



29 January, 2018

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing in advance of your forthcoming visit to China, to encourage you to take the opportunity during your meetings with President Xi Jinping and other senior leaders to discuss the situation of Hong Kong, and to go on insisting on the continued validity of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the principles of “one country, two systems”.

In the past five years Hong Kong has seen increasing threats to the basic freedoms, human rights and autonomy which the people were promised at the handover just over twenty years ago. These developments have been rightly criticised within Hong Kong and outside. Most recently, the Bar Association has said it is “appalled” by the decision to impose mainland law at the new rail terminus in Hong Kong.

In addition to these concerns, there is the case of British human rights activist Benedict Rogers, who was denied entry to Hong Kong on 11 October last year on the orders of Beijing. We welcome the statement issued by the Foreign Secretary the same day, the fact that the Chinese ambassador was summoned to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and indeed your own remarks on the matter when it was raised at Prime Minister’s Questions the following week. The remarks by Hong Kong’s Chief Executive Carrie Lam earlier this month describing visits and commentary on Hong Kong’s political developments by British Parliamentarians as “foreign meddling” further undermine confidence in Hong Kong’s autonomy and disrespect the Joint Declaration under which Britain has an obligation to monitor the protection of Hong Kong’s freedoms, at least until 2047.

We were encouraged by the remarks last week both by the Minister of State for Asia Mark Field in response to a Westminster Hall debate in the House of Commons, and by the Minister of State Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon in response to an oral question in the House of Lords, who both strongly emphasized the government’s commitment to its responsibilities under the Joint Declaration, and the declaration’s continuing validity, and expressed the government’s own concerns about threats to basic freedoms and the “one country, two systems” principle. As John Major promised more than twenty years ago, “Hong Kong will never have to walk alone.”

In light of this, we hope that you will raise the specific concerns summarized in this letter when you visit China next week, and that you will be able to provide the people of Hong Kong with



some assurance that our developing relationship with China, vital though it is, will not come at the cost of our obligations to them.

We trust that your visit is successful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Patten".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paddy Ashdown".

The Rt Hon Lord Patten of Barnes

The Rt Hon Lord Ashdown of Norton-sub-Hamdon