

Letter to the Prime Minister from 7 former Foreign Secretaries

29th May 2020

Rt. Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
No.10 Downing Street
Westminster
London
SW1A 2AA

An International Contact Group on Hong Kong

Dear Prime Minister,

As former foreign secretaries, we write to raise our concern about the deteriorating situation in Hong Kong, which has been exacerbated by the announcement that the Chinese Communist Party plans to unilaterally impose national security legislation on Hong Kong. We welcome the Joint Statement by the UK, US, Australia and Canada, as well as the Foreign Secretary's statement about extending the residency rights of British National (Overseas) passport holders if the situation does not improve.

As you will be aware, there has been international outrage at this flagrant breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Over 650 parliamentarians from 34 countries have signed a joint statement led by the last British Governor of Hong Kong Lord Patten describing it as a 'comprehensive assault on the city's autonomy, rule of law, and fundamental freedoms.'

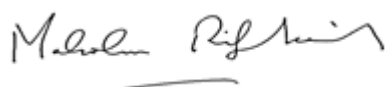
When it comes to Hong Kong's autonomy under the 'One Country, Two Systems' model, many of our international partners continue to take their cue from the British Government. I'm sure you would agree, as a co-signatory of the Sino-British Joint Declaration the UK must be seen to be leading and coordinating the international response to this crisis and ensuring the integrity of the treaty lodged at the United Nations in 1985 and 'One Country, Two Systems'.

We therefore urge you to raise this issue at the upcoming G7 meeting at the end of the month and to formally institute an International Contact Group in consultation with international partners, to monitor the situation in Hong Kong and coordinate joint action. The specific details of this group would be left for Ministers to outline, but the Government could draw inspiration from the Contact Group formed in the 1990s to monitor developments in the Balkans. The government should also consider seeking support from our Commonwealth partners and European Union allies.

Despite claims by the Chinese Foreign Ministry to the contrary, we believe the UK continues to have a moral and legal obligation to the people of Hong Kong. As events in Hong Kong develop over the weeks ahead, we hope you personally will recognise the pronounced need for international leadership from the UK Government on this matter and act accordingly.

Given the severity of the crisis in Hong Kong and the huge public interest in this issue, we will be making this letter publicly available.

Yours sincerely,



The Rt. Hon. Sir Malcolm Rifkind QC

Letter to the Prime Minister from 7 former Foreign Secretaries



The Rt. Hon. Dame Margaret Beckett MP



The Rt. Hon. Lord Hague of Richmond



The Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP



The Rt. Hon. David Miliband



The Rt. Hon. Lord Owen

pp. The Rt. Hon. Jack Straw