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Hong Kong's Heightened Crackdown on Dissent

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China Should Reverse Ban on Hong Kong National Party

This week, Hong Kong National Party (HKNP) convenor Andy Chan [appealed](#) the [Hong Kong](#) government's unprecedented decision to [ban the pro-independence party](#). The move to ban the HKNP in September was among the government's latest efforts to stifle dissent in Hong Kong.

Chan's appeal to Chief Executive Carrie Lam and the Executive Council includes a request that Lam and eight Executive Council members recuse themselves following recent comments Lam made on the matter. During a recent [policy address to the Legislative Council](#), Hong Kong's legislature, Lam stated that her administration "will not tolerate any acts that advocate Hong Kong's independence and threatens [China's] sovereignty" and is dedicated to "fearlessly take action...to nip the problem in the bud."

During Lam's address, [four opposition lawmakers were removed](#) from the council chambers. They had held up signs urging the administration to respect press freedom, referencing the government's refusal to renew an employment visa for *Financial Times* Asia editor Victor Mallet. Mallet had earlier hosted Chan on a panel at the Foreign Correspondents Club in Hong Kong, despite [demands from Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry officials](#) to cancel the event.

The HKNP ban and Mallet's unrenewed visa represent the Hong Kong government's latest efforts to encroach on civil liberties. Since 2016, authorities have [limited the right to political participation](#) by disqualifying and unseating pro-democracy and pro-independence candidates and lawmakers, denouncing pro-democracy scholars as threats to national security, and arresting and jailing pro-democracy advocates. They have also offered up alarming reinterpretations of the "one country, two systems" principle to justify efforts to undermine Hong Kong's autonomy, and declared that they will [legislate the Basic Law's Article 23](#), which seeks to criminalize sedition and subversion.

Lam should immediately reverse the ban on the HKNP. More broadly, the Hong Kong government should end its efforts to erode political participation of individuals and parties that peacefully disagree with it, and instead turn its efforts toward bolstering universal suffrage as guaranteed under the Basic Law.