

1. **on edge** (phrase) – tense/nervous, apprehensive, uneasy/unsettled.
2. **extradition** (noun) – the action of surrendering/handing over a fugitive (a person who has escaped from being confined/accused of crime) from one jurisdiction to another by mutual agreements between the two countries. deportation, handover, expulsion.
3. **underline** (verb) – underscore, emphasize, highlight.
4. **champion** (verb) – advocate, promote, support/uphold.
5. **suspect** (noun) – suspected person, accused, defendant.
6. **accord** (noun) – agreement, concord, contract.
7. **loophole** (noun) – an ambiguity in the law; flaw/fault, defect.
8. **evade** (verb) – elude, avoid, dodge/sidestep.
9. **refuge** (noun) – protection, safety, place of shelter/place of safety, haven.
10. **influence** (noun) – power, authority, leverage.
11. **the establishment** (noun) – the powers that be, the authorities, the regime (exercising power and influence).
12. **activist** (noun) – advocate, champion, supporter (of a political or societal change/cause).
13. **point to** (verb) – indicate, suggest, denote.
14. **abduction** (noun) – kidnapping, hostage-taking.
15. **critic** (noun) – censurer, attacker, fault-finder.
16. **authoritarian** (adjective) – oppressive, dictatorial, totalitarian.
17. **expel** (verb) – evict, deport, banish/exile.
18. **erode** (verb) – (gradually) deteriorate, destroy, spoil.
19. **deepen** (verb) – increase, intensify, escalate.
20. **call for** (phrasal verb) – require, publicly ask/necessitate, demand.
21. **top-down** (adjective) – hierarchical; controlled, directed, or organized from the top level.
22. **bid** (noun) – attempt, effort, endeavour/try.
23. **stringent** (adjective) – strict/stern, severe, tough/rigorous.
24. **trigger** (verb) – give rise to, bring about, evoke/prompt.
25. **back down** (phrasal verb) – reconsider, withdraw, give in.
26. **contradiction** (noun) – disagreement, opposition, inconsistency; rebuttal/negation.
27. **elite** (noun) – high society people; the group of most powerful people in a society.
28. **insistence** (noun) – force, demand, compulsion/coercion.
29. **reach out** (phrasal verb) – contact someone for help/assistance/cooperation.
30. **alleviate** (verb) – reduce, control, mitigate/moderate.
31. **repression** (noun) – suppression, oppression, domination.

City on edge: On Hong Kong protests against extradition law

Protests over the extradition Bill in Hong Kong underline the tensions with mainland China

The mass protests in Hong Kong this week against an extradition Bill the city legislative council is planning has brought the focus back on the difficult relationship between the

territory's Beijing-appointed authorities and its pro-democracy movement. The legislation, championed by Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam, will allow the local government to extradite a suspect to places with which the city has no formal extradition accord, including mainland China. Ms. Lam argues it is needed to close a loophole in the criminal justice system that, she says, has let criminals evade trial elsewhere by taking refuge in Hong Kong. But the protesters see the Bill as an attempt by Beijing to increase its influence in matters to do with the city. The extradition law would practically allow the city authorities to send any suspect wanted by Beijing to mainland China, where the judiciary is unlikely to go against the wishes of the establishment. Activists point to the abduction of Beijing's critics and the growing authoritarian nature of the city government, with instances of elected lawmakers being disqualified, activists banned from running for office, a political party prohibited and a foreign journalist expelled. They fear that the new legislation would further erode the freedoms people enjoy under the Basic Law, the city's mini-constitution.

When Hong Kong was handed over to China in 1997, both sides had agreed that the city would remain a semi-autonomous region with the Basic Law for 50 years. When the extradition agreements were finalised, Taiwan and mainland China were excluded because of the different criminal justice systems that existed in those regions. But China has steadily tried to deepen its influence. In the case of the extradition Bill, two members of the Politburo Standing Committee have called for its approval. But Hong Kong has always resisted top-down changes. In 2003, the city's first Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa's bid to pass stringent security legislation triggered mass protests, which forced him to back down. In 2014, the local authorities' proposal to change the city's electoral system attracted more protests. In less than five years they are back: a million people assembled at the legislative council on Wednesday, demanding withdrawal of the extradition Bill. These incidents suggest a fundamental contradiction between the way Hong Kong is ruled by the pro-Beijing elite and the expectations of civil society. The local authorities' insistence on going ahead with unpopular measures such as the extradition Bill is only sharpening this contradiction. Beijing should reach out to the people of Hong Kong, alleviate their fears and concerns and assure them of their rights guaranteed under the "one country two systems" model. Else, Hong Kong is likely to remain caught in a cycle of protests and repression.