

PRESS RELEASE

United We Stand: Over 1200 Signatures Collected in Copenhagen In Support of Hong Kong's Democracy

(Copenhagen, 2 October 2014) We, a group of Hong Kong citizens residing in Denmark and the local organiser of the global solidarity campaign 'United for Democracy: Global Solidary with Hong Kong' is pleased to announce that over a hundred Hong Kong citizens attended the assembly at Nytorv in downtown Copenhagen on 1 October 2014. We have collected 1,275 signatures in support of the pro-democracy civil disobedience movement that is still underway.

The event aimed to rally international support for the ongoing pro-democracy sit-ins, which the Hong Kong police attempted to disperse with unreasonable force such as pepper spray and tear gas on 28 September 2014. Apart from signing in support of Hong Kong, participants also pinned yellow ribbons, which are the symbol of the pro-democracy movement, onto the backdrop. Throughout today's event, short speeches were given covering topics from Hong Kong's political reform towards universal suffrage, the barriers to reform, to words of encouragement to our fellow citizens back home.

One of the speakers was Lasse Markus, artist and son of Danish sculptor Jens Galschiøt. Jens created the series of sculpture 'The Pillar of Shame' in remembrance of the Tiananmen Massacre of 1989 and it was first exhibited in Hong Kong in 1997. Lasse has brought one of the sculptures to the event to show his deep concern for the current development in Hong Kong. 'China is trying to run away from its promise of "one country, two systems". Hong Kong's current struggle for democracy is more important than ever,' said Lasse at the event.

The event spokesperson Terry Chan also said, 'We thank all the people who have attended or signed in solidarity with Hong Kong. We will continue to closely monitor the development of the civil disobedience movement and rally support for Hong Kong. Our demands are as follows:

1. Immediate withdrawal of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress' decision on Hong Kong's political reform,
2. Implementation of democracy and universal suffrage with civic nomination,
3. Full exercise of human rights in Hong Kong, such as right to freedom of assembly, freedom of association and the freedom of speech, and
4. Apology from the Hong Kong government and police force for the excessive use of violence in handling the peaceful, non-violent sit-in.'



Over a hundred Hong Kong citizens attended the assembly in solidarity with Hong Kong at Nytorv, downtown Copenhagen on 1 October 2014.



‘China is trying to run away from its promise of “one country, two systems”. Hong Kong’s current struggle for democracy is more important than ever,’ said Lasse Markus at the assembly.



Participants explained to passers-by the pro-democracy civil disobedience movement that is still underway in Hong Kong.

See also the separate **Backgrounder** for further details of the concerned political reform and current protests.

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BACKGROUND

Jens Galschiøt & The Pillar of Shame

Jens Galschiøt created The Pillar of Shame in remembrance of the Tiananmen Massacre of 1989. According to Jens, it is ‘to remind us of a shameful event which must never reoccur. The Pillar is a dark obelisk-like sculpture, eight metres tall, consisting of people twisted in surreal grotesque positions. It is simultaneously beautiful and frightening. Each sculpture will be provided with a base to place it in the concrete local context.’

Jens, his son Lasse and a few other Danish friends were on their way to Hong Kong in 2008 to protest against China. Even that they did not plan to enter China, they were rejected entry into Hong Kong.

Sources:

http://www.aidoh.dk/art_and_events/pos/ukposdok.htm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pillar_of_Shame

One Country, Two Systems

Hong Kong operates under a ‘one country, two systems’ arrangement with the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and is guaranteed ‘a high degree of autonomy, except in foreign and defence affairs’, as stipulated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration signed by the governments of the United Kingdom and the PRC in 1984. Ever since the handover in 1997, Hong Kong has been demanding full democracy in the election of the city’s leader and the Legislature.

Political Reform towards Universal Suffrage

Hong Kong’s leader, the Chief Executive (CE), is currently elected by a largely pro-Beijing election committee consisting of 1,200 members. As stipulated in Hong Kong’s constitution, the Basic Law, the CE should ultimately be elected by universal suffrage.

In June 2014, over 800,000 Hong Kong citizens had voted in a public poll named ‘electronic referendum’ to demand for civic nomination as an integral part of universal suffrage. On 1 July 2014, around 510,000 Hong Kong citizens took to the street to voice their demands for democracy and universal suffrage.

However, in August 2014, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of PRC (NPC) ruled that Hong Kong’s CE election in 2017 would be subjected to the following restrictions: only 2 to 3 candidates would be allowed to run, and they must have obtained more than half of the nominations from a “nomination committee” before becoming candidates; the nomination committee should be formed in accordance with the current election committee. In other words, candidates are to be pre-approved by the Beijing government.

At the same time, the Hong Kong government urges the citizen to accept the proposed arrangements.

Class Boycott & Civil Disobedience

The Hong Kong government's disregard of the apparent public demand for a democratic election and universal suffrage has resulted in a series of recent protests:

22 September 2014	Class boycott started by major universities in Hong Kong
26 September 2014	<p>Students escalated their actions by occupying the Civic Square and the government headquarters in light of lack of response from the Hong Kong government. Citizens also joined the movement. Over 10,000 citizens recorded.</p> <p>Hong Kong police pepper strayed many of the non-violent and unarmed sit-in participants, and has arrested numerous student leaders and rejected any bail.</p> <p>The sit-in continued.</p>
28 September 2014	<p>More citizens joined the sit-in.</p> <p>Hong Kong police started using tear gas to disperse the unarmed sit-in participants.</p> <p>Sit-ins have spread to numerous parts of Hong Kong and continue.</p>

The Global Solidarity with Hong Kong Movement

Groups of overseas Hong Kong citizens have launched campaigns to demonstrate support and solidarity for the current protests and civil disobedience in Hong Kong. Events have been or will be held in: Mostar (Bosnia), Toronto, Vancouver (Canada), Berlin (Germany), Stockholm (Sweden), Taipei (Taiwan), London (UK), Ann Arbor, Austin, Boston, Los Angeles, New York City and San Francisco (USA) etc.