

# Journalism club is awareness of global event

## “Five demands, not one less!”

By Yasmin Lau and Joyce Misa Year 10



A chain of events leading to mass protests against the extradition bill began in February 2018 with the murder case of Poon Hiu-wing. The bill established that criminal suspects under certain circumstances were to be extradited-i.e. handed over-to mainland China (murder, espionage, trafficking, etc.).

The protesters fear that Hongkongers would face harsh treatment and unfair trials; also, that China would exert more influence over Hong Kong- activists and journalists could be targeted. Following weeks of protests, Chief Executive of HKSAR Carrie Lam said the bill will be postponed indefinitely as a result of this.

Protesters, however, feared that the bill would be resurrected, and blamed the HK Police Force for their arbitrary arrests, brutal beatings and torture protesters in police detention, so they continued to demonstrate in hopes that the bill would be permanently withdrawn. When the government removed the bill in October 2019, it was perceived as “too little, too late” for the protesters. Nevertheless, clashes between protesters and the police had become very frequent and brutal.

It was one of the most violent days in Hong Kong history on the 21st of July 2019 when a group of suspected triad members dressed in white attacked people with steel rods and knives, including a journalist, elderly people,

children, and people returning from demonstrations in Yuen Long station. The 999 emergency line received over 24,000 calls, and police arrived just 40 minutes after the mob left the station. There were no arrests made that night as the officers stood idle at a nearby police station. The incident resulted in at least 45 injuries, including that of a pregnant woman. During the protest on November 11, 2019, a young man shouted at a traffic policeman who responded by pointing a gun at his chest and quickly locked him in a chokehold. Another protester tried saving the man in the chokehold but had a gun pointed at him, and was shot in the leg. Inaction by the police, coupled with mounting evidence of corruption and misconduct by the Hong Kong police, led the police to collude with the mob. This rendered their duty of protecting the public ineffective.

Protesters proposed “Five demands, not one less!”, a motto that symbolized what protesters fought for — protests not to be regarded as riots, amnesty for arrested protesters, an independent investigation into alleged police brutality, and the removal of the extradition bill.

In addition, supported by the UK, France, Canada, Australia, and the US, the protests in Hong Kong have gained global attention. Frequently, protesters supporting the government met with pro-Beijing rallies, and Chinese President Xi Jinping warned against separatism, warning that any attempt to divide China would lead to “bodies smashed and bones ground to powder”.

2 years after the mass protests, over 2,500 people are being prosecuted on various charges for their roles in the protests, according to the police. The authorities are still working through a backlog of potential prosecutions of the more than 10,000 arrested between June 2019 and March of this year. Nearly 300 protesters, mainly students or college-educated, have been sentenced to prison as of the end of last year, a sizable number for a city with an incarcerated population of about 7,000 people. Beijing’s imposition last year of a national security law gives prosecutors greater powers to target even more.

Many of the activists are contemplating a future in exile. Others struggle to stay committed to the cause for which they sit behind bars.

