

On the 25th Anniversary of Hong Kong's Handover, "Patriots Ruling Hong Kong" Overrides "Hong Kong governed by the Hong Kong people" and "One Country, Two Systems" Deteriorates; Taiwan and the Global Community Firmly Uphold Universal Values and Solemnly Call for the Return of Freedom and Rights to the People of Hong Kong

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The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) made the following statement today (July 1, 2022) regarding the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The MAC stated that Hong Kong has experienced rapid deterioration of liberal democracy, its people have seen regression in their basic human rights, and its society has undergone severe erosion of the rule of law. This is a clear indication that the CCP's Hong Kong policy has betrayed its initial pledge to give Hong Kong considerable political autonomy and not interfere with Hong Kong affairs; it is also a direct reflection that the CCP's "one country, two systems" model in Hong Kong contradicts universal values at its core.

The MAC pointed out that, Hong Kong was handed over to the CCP on July 1, 1997, when it was guaranteed a "one country, two systems" model that would allow "Hong Kong [to be] governed by Hong Kong people" with a "high degree of autonomy." Similarly, the Hong Kong Basic Law that came into effect on the day of the handover stipulates the CCP's commitments to ultimately grant the city dual universal suffrage for the elections of the Chief Executive and Legislative Council and to protect Hong Kong people's rights and freedoms in speech, press, publication, assembly, association, procession, and demonstration. Despite all these commitments, when millions of Hong Kongers took to the street to fight for freedom and democracy beginning from 2019, the CCP authorities chose to respond by enacting the Hong Kong National Security

Law in June, 2020. Through this law, the CCP authorities sought to enforce a hardline rule over Hong Kong by restricting human rights of Hong Kongers, jailing Hong Kong democracy activists, dismantling the civil society, and causing a media blackout. In 2021, the CCP amended Hong Kong's electoral system to enshrine "patriots ruling Hong Kong" at the expense of "Hong Kong governed by Hong Kong people" and downgrade a "high degree of autonomy" to the CCP's "comprehensive jurisdiction." Such a pivot has run complete counter not only to the CCP's stated aim of universal suffrage but to the expectations of the people of Hong Kong.

The MAC highlighted that the democracy, human rights, freedom, and rule of law in Hong Kong have sustained major regression compared to 25 years ago; today, it is universally recognized that "Hong Kong ruled by Hong Kong people" remains a pipe dream and that "one country, two systems" has degenerated. No amount of excuses by the involved parties can whitewash the damage already done to the development of democracy and human rights in Hong Kong. It is regrettable that the CCP authorities have sought to shift focus by blaming Hong Kongers' fight for freedom and democracy on the so-called foreign interference. The MAC solemnly calls on the relevant parties to cease their self-deception and follow through their commitments made in the Hong Kong Basic Law and to the international community by returning Hong Kong people the freedom, democracy, and rights they deserve. This is the only way for the CCP to truly achieve the ideal of "responding to the calls of the people."

The MAC reiterated that, through numerous democratic elections, the people of Taiwan have demonstrated to the global community and the CCP our staunch opposition to the "one country, two systems" formula. Taiwan firmly upholds our "four commitments," namely (1) the commitment to a free and democratic constitutional system, (2) the commitment that the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China should not be subordinate to each other, (3) the commitment to resist annexation or encroachment upon our sovereignty, and (4) the commitment that the future of the Republic of China (Taiwan) must be

decided in accordance with the will of the Taiwanese people. These "four commitments" are our unequivocal bottom line. We solemnly urge the Beijing authorities to face up to the de facto existence of the ROC, as only through this will they be able to resolve cross-Strait political differences in a pragmatic manner. The MAC stressed that Taiwan will continue to safeguard universal values, our democratic system, and our democratic way of life. We vow to stand in resolute defense of democracy along with the rest of the international community.