

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	284
Land:	Kina
Kilde:	Freedom House
Titel:	Freedom of the Press 2011 – Hong Kong
Udgivet:	23. september 2011
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	6. december 2011

Last Updated: Monday, 28 November 2011, 09:36 GMT

[unhcr.org](#) | [Partners](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact](#) | [Site Map](#)[Home](#) [Asia](#) [China](#)

Search

Enter a word or phrase [Advanced Search](#) [Search Tips](#)

Regions

[Africa](#)[Americas](#)[Asia](#)[Europe](#)[Oceania](#)

Countries

Categories

[Country Information](#)[Legal Information](#)[Policy Documents](#)[Reference Documents](#)

Browse by

[A-Z Index](#)[Topics](#)[Publishers](#)[Document Types](#)

Resources

[Special Features](#)[Standards and Training](#)[Information Alerts](#)[Protection Starter Kit](#)[Library](#)[News](#)[Refworld Personalization](#)[External Links](#)Text size [Email this document](#)[Printable version](#)

Title	Freedom of the Press 2011 - Hong Kong
Publisher	Freedom House
Country	China Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China)
Publication Date	23 September 2011
Cite as	Freedom House, <i>Freedom of the Press 2011 - Hong Kong</i> , 23 September 2011, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e7c84fa28.html [accessed 28 November 2011]
Disclaimer	This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher.

Freedom of the Press 2011 - Hong Kong

Status: Partly Free**Legal Environment:** 11**Political Environment:** 12**Economic Environment:** 9**Total Score:** 32

Although freedom of expression is protected by law and Hong Kong media remain lively in their criticism of the territory's government, political and economic pressures narrow the space for free expression. In recent years, Hong Kong journalists have also faced a growing threat of harassment and attack when reporting in mainland China.

Under Article 27 of the Basic Law, Hong Kong residents enjoy freedoms of speech, press, and publication, and these rights are generally upheld by the territory's independent courts. However, they risk being undermined by the power of the Chinese National People's Congress to make final interpretations of Hong Kong's Basic Law, Chinese surveillance in the territory, and the economic interests of media owners involved in the Chinese market. Hong Kong has no freedom of information law; an administrative code is intended to ensure open access to government information. However, a year-long investigation by the Hong Kong ombudsman, released in January, found "considerable misunderstanding" among some officials about their responsibilities to transparency. Records were refused for no reason, or for inappropriate reasons, the ombudsman found, citing a lack of training among government staff. The report ignited calls among local journalists and watchdogs to give freedom of information requirements the force of law.

Press freedom advocates continue to express concerns too over the selective application of the Broadcasting Ordinance and the constitutionality of existing procedures for granting licenses to new media outlets. Decisions to grant or refuse licenses are made by the executive branch rather than an independent body. In January 2010, the Legislative Council endorsed an amendment to make the process more transparent. But, the amendment fell short of calls by the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) and other watchdog groups to revamp the procedures entirely and remove the potential for political or commercial interference. Authorities continued to obstruct broadcasts by the prodemocracy station Citizens' Radio, whose license application was rejected in 2006. In April, authorities warned Legislative Council candidates not to attend preelection forums hosted by Citizens' Radio, according to local news reports. Several candidates attended anyway, and the forums were broadcasted. But the station was raided in May, and again in December, when authorities said its signals posed a threat to aviation safety. Currently only two broadcast companies, Television Broadcasts (TVB) and Asia Television (ATV), have licenses to compete in the free-to-air television market. The lack of competition has led to doubt about the diversity of news coverage by the current operators, according to HKJA. In a possible government overture to broaden the competition in this market, in July 2009 Rita Lau, the secretary for commerce and economic development, announced that the government would not set a limit for the number of free-to-air television broadcast licenses and in fact welcomed greater competition for the benefit of public choice. Subsequently, three existing pay-television operators submitted applications by late March 2010, but there were no further developments on their licenses by year's end.

Increasing media self-censorship poses a serious threat to free expression in this Chinese Special Administrative Region. In recent years, Beijing's influence over the news, publishing, and film industries has increased, prompting greater restraint on issues deemed sensitive by the Chinese central government. Such self-censorship stems in part from the close relationship between media owners and the central government. Several owners sit on the Chinese People's Political

Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a political advisory body that has little real influence over government policy but is used by the ruling Communist Party to co-opt powerful members of society. Several media owners are also current or former members of the National People's Congress, China's rubber-stamp parliament, and many have significant business interests in mainland China.

Hong Kong journalists face restrictions and intimidation when covering events on the mainland, limiting their ability to provide national news to the local population. Mainland authorities require journalists to obtain temporary press cards from Beijing's liaison office in Hong Kong prior to each reporting visit to the mainland, and to obtain the prior consent of interviewees. Even with the accreditation, journalists from the territory have repeatedly been subject to surveillance, threats, beatings, and occasional jailing when reporting on the mainland. In February 2010, Sichuan police detained and manhandled nearly a dozen Hong Kong reporters, preventing them from attending the sentencing of activist Tan Zuoren. In December, seven Hong Kong journalists were hit, kicked, and slapped by neighbors of another activist, Zhao Lianhai, outside his home in Beijing. The HKJA has repeatedly urged local authorities to do more to protect the rights and safety of Hong Kong reporters in mainland China.

Hong Kong's media are outspoken. There is a high degree of professionalism, and political debate is vigorous. Hong Kong has dozens of daily newspapers in both Chinese and English, and residents have access to satellite television and international radio broadcasts from services like the British Broadcasting Corporation. Controversy continued in 2010 over the future of government-owned Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), which has earned high public approval ratings for its critical coverage of the government. After rejecting proposals to turn RTHK into an independent public broadcaster in 2009, the government issued a new charter redefining its roles, and Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen appointed an advisory board. Critics said that the government-appointed board, and the charter's new articulation of the broadcaster's roles, including promoting "one country two systems," threatened the station's editorial independence. In recent years, publications known for their criticism of the central government, such as the *Apple Daily* and the *Epoch Times*, have reported difficulties in attracting advertisers because of fears among private business owners that supporting these publications would damage their economic interests on the mainland. There are no restrictions on internet access in Hong Kong. The region has one of the highest internet usage rates in Asia with 69.4 percent of the population accessing the internet during the year.

Copyright notice: © Freedom House, Inc. · All Rights Reserved