

Public Statement by
the International Chamber of Commerce - Hong Kong (ICC-HK)

The International Chamber of Commerce - Hong Kong (ICC-HK) deplores the incessant violence which has taken place in the past few months with increasing intensity including at clashes between protesters and the police.

It is acknowledged that public opinion through peaceful demonstrations has brought about the suspension of the work to legislate the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill. ICC-HK expressed its opposition to the Bill in early May, and subsequently sought the setting up of an independent commission of enquiry headed by a judge from the Judiciary to investigate the entire issue.

Pending the demands of the demonstrators and other members of the public to be met by the government, the situation has been aggravated by public grievances in the use of excessive force and abuse of power in law enforcement. Trust in the government takes a further dive.

Continuing violence is not the road to achieve public objectives. On the other hand, suppression is not a solution to returning the community to calm and order. What is needed now is understanding, reconciliation and dialogue.

Meanwhile, the livelihood of many is affected. Business in general is slowed down particularly for small enterprises. Business services operations are starting to be relocated elsewhere and companies are reviewing their planning and strategy for the medium term. Hong Kong's credit rating has been downgraded, and confidence in Hong Kong's business environment is questioned.

The rule of law is the cornerstone of Hong Kong's past success, but invocation of the Emergency Regulations Ordinance, initially for enacting the Prohibition on Face Covering Regulation is of considerable concern to the international business community as it adds uncertainty for the future in respect of Hong Kong as a continuing desirable business location. Everyone in Hong Kong is a loser.

The current state of affairs cannot continue any longer. Particularly with the year end approaching, there should be a break of this to let people, families and businesses have more congenial times for their daily life and their endeavors.

ICC-HK implores that we Hong Kong people should choose another way to pursue public goals. Let us adopt a rational and reconciliatory attitude to find common ground given in an environment with goodwill and empathy. This will be the right track for Hong Kong to move forward. Then everyone will be a winner.

ICC-HK is open to dialogue with anybody who, likewise, is anxious to find ways to resolve unsettled issues, to preserve business confidence in Hong Kong, and to enable Hong Kong people to get on with the life of their choice. Our email address is general@icchkcbc.org and fax no: 2869 0360.

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