



An appeal to CY Leung signed by over 100
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"Address the appeal for democracy. Stop the threat of violence."

- an open appeal to the Government of Chief Executive C.Y. Leung

Signed by over 100 academics

Starting from yesterday, there were rampant speculations about the HKSAR authorities' determination to use brutal force to remove protesters appealing for democracy in Hong Kong. Prompted by their concern for the safety of students, a number of academics have issued calls for students to withdraw from the public demonstration to avoid risking their personal safety. We share those academics' concerns, but would like to stress that the fundamental solution to the current saga should lie with concrete action by the authorities to address the people's demand.

We, the undersigned, jointly express our grave concern at the current situation of Hong Kong. We are extremely disturbed by rumours that the HKSAR authorities would go down the path of brutality to remove the protesters by force. We are even more annoyed by the apathy of Hong Kong's law-enforcement agents, which has resorted to the use of force in resolving an issue of political nature. Worse still, in a high-handed manner.

Two weeks have passed since our students kicked off their boycott of classes. Their call for dialogue has been greeted with volleys of tear gas. Instead of dispersing the protesters, such action has ignited public anger and led to the proliferation of more "occupy" actions around town. None of the officials in charge of the action has been held responsible. Not even a word of apology has been offered to the public. In an exhibition of their resilience, students and fellow protesters have continued to stand together to ask the authorities for dialogue despite the use of force. However, as the preparatory discussion for the dialogue was underway, there emerged the situation in various places when triads had gone on the offensives in attacking the protesters. Police inaction has resulted in many of the thugs going at large. In view of the development, students had no choice but to terminate the dialogue with officials until proper action is taken to look into the attack. Until now, the authorities have turned a blind eye to students' call for investigation. There is no action whatsoever to address the call for curbing triads' use of force. [Against this background, we consider the recent rumours of further use of brutal force to remove protesters from the scenes to be highly disturbing]. They show the authorities' intention to go down the dangerous path of resolving the political deadline by sheer force.

Indeed, the students' appeals are very humble. They ask for a universal suffrage with real choice by the people as the foundation of good governance. Yet the response of the authorities to their two weeks of appeals were tear gas and triad violence, as well as a completely inflexible stance on the part of the government, coupled by the threat of force. We believe that such tough and rigid approach is against the rule of proper governance. It is completely uncondusive to the forging of consensus in the Hong Kong community over the issue of electoral reform. If indeed the authorities are to go down the path of brutal suppression, not only will the current political stalemate continue. It will also trigger further escalation of the conflict in the community and bring more rigorous counter-action. The resulting damage will be hard to heal.

We call on the government to change its course before it is too late. It must respond to the students' appeal with concrete and substantive action. We urge that it stop shying away from the core issue of Hong Kong's electoral reform, which should form the basis of its dialogue with the students. We are opposed to the use brutal force on our people whose pure intention is to seek rational dialogue with the government. Any use of excessive force will only split the society further. No doubt this will be deplored by the people of Hong Kong.