

Mr Josep Borell
High Representative
and Vice-President
of the European Commission

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Brussels, 23 April 2020

Dear High Representative, dear Mr. Borrell,

Official EU condemnation of arrests in Hong Kong and request for information on missing Corona whistleblowers in China

Three urgent matters make us write this letter to you. Firstly, we urge you to issue a strong condemnation of the arrests of the fifteen opposition leaders in Hong Kong. China and the authorities in Hong Kong seem to use the Covid-19 crisis to crackdown on the opposition and pro-democracy movement. The United States, the UK and Australia have already condemned the arrests, but the European Union has not yet given any formal reaction so far.

The Hong Kong police arrested these pro-democracy activists accusing them of organising and participating in unlawful protests. These arrests followed months of massive protests, in which millions participated to express their dissatisfaction with China's moves to control Hong Kong's internal affairs.

The arrests seem to be an attempt to intimidate and weaken the pro-democracy forces ahead of the elections in September. With the global attention focused on containing the Corona virus, China is using this crisis to crush the democratic movement in Hong Kong.

These political prosecutions are in clear violation of universal human rights and are not only an attack on Hong Kong's freedoms, but also on the international rules-based order.

We believe it is of the utmost importance that the European Union sends a very strong and clear message to the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities that such actions are unacceptable.

Secondly, there are many concerns over the fate of the missing Chinese Covid-19 whistleblowers who were branded as enemies of the state by the Chinese authorities. NGOs claim that more than 5000 people were arrested for sharing information in the first weeks of the outbreak.

We, the undersigned Members of the Renew Europe group, urge you to demand an official explanation by the Chinese authorities about their fate. Especially during times of crises in which authoritarian regimes abuse the situation to purge their citizens, the European Union should stand up for universal human rights and the rule of law.

Lastly, we would like you to demand China to be fully transparent about the COVID-19 outbreak and to share all the relevant information and knowledge concerning the virus.

We hope you will come out with an official reaction as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

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