

## UK Must Shield Hong Kong Activists from Risky Extradition Plans

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A Hong Kong pro-democracy activist living in exile in the United Kingdom has warned that plans to revive extradition cooperation with Hong Kong could endanger those fleeing political persecution. The activist, Carmen Lau, says Beijing's increasing pressure on dissidents abroad, backed by cash bounties, is turning Britain into a potential hunting ground for authoritarian regimes.

Carmen Lau, a former member of Hong Kong's District Council, was placed under a national security arrest warrant by Hong Kong authorities, backed by a one million Hong Kong dollar bounty, approximately £100,000, for information leading to her arrest. She revealed in an interview with Channel 4 News that she learned of the warrant and reward through media reports, expressing alarm at the reach of the People's Republic of China beyond its borders.

According to Lau, the Hong Kong government has weaponised vague or non-political charges to facilitate the extradition of pro-democracy advocates. "They use other excuses to try to extradite us," she said, highlighting fears that such tactics could soon be used within the United Kingdom if any legal cooperation is reinstated.

Despite public assurances from the British government that the Hong Kong diaspora will be protected, Lau remains deeply concerned. She noted anonymous letters have already been sent to her neighbours, encouraging them to hand her over to the Chinese authorities in exchange for the reward. "Although I have trust with my neighbours, who knows who else would be thirsty for the bounty," she said, describing a growing sense of fear.

The national security law implemented in 2020 in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) by China's central government has given rise to far-reaching crackdowns. Many Hongkongers who opposed authoritarian control have since fled, seeking asylum in Western nations, including the United Kingdom. For Lau and others like her, the safety promised by British soil is now clouded by political developments.

She is urging the United Kingdom to decisively reject any effort to renew extradition agreements with Hong Kong. "The relationship with China should not compromise human rights over economic interests," she said firmly, calling for an end to any ambiguity in Britain's stance.

Carmen Lau's case serves as a cautionary example of how international alliances and legal cooperation can be exploited by regimes that do not respect freedom of speech or political dissent. Her appeal is clear: Britain must remain a safe haven for those who stand for liberty.