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Freedom in the World 2024 - Hong Kong*

PARTLY FREE

41

/ 100

[Political Rights](#) 9 / 40

[Civil Liberties](#) 32 / 60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

42 / 100 Partly Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)

* *Indicates a territory as opposed to an independent country.*

Note

Freedom in the World reports assess the level of political rights and civil liberties in a given geographical area, regardless of whether they are affected by the state, nonstate actors, or foreign powers. Disputed territories are sometimes assessed separately if they meet certain criteria, including boundaries that are sufficiently stable to allow year-on-year comparisons. For more information, see the report [methodology](#) and [FAQ](#).

Overview

The people of Hong Kong, a special administrative region of China, traditionally enjoyed substantial civil liberties and the rule of law under their local constitution, the Basic Law. However, the 2020 implementation of the National Security Law (NSL) has amounted a multifront attack on the “one country, two systems” framework. The territory’s most prominent prodemocracy figures have been arrested under its provisions, and NSL charges or the threat of charges have resulted in the closure of political parties, independent news outlets, peaceful nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and unions. The NSL also paved the way for Beijing

to overhaul Hong Kong's electoral system beginning in 2021; the new rules permit mainland authorities to vet candidates and contain other provisions that ultimately ensure Beijing near-total control over the selection of Hong Kong authorities.

Key Developments in 2023

- The nonjury trial of 47 prodemocracy activists who participated in an unofficial 2020 primary began in February. The prosecution and defense both made their closing arguments in December.
- In July, the High Court denied the government's efforts to seek an injunction prohibiting the dissemination of "Glory to Hong Kong," a prominent protest anthem. The government appealed the decision in August.
- District council elections were held in December, though the territory's Legislative Council (LegCo) reduced the number of directly elected seats and authorities vetted candidates for their "patriotic" character ahead of the polls. Turnout stood at 27.5 percent, a record low for local elections.
- The NSL-related trial of media owner Jimmy Lai opened in December. Lai, who was charged with "colluding with foreign forces" in 2020, has already received convictions related to protest activity and allegations of fraud; he faces a potential life sentence over his NSL-related charges.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections? 4

The territory's chief executive is selected under electoral laws approved by the National People's Congress (NPC) of China in 2021, diminishing universal suffrage and giving mainland authorities near-total control over the office-holder's selection. The chief executive serves a five-year term and can seek reelection. The Election Committee (EC), which was expanded under the new laws and is mostly comprised of individuals backed by Beijing, selects the chief executive. Former security secretary and chief secretary for administration John Lee was the only candidate vetted to succeed Carrie Lam in 2022; he won 1,416 votes in the 1,500-member EC that May and took office that July.

Under the 2021 rules, Beijing can vet EC and LegCo candidates, who must be "patriots." The number of EC members was also increased from 1,200

to 1,500. Of the 300 new representatives, 190 are delegates of either the NPC or the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), China's top government advisory body. The remaining 110 members represent "Hong Kong members of relevant national organizations." The number of eligible voters who select EC members was cut from some 200,000 "functional constituency" voters—representatives of elite business and social sectors, many with close Beijing ties—to around 4,800. Most individual votes were replaced with organizational votes; unions and other groups may cast only one vote on behalf of their members.

Nearly all of the 967 EC seats contested in September 2021 were filed by candidates considered to be aligned with the Beijing-backed authorities. The remaining 533 seats were occupied by individuals nominated directly from designated organizations and by ex officio members.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected 0 / through free and fair elections? 4

The electoral system imposed by Beijing in 2021 significantly altered the composition and power dynamic of the LegCo. The number of seats increased from 70 to 90, with 40 elected by the EC, 30 by the functional constituencies, and 20 elected directly by Hong Kong voters in five geographical constituencies. This reduced the proportion of seats open for direct election from 50 percent to 22 percent. Members serve four-year terms.

LegCo elections due in September 2020 were delayed due to COVID-19 and were held in December 2021. Prodemocracy candidates were prevented from running for LegCo seats in the interim. In November 2020, the NPC Standing Committee issued a directive allowing the territory's government to summarily remove LegCo members deemed to have endangered national security; 4 prodemocracy members were removed, prompting the remaining 15 prodemocracy lawmakers to resign. In January 2021, dozens of activists who organized or participated in a nonbinding primary in 2020 were arrested under the NSL. Those trials were ongoing as of December 2023. The pro-Beijing camp, with candidates vetted in line with a "patriots only" policy, won all but one seat in the elections on a record-low turnout of 30 percent.

District council elections were held in December 2023. In July, the LegCo voted to reduce the number of directly elected council seats from 452 to 88 and reduce the total number of seats from 479 to 470. Candidates were vetted in line with the "patriots only" policy and had to receive the backing of government committees. Constituency borders were additionally altered ahead of the polls. Turnout stood at 27.5 percent, a record low for those contests.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies? 0 / 4

Beijing has the ability to shape electoral outcomes under the 2021 rules. The EC is empowered to vet and preapprove candidates based on national security background checks that ensure they are “patriots.” This mechanism is more restrictive than the prescreening system for the 2016 LegCo election, in which the Electoral Affairs Commission required candidates to attest in writing their belief that Hong Kong is unquestionably a part of China. Far fewer EC and LegCo seats are directly elected under the new system.

Prodemocracy candidates were absent from the 2021 LegCo elections. The seven-member Candidate Eligibility Review Committee approved all but one of the 154 candidates, most of whom were part of the pro-Beijing camp. John Lee was the only candidate to be successfully nominated and vetted by the EC for the role of chief executive in 2022. District council candidates running for the December 2023 polls were also vetted to ensure they were “patriots.”

B Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings? 1 / 4

Hong Kongers’ political choices are limited by an electoral system that ensures the dominance of the pro-Beijing camp by stifling prodemocracy opposition. The banning of the proindependence Hong Kong National Party in 2018 marked the first blanket prohibition of a political party since the territory’s 1997 handover from the United Kingdom to China. The government has since taken more aggressive steps to outlaw prodemocracy political activities. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is not formally registered in Hong Kong but exercises enormous influence.

Since 2021, leading prodemocracy figures have been effectively removed from the political arena under provisions of Beijing’s “patriots only” electoral makeover or via the NSL. Civic Passion, a localist party critical of Beijing, disbanded in 2021 after its chairman was ejected from the LegCo for being deemed insufficiently patriotic. In May 2023, the prodemocracy Civic Party announced its dissolution. The Democratic Party, the only significant prodemocracy party left in the territory, faces financial and political pressure from the authorities.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its 0 /

Prodemocracy legislators, who have historically enjoyed substantial minority representation alongside their pro-Beijing counterparts, are absent from the LegCo and district councils.

The subjective nature of the NPC's standards for oath taking, the expansive criminalization of speech and political activity under the NSL, and the chief executive's discretionary authority to remove proindependence LegCo members all invite arbitrary enforcement and pose serious obstacles for the opposition in future elections. The opposition has been battered by arrests and detentions since the 2020 imposition of the NSL.

The 2021 electoral reforms closed remaining avenues for the opposition to win political representation by reducing the number of elected seats, increasing the proportion of appointed seats, and implementing a vetting process to ensure that only "patriotic" candidates who accept Beijing's rules for Hong Kong can contest elections. Similar restrictions were imposed ahead of the 2023 district council elections. The Democratic Party endorsed six candidates to run in the those contests, none of whom were successfully vetted.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? 1 / 4

The unelected CCP leadership in Beijing exerts a powerful influence on politics in Hong Kong through a variety of channels and methods, including the NPC's ability to issue interpretations of the Basic Law, the co-optation of Hong Kong business leaders through their mainland assets and membership in the NPC or CPPCC, and lobbying or harassment of EC members and other political figures to ensure favorable electoral outcomes. The Liaison Office, which represents the mainland government in Hong Kong, coordinates nominations and campaigns for the pro-Beijing camp in LegCo elections. The NSL, imposed without local consultation, gives Beijing vastly expanded powers in Hong Kong, in part by establishing a centrally controlled security apparatus in the territory and by allowing defendants in some NSL cases to be transferred to the mainland for prosecution and punishment.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? 2 / 4

While there are no formal restrictions preventing women or members of ethnic minority groups from voting or running for office, their participation is limited in practice. A dwindling number of seats can be

openly contested, as authorities vet candidates for their “patriotic” character including at the local level.

Of the 21 official members of the Executive Council, a body that advises the chief executive, only 5 are women, and female legislators occupy only 16 of the LegCo’s 90 seats. There is no ethnic minority representation in Hong Kong’s government. Female representation at the local level is low.

Score Change: The score declined from 3 to 2 because opportunities for equal and fair representation have dwindled, as local elections have increasingly come under the control of the ruling establishment.

C Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? 0 / 4

Genuinely independent directly elected officials have little ability to set and implement government policy, and unelected mainland authorities are highly influential. The Basic Law restricts the LegCo’s lawmaking powers, prohibiting legislators from introducing bills that would affect public spending, governmental operations, or political structure. The current LegCo offers no meaningful checks on executive authority and instead functions as a rubber-stamp institution.

Under the current electoral system, a vetting process ensures that only “patriotic” candidates who accept Beijing’s rules for Hong Kong may run in elections. Prodemocracy candidates have been barred from running for office, jailed, or forced into exile, and recent elections have proven uncompetitive.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 3 / 4

Hong Kong is regarded as having generally low corruption rates, and some high-ranking officials have been successfully prosecuted for graft-related offenses in the past. However, residents perceive the government to be lagging in the fight against corruption. Authorities have also applied anti-money laundering and anticorruption laws against organizations connected with the 2019 protest movement.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 2 / 4

Hong Kong has no freedom of information law, nor does it have any specific legislation relating to the management of government records and archives. An administrative Code of Access to Information is intended to ensure open access to government records but includes broad exemptions.

While there are public consultations on issues ranging from transit fares to the chief executive's annual policy address, the range of consultation is narrow in practice. Public deliberation is not repressed but nevertheless infrequent and controlled by ruling elites. In recent "public consultation meetings" hosted by John Lee, hand-picked supporters of the government attended by invitation. The government is highly insulated from civil society actors, especially those that are critical of Hong Kong and mainland authorities. The territory's government does not consult with them when formulating policy.

Consultations between Hong Kong officials and the Liaison Office are opaque. There is no transparency regarding central government processes that directly affect Hong Kong. The NSL was drafted in secret and announced without public consultation, taking effect almost immediately after the text was first published.

Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? 1 / 4

The Basic Law has historically acted as a bulwark for press freedom, and the mainland's internet censorship regime does not yet apply in Hong Kong. Residents have long had access to a variety of print, broadcast, and digital news sources. However, following several years of sustained political and economic pressure on independent media by the Hong Kong and mainland governments, press freedom has deteriorated. According to a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents' Club and released in July 2023, 65 percent of local journalists self-censor.

Prodemocracy media owner Jimmy Lai was arrested on suspicion of "colluding with foreign forces" in 2020. His newspaper, the *Apple Daily*, and sister publication *Next Magazine* both closed in 2021, as did publisher Next Digital. Lai received a prison term in 2021 for protest activity and received another sentence over fraud allegations in 2022. In September 2023, Lai marked 1,000 days in solitary confinement. Lai's NSL trial began in December 2023; if convicted, he could receive a life sentence.

Several independent outlets have closed in recent years. In June 2023, Citizens' Radio closed, with authorities prohibiting it from accessing donations by employing the NSL.

Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), the territory's public broadcaster, had a reputation for independence before the government effectively took control of its output in 2021. RTHK adopted new editorial guidelines and

purged its archives that year; in July 2023, it announced it was suspending a show with LGBT+ themes.

Political cartoonist Wong Kei-kwan, known for satirical cartoons on local politics, left the *Ming Pao* newspaper in May 2023; government officials vocally criticized his work before his departure. Wong's works were subsequently pulled from library shelves.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 3 / 4

Religious freedom is generally respected in Hong Kong. Adherents of the Falun Gong spiritual movement, which is persecuted in mainland China, are free to practice in public. However, they have faced counterdemonstrations and harassment by members of the Hong Kong Youth Care Association, which has ties to the CCP. Religious figures and groups that support the government's opponents have been targeted by the authorities and pro-China actors.

Some churches self-censor and eschew pastors and sermons with political views. In recent years, the territory's Catholic diocese has stopped holding masses to commemorate the victims of 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

In November 2023, the territory's government denounced a letter signed by 10 Catholic bishops and archbishops posted outside of Hong Kong who called on authorities to release Jimmy Lai, saying that the signatories were undermining local rule of law.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? 1 / 4

University professors were historically able to write and lecture freely, and political debate on campuses was lively. However, an ongoing crackdown on free speech on campus, academic freedom, and student activity persists.

The NSL has been used aggressively to suppress discussions of Hong Kong independence and the 2019 protest movement at all levels of education. Several prodemocracy scholars have been fired by Hong Kong universities since 2020. In 2021, the Education Bureau instructed public universities to bring curriculums in line with the NSL and "prevent and suppress" on-campus acts that could violate its provisions. University students are reportedly less willing to discuss politically sensitive matters. Academics increasingly self-censor for fear of violating the NSL and some have chosen to leave Hong Kong. The *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po* newspapers, both of which are owned by the Chinese state, have published articles attacking academics.

In June 2023, the Hong Kong Free Press news outlet reported that staff members of schools benefiting from subsidies were required to support national security aims, and that institutions were expected to dismiss suppliers and break contracts on national security grounds. Also in June, Chief Executive Lee approved an amendment of Hong Kong University's statutes, allowing its disciplinary committee to hear cases of students allegedly bringing the institution into "disrepute" but leaving that term undefined. In November, the LegCo approved a proposal to reduce the size of the Chinese University of Hong Kong's governing council and alter its makeup; LegCo members who supported the proposal said that council members should be "patriots."

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 2 / 4

Hong Kong has a tradition of free personal expression and private discussion, but local and mainland security agencies have been suspected of monitoring the communications of prodemocracy activists for some years. These agencies are now mandated to do so under the NSL, which permits warrantless surveillance and wiretapping. The law also allowed mainland authorities to establish security agencies in the territory under their own jurisdiction, and people charged with NSL offenses can be detained and tried in the mainland. The NSL's enactment has prompted many social media users to self-censor, close their accounts, or delete content that could run afoul of the law.

The territory's government sought an injunction to prohibit the dissemination of the protest anthem "Glory to Hong Kong" in 2023. While the High Court denied the request in July, the government appealed the decision in August.

In 2023, the territorial government ramped up its effort to control online speech. In March, a Hong Kong exchange student studying in Japan was arrested by national security police when she returned to the city. She was charged with "incitement" for publishing "seditious" social media posts and received a two-month prison sentence in November. In December, a man was charged and an Hong Konger residing overseas was wanted for breaching the Elections Ordinance by "inciting" the public to boycott the district council election. That same month, four paid subscribers to the Patreon accounts of prodemocracy activists Nathan Law and Ted Hui, both of whom are in exile, were arrested for aiding, assisting, or funding separatism under Article 21 of the NSL.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? 1 / 4

The Basic Law guarantees freedom of assembly, but the Public Order Ordinance requires organizers to give police seven days' notice before protests and to obtain official assent.

The annual June 4 vigil to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre was banned for three years under COVID-19-related measures. In 2023, with pandemic restrictions having been lifted, authorities took other steps to stop the vigil. In March, Chow Hang-tung, former vice chair of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China—which organized the vigils—and two other members were found guilty of not complying with a NSL-related request for information. In June, police detained some 25 people on charges such as “breaching public peace” and “obstructing police officers.” Authorities allowed pro-Beijing organizations to organize a carnival at Victoria Park, where the vigils had been held.

In March 2023, the city saw its first authorized antigovernment protest since the implementation of the NSL. That protest, which was motivated by opposition to a land reclamation plan, was restricted; only 100 were allowed to participate, participants were obliged to wear numbered tags, and the rally was cordoned away from media. Labor unions also faced obstacles in April organizing a public demonstration because police did not issue a letter giving effective consent.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights- and governance-related work? 1 / 4

Historically, Hong Kong hosted a vibrant NGO sector, including a number of groups focusing on human rights in mainland China. However, the introduction of the NSL dramatically affected the civil society sector; in 2022, the Hong Kong Free Press reported that 58 organizations, including local press outlets, prodemocracy groups, and unions, had disbanded since 2021. In August 2023, a Cantonese-language advocacy group, Societas Linguistica Hongkongensis, closed after national security police raided its founder's home without a warrant.

In June 2023, the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute announced its decision to limit the scope of its surveys and stop releasing material on “sensitive” questions regarding attitudes toward the Tiananmen Square massacre, the status of Taiwan, and local identity.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 1 / 4

Trade unions are independent, but collective-bargaining rights are not recognized, and protections against antiunion discrimination are weak.

Some trade unions took an active role in the 2019 protest movement and unsuccessfully attempted to organize a referendum on a potential general strike in 2020, drawing warnings from government ministers for their efforts. Many unions have since dissolved, having faced growing pressure from government officials and state media and fearing for members' personal safety. The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions dissolved in late 2021, as did the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union.

F Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary? 2 / 4

The Hong Kong judiciary has been undermined by the NSL, which allows the government to select judges for NSL trials. The NSL was imposed on Hong Kong through a Basic Law provision that allows the NPC to list national laws that must be applied locally, bypassing both the LegCo and Hong Kong's courts. The NPC has historically reserved the right to make final interpretations of the Basic Law, limiting the independence of the Court of Final Appeal. Such interventions were rare prior to the NPC's 2016 interpretation regarding oaths of office, which was issued without a request from the Hong Kong government.

Judges, including Court of Final Appeal members, are selected by the territory's chief executive with the support of the advisory Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission. Under the NSL, the chief executive is empowered to designate a pool of judges to try cases related to that law. They are selected for a one-year term but can face removal should they make statements that "endanger national security." The chief executive's criteria for selecting the pool and the identities of assigned judges are not publicly available.

In late 2022, Beijing intervened to grant the chief executive the power to bar foreign lawyers from national security trials; Jimmy Lai's lawyer, Briton Tim Owen, was then prevented from entering Hong Kong for the trial.

Local courts have ruled against the government in some recent decisions. In February 2023, the Court of Final Appeal ruled against the requirement that transgender residents undergo "full sex reassignment surgery" in order to update identity documents, citing the Bill of Rights. In July, the High Court refused to issue an injunction against "Glory to Hong Kong," saying it could harm freedom of expression.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 2 / 4

The courts typically upheld due process rights and adjudicated civil and criminal matters fairly and efficiently in the past. Following the thousands of arrests made during the 2019 protests, courts came under pressure to

process cases faster, and pro-Beijing politicians and media called on them to side with the prosecution and issue heavier sentences.

Under the NSL, individuals charged with national security offenses are tried by judges selected by the chief executive, and the central government wields influence over the appointment of prosecutors. In cases involving offenses against public order or state secrets, the trials may be closed to the public. The central government's Office for Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong can assert jurisdiction over some cases and have them tried on the mainland. There is a much higher threshold for bail for NSL cases than others. The NSL also gave police powerful new legal tools including enhanced investigatory power to search premises and electronic devices, freeze or confiscate assets, and demand people and groups provide information. In April 2023, Security Minister Chris Tang said that the conviction rate for national security-related cases stood at 100 percent and disclosed that 71 people had been convicted. In July, the LegCo voted to give prosecutors more powers to challenge High Court decisions in national security cases where defendants were acquitted, opening the possibility that those defendants could be retried.

In 2022, Justice Secretary Paul Lam ordered a nonjury trial for 47 prodemocracy advocates who participated in the unofficial 2020 primary, becoming only the second case of its kind to be conducted without a jury. The trial, presided over by three designated national security judges, began in February 2023. The prosecution and defense presented their closing statements in December.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies? 2 / 4

Police are forbidden by law from employing torture, disappearance, or other forms of abuse. However, the 2019 protest movement featured frequent episodes of police violence, which have generally gone unaddressed. There were also credible allegations of arbitrary detention and torture of protesters in 2019. The protest movement also brought about a more general climate of unrest, due to both clashes that accompanied demonstrations and violent attacks committed by nonstate actors against protesters, activists, and bystanders at protest locations. Cases of arbitrary detention have reportedly decreased since, though the US State Department warned travelers that they still risk "wrongful detentions" and "arbitrary enforcement of local laws" in a June 2023 advisory. The Canadian government has issued similar warnings.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population? 3 / 4

Hong Kong has four antidiscrimination ordinances concerning sex, disability, family status, and race. Citizens are generally treated equally under the law, though people of South Asian origin or descent face language barriers and de facto discrimination in education and employment. Foreign delivery workers face racial discrimination. Women are also subject to some employment discrimination.

Antidiscrimination laws do not specifically protect LGBT+ people. In recent years, the Equal Opportunities Commission has unsuccessfully called on the Hong Kong government to enact antidiscrimination legislation to change this. In February 2023, the Court of Final Appeal allowed transgender residents to update their identity documents without being mandated to undergo surgery.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education? 3 / 4

Hong Kong residents generally enjoy freedom of movement, though authorities periodically deny entry to visiting political activists and Falun Gong practitioners, raising suspicions of Beijing-imposed restrictions. Some Hong Kong activists and politicians have also faced difficulty traveling to the mainland.

Hong Kong police have reportedly compiled a watchlist of people to arrest under the NSL should they attempt to leave via border checkpoints or the airport. In July 2023, the Hong Kong government issued arrest warrants and bounties of HK\$1 million (US\$128,000) for eight overseas activists. Another five were subsequently targeted with bounties in December.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors? 3 / 4

While property rights are largely respected, collusion among powerful business entities with political connections is perceived as an impediment to fair competition.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 4 / 4

Hong Kong residents are legally protected from rape and domestic abuse, and police generally respond appropriately to reports of such crimes. However, domestic and sexual violence reportedly occurred more often during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Men and women enjoy equal rights in personal status matters such as marriage and divorce. There is no legal recognition of same-sex marriage or civil union in Hong Kong. A constitutional challenge to restrictions on same-sex marriage was rejected by a court in 2019. In 2022, an appellate court upheld a 2020 decision denying recognition of same-sex marriages conducted overseas. In September 2023, however, the Court of Final Appeal ruled that the territory's government was obligated to provide "an alternative legal framework" for recognizing same-sex unions. The same court ruled in October that the denial of inheritance rights for same-sex unions was "an unacceptably harsh burden."

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from 3 / economic exploitation? 4

While most Hong Kong residents enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation, certain marginalized groups face substantial risks of exploitation and abuse. Many of Hong Kong's 340,000 migrant household workers remain vulnerable to a wide range of exploitative practices such as physical abuse, humiliation, and forced labor. Some migrant workers' travel documents and mobile phones are seized by their employers. Since they may face deportation if dismissed, many are reluctant to bring complaints against employers.

Hong Kong is a significant site for human trafficking but lacks comprehensive antitrafficking legislation.

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