

Police fire tear gas at crowded Hong Kong rally

Written by Taipei Times

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Officers detain an injured man after police dispersed a crowd gathered for a “universal siege on communists” rally at Chater Garden in Hong Kong yesterday.

Photo: AFP

Clashes yesterday broke out between protesters and police in Hong Kong, cutting short a rally after thousands had gathered at a park on Hong Kong Island to call for electoral reforms and a boycott of the Chinese Communist Party.

Police fired tear gas near Chater Garden, not far from the Legislative Council, after some protesters attacked plainclothes officers.

Sporting their movement’s trademark black clothing and masks, rally participants packed into Chater Garden, holding up signs that read “Free Hong Kong” and waved US and British flags.

“We want real universal suffrage,” the protesters chanted. “Disband the police force, free Hong Kong!”

Hong Kong media outlets reported that police arrested the rally’s organizer, Ventus Lau (劉頌鵬), shortly after he spoke to reporters.

Radio Television HK cited fellow organizers as saying that Lau was arrested for allegedly violating the police’s conditions for the rally.

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Earlier in the day, Lau said he believes more large-scale protests are needed for global attention to return to Hong Kong, adding: "I think Hong Kong has not been the focus of the world anymore."

He urged countries to launch sanctions against Hong Kong's government if it does not allow residents to directly elect Legislative Council members this year.

In response to the rally, Hong Kong's government released a statement outlining the "universal suffrage of 'one person, one vote' as an ultimate aim" enshrined in the territory's Basic Law.

This step must be implemented in line with "gradual and orderly progress," the statement said.

"The government understands the aspiration of the community for universal suffrage," it added. "To achieve this aim, the community needs to have a clear understanding that apart from being accountable to [Hong Kong], the CE [chief executive] selected by universal suffrage is appointed by the Central People's Government [CPG] and shall also be accountable to the CPG."

Source: [Taipei Times - 2020/01/20](#)