IBERIAN MUN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Officer Report 2019

*The Situation in Hong Kong*

Hong Kong has made international headlines through their large-scale protests known as the “Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement” (Anti-ELAB Movement) that has engulfed the Special Administrative Region since March 31st, 2019. Its highest turnout was on July 1st, the 22nd anniversary of the 1997 handover with 550,000 protestors; approximately a quarter of Hong Kong’s population. The cause of the demonstrations was the controversial extradition bill which would allow mainland China to bring in anyone from Hong Kong to be tried in court with what opponents call a dishonest, biased judicial system. Protestors and opponents fear the bill will lead to further erasure of judicial and regional independence as a fair democracy.

The crisis connects back to deeper problems and tensions between the Chinese government and Hong Kong. After the transfer of sovereignty from the UK in 1997, Hong Kong was granted with the status of “Special Administrative Region”, allowing them to preserve their British-influenced established government remaining highly politically autonomous for 50 years. Despite these agreements between the Chinese and British governments, Beijing has been exercising large amounts of authority over the Hong Kong democracy, allowing them “free elections” with candidates that were chosen and approved by the Chinese government. The extradition bill had become a tipping point for the highly dissatisfied and tension-filled Hong Kong citizens, fueling their resentment towards China’s power, the One-China policy, and increasing loss of autonomy,.

What had originally begun as peaceful demonstrations turned into violent resistance, protestors vandalizing government buildings and symbols, to be swiftly met with police brutality; Hong Kong police frequently using disproportionately drastic measures such as using tear gas and water cannons. This violence was met with further resistance and violence from protestors, demonstrations escalating daily. The protests have caused mass disruptions to the local economy, and air travel as protestors have spread their activism to the Hong Kong airport. Police are being accused of arresting with political motives and using excessive force to the extent that it violates human rights law.

The world watching Hong Kong’s democracy and peace crumbling, the UN has recently taken a stance upon the crisis. Human Rights experts have expressed concerns over multiple human rights violations including the protestors’ freedom of speech, expression, and their right to peaceful assembly. Human Rights High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet claimed, “The rights of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and the right to participate in public affairs are expressly recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which is incorporated in the Basic Law of the Hong Kong SAR”. The UN actively condemns violence and lack of restraint exercised by police, urging China to respect rights.

The IMUN Security Council is urged to take measures in order to protect democracy and the human rights of Hong Kong citizens, contemplating the threat to international peace and security that expansionist superpowers pose by violating human rights in the process of extending influence.