11 May 2023

The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH

The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Dear Secretary of State,

We, the undersigned parliamentarians, are writing to raise our concern regarding retaliatory action the People’s Republic of China and the Hong Kong Government have taken against the British National Overseas (BNO) Visa, which has seen thousands of Hong Kongers who have moved to the UK denied access to over £2.2 billion of their pension savings.

As you will be aware, in retaliation to the UK Government launching the BNO Visa scheme in January 2021, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that it would no longer recognise the British National Overseas passport as an identity document.

This unilateral declaration that was not accompanied by a change in pension regulations or legislation in Hong Kong has led to thousands of Hong Kongers refused access to their hard earned pension money on the grounds that pension providers will not recognise a valid UK Government issued document.

Research published by the UK-based NGO Hong Kong Watch has estimated that the Hong Kong Government has denied Hong Kongers who have moved to the UK access to over £2.2 billion of their pension savings held in schemes as part of the Mandatory Provident Fund.

In the case of HSBC, a UK-headquartered bank is undertaking retaliatory action on behalf of the Chinese Government and it is estimated that it has denied Hong Kongers access to over £600 million worth of their hard-earned pension savings.
This punitive denial of Hong Kongers to access their savings is curtailing the ability of many to start new lives and to prosper and thrive here in the UK. It is also likely to increase the amount of financial support that new arrivals require from the UK Government in the future.

Given that this retaliatory action is not only targeted at vulnerable political refugees who have fled an ongoing human rights crackdown, but at the UK Government, we urge you to issue guidance to all UK-based financial institutions regarding the use of British National Overseas passports as valid documents.

We also request that you undertake an official review of the number of Hong Kongers in the UK who have been impacted by this change, and press UK trustees of the Mandatory Provident Fund to give Hong Kongers under the BNO Visa immediate access to their pension savings.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Alton of Liverpool, Patron of Hong Kong Watch

Co-signatories:

Lord Patten of Barnes
Rt Hon Sir Desmond Swayne TD MP
Henry Smith MP
Ian Paisley MP
Sir Malcolm Rifkind KCMG KC
Fiona Bruce MP
Charlotte Nichols MP
Marie Rimmer MP
Andy Carter MP
Siobhain McDonagh MP
Layla Moran MP
Damian Green MP
Alyn Smith MP
John Baron MP
Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP
Marion Fellows MP
Carol Monaghan MP
Deidre Brock MP
Drew Hendry MP
Allan Dorans MP
Sarah Champion MP
Kim Johnson MP
Alistair Carmichael MP
Richard Thomson MP
Stephen Timms MP
John McDonnell MP
Virendra Sharma MP
Sarah Olney MP
David Davis MP
Royston Smith MP
Peter Dowd MP
Tim Loughton MP
Mohammad Yasin MP
Wera Hobhouse MP
Chris Bryant MP
Ed Davey
Wendy Chamberlain
Daisy Cooper
Tim Farron
Richard Foord
Sarah Green
Christine Jardine
Helen Morgan
Jamie Stone
Munira Wilson
Stuart C McDonald
Judith Cummins
Liam Fox
Tom Randall
Philippa Whitford
Danny Kruger
Wayne David
David Jones
Lord Willoubhy De Broke
Lord Bradshaw
Lord Hain
Viscount Bridgeman
Baroness Brinton
Lord Gresford
Baroness Lister
Lord Trees
Baroness Warwick
Lord Campbell
Baroness Eaton
Lord Warner
Baroness O’Loan
Baroness Bennett
Lord Bethell
Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws KC
Lord Stunell
Baroness Cox
Lord Hunt of Kings Heath
Lord Storey CBE
Lord Bishop of Coventry
Lord Hylton
Lord Bowness
Lord Clement-Jones
Baroness Doocey
Lord Foster of Bath
Lord Goddard of Stockport
Baroness Hamwee
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Baroness Kramer
Baroness Ludford
Baroness Smith of Newnham
Lord Stoneham of Droxford
Lord Strasburger
Baroness Tyler of Enfield
Baroness Bonham-Carter of Yarnbury