

Press release: UK and Canada joint statement on Hong Kong

Joint statement by Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland:

We have been following the proposals of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to amend the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance. It is clear that the proposals have generated significant debate in Hong Kong, in particular in relation to removing the territorial restrictions on extradition to mainland China.

We are concerned about the potential effect of these proposals on the large number of UK and Canadian citizens in Hong Kong, on business confidence and on Hong Kong's international reputation. Furthermore, we believe that there is a risk that the proposals could impact negatively on the rights and freedoms set down in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. It is vital that extradition arrangements in Hong Kong are in line with 'One Country, Two Systems' and fully respect Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. We have made these views clear in our respective conversations with the Hong Kong Government.

It is important that these proposals are subject to the highest levels of scrutiny, including in the Legislative Council. We urge the Hong Kong Government to engage meaningfully with Hong Kong's broad range of local and international stakeholders in order to ensure their concerns are fully considered. We believe that the Hong Kong Government should allow time to give proper consideration of all alternative options and safeguards.