



## **Standing up for Hong Kong and Uyghurs**

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to monopolize the attention of leaders around the world, some international observers of China have concluded that the PRC government authorities are attempting to exploit the crisis for geopolitical gain. From its disputed western border with India to the contested waters of the South China Sea, a common observation is that Beijing has stepped up its assertive behavior against its neighbors to settle old scores.

In addition, the situation in Hong Kong has deteriorated over the last few months and culminated in Beijing announcing a bill on May 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 to “safeguard national security” in the city-state. This new security law threatens China’s commitments to citizens and international partners with regard to Hong Kong. The 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration has guaranteed basic rights and freedoms, including freedom of speech, of assembly, of association and of press for 50 years after the handover of sovereignty, and the 1990 Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region stipulates that Hong Kong will maintain the autonomy and independence of the executive, legislature and judiciary, as well as the aforementioned rights. This new security law will effectively end Hong Kong’s autonomy under the “One Country, Two Systems” arrangement that has been in place since 1997.

Alongside the deteriorating situation in Hong Kong, the PRC has launched a full assault on the liberties of the people living in Xinjiang, with as many as 2 million ethnic Uyghurs currently being held in internment camps across the region. Those who are not in internment camps are under constant surveillance and face daily harassment from the Chinese Communist Party. What is happening in Xinjiang Autonomous Region is nothing more than a cultural cleansing. It is time for the world to speak up and do more.

**THEREFORE, the IDU, committed to the values of human dignity and human rights, freedom and responsibility, democracy, solidarity, justice and the rule of law,**

- expresses, together with its regional organizations, especially the European People’s Party EPP, the European Conservatives and Reformists ECR and the Asian Pacific Democrat Union APDU, deep concern over the current situation in Hong Kong and Xinjiang;

- condemns the PRC's suppression of guaranteed freedoms in Hong Kong, in violation of its own stated international agreements and contrary to the spirit of commitments made to citizens;
- calls upon the IDU members and their governments to not tolerate this flagrant breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration;
- reiterates our strong support for the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle and for all the rights therein enshrined for the citizens of Hong Kong in accordance with the Basic Law;
- condemns the ongoing human rights violations being levelled against the Uyghurs by PRC government officials;
- asks IDU members to raise the issue of human rights violations directly with Chinese authorities and to consider targeted sanctions against members of the PRC regime; and,
- supports ECR's initiative #SpeakUpForUyghurs.