of worship in just one county—Poyang—in Jiangxi Province. On August 31, the Public Security Bureau of Horqin District in Tongliao, Inner Mongolia, [published online](#) images captured by surveillance cameras of individuals who took part in protests against the imposition of Mandarin-language instruction in local schools. And in [Xinjiang](#), [police](#) continue to use cameras, phone checks, and other forms of surveillance to monitor the region’s ethnic minority Muslim population.

- **Digital currency:** In October, Chinese authorities began trials of a new digital currency. On October 10, Shenzhen’s municipal government [issued](#) 10 million yuan (\$1.5 million) of “[DC/EP](#)” (Digital Currency/Electronic Payment) to 50,000 randomly selected consumers via 200-yuan (\$30) digital red envelopes. Unlike cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin that are not controlled by a centralized authority, China’s digital currency is [issued](#) by the country’s central bank. [Analysts speculate](#) that while in the future a digital currency could help the Chinese government address issues like money laundering, it could also allow authorities to monitor the financial activities of anyone using the currency both inside the country and abroad.
- **Personal data-protection law opened for public consultation:** On October 21, a draft Personal Information Protection Law [was submitted](#) for public consultation. The law, China’s [first](#) comprehensive legal document concerning the protection of personal information, [will apply](#) to any organization or individual operating in China or seeking access to the data of Chinese citizens. While experts say the law is [inspired](#) by the EU General Data Protection Regulation, [others note](#) that it is focused on how private organizations—rather than the Chinese state—collect, store, and use personal data. As such, it would have little impact on restraining the country’s massive state surveillance system.

Politicized prosecutions of rights activists, CCP cadres, Hong Kongers, and Taiwanese continue apace

The 2020 [Freedom On The Net](#) report for China, released on October 14, details how over the past year Chinese security services have detained, tortured, or prosecuted a wide variety of Chinese netizens, including critics of President Xi Jinping, members of ethnic and religious minority groups, online journalists, and human rights advocates. Over the past month, additional notable cases indicate such trends are continuing:

- **Hong Kongers detained in China:** On August 23, China’s coast guard captured a group of 12 people seeking to flee Hong Kong for Taiwan [via speedboat](#) and detained them in Shenzhen. Ten of the individuals—some of whom were [facing charges](#) related to their participation in Hong Kong’s protest movement, including possession of weapons—face charges of illegally crossing the border, while two others are charged with organizing the trip. The group members, whose ages range

from 17 to 33, have remained in incommunicado detention. Chinese authorities have [denied](#) all 12 access to their lawyers, in violation of China's Criminal Procedure Law. While Hong Kong authorities deny involvement in the case, flight logs suggest a Hong Kong police [surveillance plane](#) followed the speedboat prior to its capture. On October 10, Hong Kong police also arrested nine people for [providing assistance](#) to the "Hong Kong 12." In related news, Alexandra "Grandma" Wong, a prominent fixture in Hong Kong's protest movement whose residence was in China, [reemerged](#) after going missing for 14 months, saying mainland authorities had detained her during that time.

- **Beijing publisher Geng Xiaonan:** On October 20, police in Beijing [formally arrested](#) prominent Chinese publisher Geng Xiaonan and her husband Qin Zhen for "illegal business activities." [First detained](#) on September 9, Geng's detention is believed to be connected to her [public defense](#) of former Tsinghua University law professor and government critic Xu Zhangrun, who police briefly detained in July. In turn, Xu has [spoken out](#) against Geng's detention.
- **Rights lawyer Chang Weiping:** On October 22, [police detained](#) rights lawyer Chang Weiping, placing him under "residential surveillance," a form of detention in which the person is often placed at an undisclosed facility. Police had previously detained Chang for ten days [in January](#) for his participation in a December 26, 2019, meeting of activists and lawyers in Xiamen, Fujian Province. His latest detention is believed to be in retaliation for a video he posted on [YouTube](#) on October 16, which details how police reportedly tortured him in January.
- **Zhejiang Party cadre charged:** In early October, the Supervisory Commission of Ningbo, Fujian Province, stripped the deputy party secretary of Xiangshan County, Ye Fuxing, of his government post and party status and began [criminal procedures](#) against him for spreading material online that "vilified and slandered party and national leaders." While the specific content of the material was unclear, [observers speculate](#) that the severity of the punishment indicates this was not the first time Ye had shared such materials.
- **Taiwanese forced confessions:** In mid-October, state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) aired the [forced confessions](#) of four Taiwanese citizens accused of spying. Broadcast between October 11 and 13 on the CCTV's Focus Talk program, the confessions of the men—all of whom police had originally detained between 2018 and 2019—were presented as part of "[Thunder 2020](#)", an anti-espionage operation aimed at a purported Taiwanese spy ring operating in China. Rights groups raised concerns that the men had been abused in order to force the confessions and questioned the validity of the charges against them; two of the men were scholars and one a businessman who took photos of a publicly visible military exercise near the border with Hong Kong. Like many programs on CCTV, Focus Talk has a [long record](#) of attacking victims of Communist Party political persecution.

HONG KONG

The National Security Law's creeping impact on the education sector

The impact of Hong Kong's National Security Law on academic freedom and freedom of speech in schools and universities continues to be felt across the Special Administrative Region. The law's adoption has prompted concern among [local academics](#) that they may be passed over for [tenure](#) or have [contracts terminated](#), that students may report them to authorities for the content of their lectures, and that formerly safe research topics or partnerships with foreign think tanks critical of the Chinese government will be off-limits or dangerous. The law's effect has also harmed Hong Kong's universities' position as an [attractive hub for international academic exchange](#) in Asia, with scholars, professors, and students from other countries declining opportunities they might have previously pursued. Farther afield, instructors of Chinese studies in the United States and the United Kingdom have felt compelled to [adopt precautions](#) to ensure the safety of students studying remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Numerous incidents over the past month highlight the creeping effect the new National Security Law is having at all levels of the education sector:

- In late September, the Education Bureau stripped a primary school teacher of his [teaching credentials](#) for life in response to the teacher allegedly spreading “[proindependence messages](#)”—although the lesson in question occurred more than a year ago, in March 2019.
- On October 6, Hong Kong's secretary for education, Kevin Yeung, [warned teachers](#) that any discussion of Hong Kong independence at elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools was strictly off-limits.
- On October 10, the University of Hong Kong [tore down](#) and barricaded a campus area previously used as a student-run Lennon Wall, over the objections of the student union. The area had previously been used to display prodemocracy and anti-government slogans and posters.
- In an [open letter](#) released in October, more than 100 academics from 16 countries warned that the National Security Law's claim of extraterritorial jurisdiction could impact [global academic freedom](#). The letter said that the law could serve as the basis of imprisonment for scholars and students travelling through Hong Kong or China, over academic work considered subversive by Chinese authorities. Signatories called for a united and coordinated effort from universities and government officials to address the challenge.
- On October 13, former chief executive CY Leung [published](#) on his Facebook page a list of 18 teachers prosecuted for protest-related offenses. Leung—who is now a vice president of the mainland Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference—

claimed that the list, which included the teachers' ages and the schools where they worked, was a part of his efforts to [report protesters' alleged criminal activity](#). The [city's largest teacher's association](#) and an education-sector lawmaker criticized the move as improper and as an attempt to incite hatred.

- Students and alumni of the University of Hong Kong [raised concerns](#) about the October 27 decision of the university's governing council to appointment two mainland Chinese professors as vice presidents of research and academic development, respectively. One had previously been listed on the website of Tsinghua University as a member of the [Communist Party](#), although he claimed this was incorrect. The move came after several academics at the university, considered Hong Kong's most prestigious, lost their positions—including prodemocracy professor Benny Tai who was fired in July even though he had been tenured, and his department and the university senate had objected to the move.

FEATURED PUSHBACK

International assistance offered to Hong Kongers

As the Hong Kong government clamps down on protesters, journalists, human rights activists, and prodemocracy legislators using both the new National Security Law and other legal provisions at its disposal, a growing number of [politically active Hong Kong residents](#) are seeking [refuge abroad](#). Until last year, Hong Kongers very rarely sought asylum. In an effort to support their democratic cause and protect them from reprisals, several foreign governments have adopted new policies. On September 30, the [United States](#) announced that Hong Kongers would be among categories of refugees to have their applications prioritized. [On October 22](#), the [United Kingdom](#) announced a new class of visa for Hong Kong BN(O) [passport](#) holders, in a first step to facilitating a new track to earning citizenship.



A Hong Kong protester in July 2019 waves a British flag. On October 22, the United Kingdom announced a new class of visa for Hong Kongers wishing to leave the territory for Britain.

Credit: [Suisman Danielle](#)

In a related trend, a [number of countries](#) who had extradition treaties with Hong Kong, given the high degree of legal protections there, have suspended those agreements since passage of the National Security Law, which has increased the risk of politicized prosecutions and transfer of detainees to mainland China. Recent examples include [Ireland](#) and the [Netherlands](#), following on the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, and Germany [earlier in the year](#).

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- **State media response to US election victor:** Once results in the US presidential election are finalized, watch for how Chinese state media and online censors respond, as reactions may differ depending on the outcome. Joe Biden's prospective victory is likely to initially invite a more conciliatory tone, at least until his administration implements its own policies perceived to be contrary to China's interests. Should President Donald Trump ultimately emerge victorious, expect a harsher tone. To date, US voting- and election-related protests have been predominantly peaceful, but should rancorous court battles prolong uncertainty during the post-election period expect Chinese state media to gloat more loudly over the state of US democracy relative to the CCP regime's heavy-handed political "stability."
- **Politicized use of surveillance capacity:** As the Chinese party-state's capacity to monitor citizens, analyze data, and integrate systems expands, watch for specific examples and documentation (including court verdicts) of how the surveillance state—including a new digital currency—is being used to identify, detain, or otherwise punish Chinese citizens for engaging in the peaceful exercise of basic rights like freedom of expression, association, and religion.
- **Hong Kong prodemocracy arrests:** Over the past week, Hong Kong authorities have launched a new wave of controversial arrests targeting government critics and pro-democracy advocates. Among those detained are teenage activist [Tony Chung](#) who was charged under the new National Security Law, journalist [Bao Choy Yuk-ling](#) from public broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong, and eight pro-democracy [Legislative Council members](#) who had been involved in an scuffle in the legislature in May (their pro-Beijing counterparts appear to have escaped censure). Watch for how these cases are handled, any due process violations, and additional targeting of government opponents with legal reprisals in the coming weeks.

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 related to China, see: *Freedom in the World 2020*, *Freedom on the Net 2020*, *Beijing's Global Megaphone*, and *The Battle for China's Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance under Xi Jinping*



Freedom House is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports democratic change, monitors freedom, and advocates for democracy and human rights.

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