

THE UNEXPECTED HONG KONG UPHEAVALS

The 1997 Handover promised Hong Kong people their economic, social and law systems and way of life would remain unchanged for 50 years until 2047 – i.e., "One country, two systems" as agreed between the UK and China.

In 2018 a 19-year-old man and a 20-year-old pregnant woman, both from Hong Kong, spent Valentine in Taiwan. He killed her then flew back to HK. There is no extradition treaty between HK and Taiwan. He was jailed in HK for money laundering such as using her credit card, and released in 2019.

In February 2019, the Hong Kong government cited this murder case as the rationale to amend extradition law. While this would allow HK to extradite the young murderer to Taiwan, the amendment would also allow anyone in HK be extradited to mainland China. HK did not have extradition agreements with mainland China as a safeguard between the different legal systems of China and HK that derived from English law. Protests against the amendment resulted in more control from the North and President Xi signing the Hong Kong national security law in June 2020, with a vague/ever-changing red line.

An old friend in HK said she enjoyed eating out and shopping just the same. But other Hongkongers did notice infringements of human rights and a gradual loss of the freedom of speech that HK had long enjoyed, and it's no longer the promised "two systems". They fear soon, one may even lose the freedom to remain silent and, under pressure, would say what the Authority want to hear.

Hongkongers eligible for British National Overseas visa (BNO), with resources, can come to the UK. After living here for 5 years they can apply for permanent residency. However, not all Hongkongers who want to come are eligible or have the necessary resources, and some who can take advantage of BNO are not necessarily pro-democracy. Also, BNO rules keep changing.

The young man who killed his girlfriend and can't be extradited to Taiwan, while in jail, was converted by an Anglican priest. When released from jail in 2019 he said he would go to Taiwan to give himself up, but up to now he is still in HK. The Anglican priest who converted him has an active political career. He affiliated with pro-Beijing politicians and the HK Authority, and was elected to the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Many pro-democracy Hongkongers do not like him.

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