

Dear Friend,

“Article 23,” also known as the “anti subversion” law is a direct and targeted attack on democratic freedom in Hong Kong. It is of the utmost importance to all those who value human rights in Hong Kong for this article not to be enacted. Please focus your efforts to join western governments and freedom activists worldwide by voicing your concern to the government of Hong Kong, and to thereby safeguard its freedoms and its citizens. Please read on.

The restriction of democratic freedom in Hong Kong will undoubtedly hinder its prosperous relations with other countries. Business, trade unions, lawyers, scholars, scientists, religious leaders, media, NGOs, world governments, etc., cannot ignore this issue, because these kinds of draconian laws, prevalent in China, and increasing being forced on the Hong Kong citizens, are harmful to everyone. The vague terms contained within article 23 are dangerous to each person who cherishes freedoms in Hong Kong, very dangerous. We can see what such laws have accredited the mainland China

Ms. Frances D'Souza, a freedom of expression expert and co-author of the "Johannesburg Principles," a set of international guidelines for nations in drafting legislation to ensure the protection of human rights, recently traveled to Hong Kong to speak out against the proposed Article 23. Ms. D'Souza warned that the terms of the Hong Kong government's so-called “consultation document” regarding Article 23 violated a number of international standards for protecting human rights and the freedom of expression. She said, "Article 23 undoubtedly jeopardizes individual freedom, and the freedoms of speech and information exchange." For instance, the legislation's definition of "hidden treason" could lead to citizens committing crimes without the intention, or even knowledge, of having done so.

Researchers fear that under the proposed legislation they may not be able to conduct research in certain fields of study for fear of arrest under broadly termed statutes. For example, businessmen may be charged with treason for providing banking services to Taiwan because China is at “odds” with Taiwan.

Falun Gong practitioners are perhaps under the greatest threat from this legislation. Until now Falun Gong practitioners have been able to practice freely in Hong Kong, but not without increasingly more blatant interference from the government. Falun Gong is an entirely peaceful and relaxing practice of mind and body meditation based on principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Tolerance, and is well known and respected throughout the world. Due to China’s relentless pressure, the practice is targeted with defamation and violent repression wherever it’s power can be wielded. We would never want to see more people suffer this kind of intense pressure and attack on basic freedom.

It is clear that the stability of Hong Kong’s democratic “one country two systems” policy and its credibility and accountability to the world is in serious jeopardy. A strong voice from all corners of the world can and will stop Article 23 from being passed, and protect the Hong Kong citizens. Public input is only accepted until December 24, 2002. Please help abolish this possible stain on Hong Kong’s history.

Kind regards, Dave Meek, Concerned Canadian Citizen