

Hong Kong: End excessive use of force

(Bangkok, 19 November 2019) - The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) strongly condemns the excessive use of force against the demonstrators in Hong Kong. It calls on the Government of Hong Kong to maintain restraint and initiate a negotiated settlement to the grievances of its people.

Over recent days, protesters and the police have been caught in a standoff in the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong, spurring violence as thousands have attempted to connect to the protesters trapped inside the university. The police have used tear gas, batons, and rubber bullets, while several protesters have retaliated with petrol bombs and arrows. As of this writing, some 600 protesters have reportedly surrendered to the police, while 200 remain trapped inside the university.¹ This incident is just the most recent of increasingly violent clashes between the police and protesters.

Six months since the protests started, the violence in Hong Kong has reached a crisis point with no sign of de-escalation. FORUM-ASIA calls on the Government of Hong Kong to:

- Take meaningful steps towards a negotiated solution to the crisis;
- Ensure the safety and protection of all individuals, including those still trapped in the university, as well as of the protesters who have surrendered and are in police custody;
- Refrain from the use of excessive force against protesters, and ensure conditions necessary for freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association are present;
- Ensure transparent police investigations on the use of violence by police officers; and
- Ensure access to justice for protesters detained by the police.

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About FORUM-ASIA:

FORUM-ASIA is a regional human rights group with 81 member organisations in 21 countries across Asia. FORUM-ASIA has offices in Bangkok, Jakarta, Geneva and Kathmandu. FORUM-ASIA addresses key areas of human rights violations in the region, including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, human rights defenders, and democratisation.

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¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/19/hong-kong-protests-hundreds-surrender-to-police-after-university-standoff>