

Hong Kong officially kills extradition bill

Written by Taipei Times

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The Hong Kong Legislative Council yesterday formally withdrew planned legislation that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China, but the move was unlikely to end months of unrest, as it met just one of the five demands of pro-democracy protesters.

The rallying cry of the protesters, who have trashed public buildings in the Chinese-ruled territory, set street fires and thrown Molotov cocktails at police, has been “five demands, not one less,” meaning that the withdrawal of the bill makes no difference.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam (林鄭月娥) had said many times that the bill was as good as dead and that other demands, including universal suffrage and an amnesty for all those charged with rioting, were beyond her control.

Protesters are also calling for her to stand down and for an independent inquiry into perceived police brutality during a long hot summer of running battles on the streets.

“There aren’t any big differences between suspension and withdrawal [of the extradition bill]... It’s too little, too late,” said 27-year-old protester Connie, hours before the bill was withdrawn. “There are still other demands the government needs to meet, especially the problem of police brutality.”

Most protesters do not give their full name to avoid being identified.

Police have responded to the violence with water cannon, tear gas, rubber bullets and several live rounds.

Protesters are angry at what they see as Beijing encroaching on the former British colony’s “one country, two systems” formula enshrined during the handover in 1997, which permits the territory wide-ranging freedoms not available on the mainland such as an independent judiciary.

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The extradition bill would have allowed defendants charged with serious crimes to be sent for trial abroad, including to Chinese Communist Party-controlled courts in China.

The bill was seen as the latest move by Beijing to erode those freedoms. China has denied these claims and accuses foreign countries of fomenting trouble.

A murder suspect, Chan Tong-kai (陳同佳), whose case Lam had originally held up as showing the need for the extradition bill walked free on yesterday as the territory's government squabbled with Taiwan over how to handle his potential voluntary surrender to authorities.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2019/10/24](#)