

UK Denounces Hong Kong Bounty Threats Targeting Activists in Britain

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The United Kingdom (UK) has strongly condemned the Hong Kong government's decision to issue financial rewards, bounties, for information leading to the arrest of pro-democracy activists living in Britain. The UK has described the move as a clear case of transnational repression and an unacceptable attempt to extend Beijing's reach beyond its legal jurisdiction.

Foreign Secretary David Cameron warned that the UK “will not tolerate” foreign powers intimidating individuals on British soil. He called the bounties “a threat to our democracy and fundamental human rights”. He stated that British diplomatic officials in London, Beijing, and Hong Kong have been instructed to raise the matter urgently with relevant authorities.

Under the National Security Law imposed by Beijing, Hong Kong police have placed 19 overseas activists on a wanted list. Among them are four individuals based in the UK and the United States (US), Simon Cheng, Frances Hui, Joey Siu, and Johnny Fok, each with a HK\$1 million (approximately £100,000) bounty on their heads. A further 15 individuals have bounties of HK\$200,000 (roughly £25,000) each.

Simon Cheng, founder of ‘Hongkongers in Britain’, welcomed the UK’s official condemnation and argued that the move by Hong Kong authorities has backfired by drawing more attention to the democratic cause. Others, including younger activists like 19-year-old Chloe Cheung, have voiced concern over personal safety. Cheung, who fled Hong Kong in 2020 after participating in protests, claims she has received minimal support from UK authorities and lives in fear of surveillance or worse.

Reports have emerged of letters being sent to neighbours of Hong Kong activists residing in the UK, encouraging them to report individuals to the Chinese Embassy in exchange for rewards. Conservative MP Chris Philp, the Shadow Home Secretary, described the development as deeply alarming and pressed the government to respond robustly. Home Office ministers reassured Parliament that British intelligence and security services are monitoring the situation and stand ready to act.

Human rights groups have echoed the government's concern. Amnesty International labelled the bounty offers as extraterritorial intimidation designed to silence dissent abroad and called for their immediate withdrawal.

This episode has intensified scrutiny of China's expanding global enforcement tactics, which the UK firmly rejects. Ministers continue to stress that British soil will not be a hunting ground for foreign regimes seeking to punish peaceful political activism.