



### [Annual Vigil Commemorating the Tiananmen Square Massacre is Cancelled](#)

As tensions rise between Hong Kong and China, an annual vigil to commemorate the Tiananmen Square massacre has been cancelled for the first time in thirty years. Traditionally, Hong Kong has been the lone Chinese territory to mark the anniversary of the brutal crackdown. Demonstrations within mainland China are tightly regulated, and information about the incident is closely guarded. Hong Kong police rejected organizers' request to hold the demonstration, citing a fear that COVID-19 could spread rampantly during the event. Even before police refused to allow the demonstration, relations between Hong Kong and Beijing were at an all-time low due to a recently enacted national security law. The law in question significantly undermines the freedom afforded to Hong Kong under the "One Country, Two Systems" policy, and protests have broken out in response.

This year marks the first time that a demonstration to commemorate the victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre will not be held in Hong Kong. The massacre occurred when Chinese government forces opened fire on peaceful protestors calling for economic and democratic reforms. Prior to the shooting, peaceful protests had been occurring across China that called for democracy and the resignation of Chinese Communist Party members. When the protest at Tiananmen Square turned violent, security forces fired indiscriminately into crowds of demonstrators. Reporters and Western observers have estimated a death toll in the thousands, with tens of thousands more arrested.

Since the Tiananmen Square massacre, Hongkongers have observed the anniversary by holding rallies and vigils in the popular Victoria Park. However, Hong Kong police have forbidden a rally this year to commemorate the victims of Tiananmen Square. Despite this, many people are planning to attend a rally in Victoria Park anyway, and organizers are asking people to hold private and online vigils.

Under the "One Country, Two Systems" policy, Hongkongers have always been given more autonomy than mainland Chinese citizens, and they have exercised their right to peaceful assembly by commemorating the victims of violence perpetrated by the Chinese state. Recently, that autonomy has come under attack from Beijing, which is seeking to firm up control over Hong Kong.

Last month in late May, China's legislature approved the national security law, which bans "secession, subversion of state power, terrorism, and foreign intervention" in Hong Kong, and also gives China's state security agencies license to operate in the city. The standing committee of China's National People's Congress will now draft the law, which, due to a constitutional backdoor, will bypass the Hong Kong legislature entirely but be enforced by the Hong Kong government. The law has reinvigorated protests in Hong Kong, which were at a temporary lull due to the coronavirus. Also due to the new law, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared to Congress that Hong Kong could not continue to be considered significantly autonomous to China. This move threatens Hong Kong's status as a global financial hub as economic restrictions applied to China will now also be relevant to Hong Kong.