

# In Hong Kong normalization reaches a new level

Via [L'Anticapitaliste](#)

A gigantic desire for freedom and democracy was expressed in 2019 in Hong Kong. For the political power, the time has now come for revenge and the framing of the population with the standards in place on the Chinese mainland. The new election rules promulgated on March 30 aim to complete the elimination of all forms of countervailing power.

During colonial times, the British governor held all executive power. After 1997, this was transferred to a “Hong Kong executive power” on the orders of the Beijing regime. The method of appointment to the post of Chief Executive promulgated on March 30 makes the lack of autonomy of the “Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region” even clearer.

## **A Legislative Power Entirely Under the Government's Direction**

Established in 1843, the Legislative Council (LegCo) had the sole function of assisting the colonial governor. Until 1985, it was composed entirely of members appointed directly by the British government.

In 1991, the right to elect 30% of the members of this institution by direct universal suffrage was granted to the people of Hong Kong. In substance, nothing changed: the other seats were allocated according to a highly complex system that allowed the vast majority to continue to benefit supporters of the London and then Beijing governments.

The percentage of legislators elected by universal suffrage is then gradually increased to reach 50% in 2004, then 57% in 2012 if we add the fifty deputies now elected by indirect suffrage.

After the 2019 mobilizations, the specter of losing control of the Legislative Council haunts power. Indeed, in the local elections of November 24, 2019, the opposition won 86% of the seats with 57% of the vote. If this achievement by the opposition were to be repeated in the legislative elections originally scheduled for September 6, 2020, it would find itself with a majority in the Legislative Council.

To prevent this from happening, the Beijing government postponed the elections at the last moment. It ended such a possibility once and for all by granting itself, on March 30, 2021, the right to:

- 1) exclude any candidate who does not suit it, whatever the type of election;
- 2) reduce the percentage of deputies under universal suffrage from 57% to 22%.

After providing a platform for the opposition between 1991 and 2020, the Legislative Council is resuming the function it had for 154 years under the British monarchy, this time in the service of the Beijing regime.

### **A domesticated judiciary**

One of the peculiarities of Hong Kong was the existence of freedom of expression and organization, as well as respect for legal rules not existing in mainland China. Since the enactment of the "national security" law on June 30, 2020, all this has been widely questioned: it is now possible to hold trials in camera, pass sentences that can go up to life imprisonment, transfer any suspect to the mainland to be tried and imprisoned there, dismiss civil servants for opinion offenses, restrict press freedom, etc.

### **A Fierce Repression**

As of January 31, the number of opponents being prosecuted was over 2,300 (for a population nine times smaller than that of

France!). Trials are already scheduled through 2023.

Many leading representatives of all opposition currents are in prison, on provisional release, or in exile. Trade union leaders are behind bars, for example, such as the president of the HKCTU and the president of the HAEA union (of public hospital employees). As for the general secretary of the HKCTU, he is the subject of a number of legal actions.

The level of organization of the opponents has declined significantly: to avoid charges, several organizations have dissolved and the coalition that organized the large demonstrations in 2019 is breaking up.

**Given this situation, solidarity is more than ever essential with the victims of repression, whether in Hong Kong or in exile.**