

Hong Kong's largest teachers' union to disband following pressure from gov't and Chinese state media

Via [Europe Solidaire](#)

Founded in 1973, the Chinese state-run People's Daily and news wire Xinhua slammed the union as a "poisonous tumour" that must be "eradicated."

The Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union (HKPTU) announced their disbandment on Tuesday 10.

The HKPTU, with over 95,000 members, was the city's largest teachers' union, representing over 90 per cent of the profession.

It comes after the Education Bureau announced its decision to scrap all links with the union on July 31 – hours after the group came under fire in Chinese state media.

The state-run People's Daily and news wire Xinhua slammed the union as a **"poisonous tumour" that must be "eradicated."**

A Hong Kong government spokesperson then accused it of *"dragging schools into politics,"* making reference to their organisation of a teacher's strike during the city's 2014 Umbrella Movement and the publication of teaching materials promoting civil disobedience.

"We have felt enormous pressure," HKPTU President Fung Wai-wah told reporters during Tuesday's press conference. *"We understand that many members have a deep connection with the union, and feel sad about the disbanding of the HKPTU."*

Fung Wai-wah added that the union had tried hard to find ways

to continue its operations, but still failed to find ways that *"could solve the crisis."*

"I can only say that the social and political situation changed too fast and too quickly, and our decision was made in response to these changes," said Fung.

After Tuesday's announcement, a member of staff at one of the HKPTU's service centres told HKFP that there were often queues for its services, but things were busier in recent days.

The decision was approved unanimously in a executive council meeting on Monday 9 evening.

Fortnight of pressure

Since the government's statement, the 48-year-old union quit the pro-democracy Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) and Education International(EI), a global network of educators' unions.

The HKPTU also vowed to *"focus on the rights and interests of the education sector"* following the government's decision, and had also created a working committee to promote Chinese history and culture in order to foster *"affection for home and country"* among students.

The security law, enacted by Beijing last June (2020), has prompted a chill among civil society groups with several disbanding altogether.

In July, the **progressive Lawyers Group, Progressive Teachers' Alliance, medical group Médecins Inspirés** and the **Neo Democrats** all ceased operations.

The HKPTU will stop processing new membership applications and membership renewals, and will stop commenting on, or participating in, public affairs, it said on Tuesday 10. HKPTU's rights and complaints branch will also stop accepting new cases and enquiries, but Fung Wai-wah said that the union will aim to complete existing cases as soon as possible.

The right to form and join labour unions is protected by the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights and the national security law.