

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN HONG KONG:

HONG KONG WATCH BRIEFING ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS: DECEMBER 2022

KEY FIGURES

6 Chinese diplomats removed from the UK following the Greater Manchester Police’s request to waive diplomatic immunity so they could be questioned in relation to the October incident.¹

100,000 people were members of the Pro-Beijing Facebook Group “Save Hong Kong” before it was closed down.²

A minor, who was **15** at the time of charge, has his bail application rejected, and faces National Security Law trial.³

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

POLITICAL PRISONERS: ARRESTS, CHARGES, & TRIALS

- Beijing Interprets Hong Kong’s National Security Law
- Jimmy Lai Sentenced to Five years for Fraud and NSL Trial Adjourned
- Chow Hang-tung Conviction Overturned
- Chow Hang-tung to Face Trial Without Jury
- Teenager Sentenced for Online Posts
- Man Arrested for Online Posts
- Stand News Sedition Trial to Continue
- Another Ten Sentenced in Relation to PolyU Protest
- Paramedic Jailed for Rioting
- Bail Application of Minor Charged Under National Security Law Rejected
- Tiananmen Vigil Leader Denied Bail

¹<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/14/china-removes-6-diplomats-from-uk-after-attack-on-hong-kong-protester-at-manchester-consulate/>

²<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/19/founder-of-hong-kong-top-pro-beijing-facebook-group-save-hk-among-4-elected-to-citys-legislature/>

³<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/16/hong-kong-court-rejects-bail-application-of-minor-charged-under-national-security-law/>

STATE OF THE RULE OF LAW AND POLICING

- Hong Kong Ends COVID-19 Restrictions
- Pro-Beijing Activist Elected to Election Committee

INTERNET FREEDOM IN THE CROSS HAIRS

- Google Refuses to Alter National Anthem Search Results
- Hong Kong Author Xi Xi Passes Away

A GREAT PURGE UNDERWAY

- Human Rights Lawyers Leave Hong Kong
- Vigil Held for Ürümchi Fire Victims in Hong Kong
- Mainland Student in Hong Kong Holds Blank Paper on China's National Constitution Day

STATE SECURITY AND ECONOMY

- Hong Kong Teachers to Study National Security Law
- University Students to Pass National Education Course to Graduate
- 6 Chinese Diplomats Removed from UK

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

- COVID Test Requirements for Hong Kong Travellers, and Government Response
- WTO Rules in Favour of Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Proposes Crowdfunding Regulations
- “Hello, Hong Kong” Tourism Campaign Launched
- HKETO Bill Introduced
- Hong Kong Protestors Face Deportation from the United States
- Hong Kong Groups Express Solidarity with Mainland Protesters
- Chinese Embassy in London Plans Rejected

POLITICAL PRISONERS: ARRESTS, CHARGES & TRIALS

Beijing Interprets Hong Kong's National Security Law

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) adopted an interpretation of Article 14 and Article 47 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The request for interpretation was submitted by Hong Kong's government.⁴

This will allow Hong Kong's Chief Executive to decide unilaterally which lawyers are permitted to represent defendants, and to choose the judges to preside over cases. It also empowers the National Security Committee to overrule judicial decisions. Hong Kong Watch urges all remaining foreign judges to withdraw from Hong Kong and urges the UK Foreign Secretary to impose immediate targeted sanctions.⁵

Jimmy Lai Sentenced to Five years for Fraud and NSL Trial Adjourned

Jimmy Lai (黎智英) was found guilty of two counts of fraud and sentenced to five years of prison. Lai had sublet part of the office space in the building to another company run by Lai. According to the judge, this firm's business did not conform with the lease agreement and that Lai had hidden the fact that the company was occupying space in the building. This prosecution is seen by many as a punishment for Lai's past activism.⁶

Lai's son, Sebastian, who is a British citizen like Jimmy Lai, said his father did nothing wrong and had already spent time in prison for "standing up for human rights". He expressed that it was "disappointing" the UK was not doing more to help Lai.⁷

Lai's lawyers have asked the United Nations to investigate his imprisonment and multiple criminal charges as "legal harassment" that punish him for speaking out. Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC from Doughty Street Chambers in London is one of Lai's representatives, and has filed an appeal with the U.N. special rapporteurs for freedom of opinion and expression, counter-terrorism and human rights, rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and human rights defenders.⁸

Lai also faces a National Security trial, which was set to begin in November 2022, but has been postponed to September 2023. His lawyer, Tim Owen, KC, has been denied a visa and

⁴ <https://www.chinadailyhk.com/article/307775>

⁵ <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2022/12/30/hong-kong-watch-calls-on-foreign-judges-to-withdraw-and-uk-government-to-impose-sanctions-following-beijings-ruling-on-hong-kong-lawyers>

⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/business-crime-asia-beijing-hong-kong-e6e240bf69e43ecf0f41d88d0322567e>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-63926374>

⁸ <https://apnews.com/article/business-jimmy-lai-europe-hong-kong-arrests-fbd6a0e59b3099ccc338f0d00d163990>

forced to leave Hong Kong. The Hong Kong government argued that there was a national security risk in having an overseas lawyer working on this case. After the highest court in Hong Kong rejected this submission, the Hong Kong government asked the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC), Beijing's highest legislative body, for interpretation.

Hong Kong's representative delegate on the Standing Committee said barring foreign lawyers from working on national security cases was appropriate and that national security defendants could be sent to the mainland for trial if they could not find a lawyer in Hong Kong.⁹

Lai's trials mark a further deterioration in Hong Kong's rule of law and Beijing's increasing involvement in Hong Kong's legal system.

Chow Hang-tung Conviction Overturned

Chow Hang-tung (鄒幸彤)'s conviction for unauthorised assembly was overturned, with the judge ruling that the Hong Kong Police hadn't properly justified the Annual Tiananmen vigil's ban. Although Chow's conviction was overturned, she remains in custody and faces two National Security charges.

The annual vigil, commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre, has been banned in Hong Kong since 2020, with the government citing COVID restrictions. In 2021, Chow was arrested for "inciting" the public to take part in the annual vigil. In January 2022, she was jailed for encouraging the assembly in breach of Covid laws.¹⁰ The organised vigil did not take place in June 2022, although people found other ways to commemorate, and six people were arrested.¹¹

Chow Hang-tung to Face Trial Without Jury

As mentioned, Chow Hang-tung (鄒幸彤) has also been accused of alleged incitement to subversion, under the National Security Law. On 1 December, she received a letter from the Department of Justice announcing that the case be tried without a jury. The reasons given were the "involvement of foreign factors in the case, protection of personal safety of jurors and their family members, and/or if the trial is to be conducted with a jury, there is a real risk that the due administration of justice might be impaired."¹²

⁹<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/13/trial-of-hong-kong-tycoon-jimmy-lai-delayed-after-british-lawyer-denied-visa-extension>

¹⁰<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-63967780>

¹¹<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/04/china/hong-kong-june-4-2022-intl-hnk/index.html>

¹²<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/05/national-security-case-against-hong-kong-tiananmen-vigil-group-to-be-tried-without-jury-chow-hang-tung-says/>

Teenager Sentenced for Online Posts

18 year-old Chui Hoi-chun (徐凱駿) has been sentenced to at least six months in a training centre, which is an alternative for defendants ages 14-20. He pleaded guilty to acting with seditious intent, which he did by online posts that insulted the national anthem and national flag, including publishing altered lyrics of the Chinese national anthem. The defence asked for leniency because Chui was only 16 at the time of the acts, but the judge refused it.¹³

Man Arrested for Online Posts

A 49 year-old man has been arrested, under the sedition law, for online posts which allegedly insulted the national anthem and shared the personal details of police officers and their families without their consent (doxxing). The sedition law dates from the colonial era and the anti-doxxing law was passed in September 2021. It has a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a fine of up to 1 million HKD.¹⁴

Stand News Seditious Trial to Continue

Due to the National Security Department's improper handling of evidence related to additional articles which prosecutors have cited as seditious since the trial began, lawyers applied for a termination of proceedings against two Stand News (立場新聞) editors. However, the court ruled that they could not prove that this compromised the fairness of the trial, or would "abuse the court procedures in future hearings".

Chung Pui-kuen (鍾沛權) and Patrick Lam (林紹桐) and the outlet's parent company, Best Pencil (Hong Kong) Limited, have been charged with conspiracy to publish seditious material related to news articles and commentaries between July 2020 and December last year. They are currently free and on bail after pleading not guilty. They face a maximum sentence of 2 years under the sedition charges.¹⁵

Another Ten Sentenced in Relation to PolyU Protest

10 people, including the chairman of the Democratic Party, Law Kin-hei (羅健熙), were charged with crimes including illegal assembly and possession of offensive weapons in public places because of the activities related to the 2019 Hong Kong Polytechnic University Protests. Four of them were arrested after trial and all were sentenced between 15 and 24 months by the District Court.¹⁶

¹³<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/14/hong-kong-teenager-sentenced-to-training-centre-for-sedition-over-extremely-insulting-online-posts/>

¹⁴<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/12/hong-kong-man-arrested-under-sedition-law-after-allegedly-insulting-national-anthem-online-and-doxxing-police/>

¹⁵<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-court-rejects-bid-terminate-sedition-trial-stand-news-2022-12-22/>

¹⁶<https://thewitnesshk.com/1118%E7%90%86%E5%A4%A7%E8%A1%9D%E7%AA%81-4%E4%BA%BA%E9%9D%9E%E6%B3%95%E9%9B%86%E7%B5%90%E7%AE%A1%E6%AD%A6%E5%88%A4%E5%9B%9A15%E8%87%B324%E6%9C%88-%E5%AE%98%E6%8C%87%E7%9B%B2%E7%9B%AE%E5%B4%87%E6%8B%9C/>

This included freelance journalist Tang Cheuk-yu (鄧卓儒) who was sentenced for 15 months for “possession of offensive weapons in a public place.” Although the court acknowledged that he was doing his job as a journalist at the site, he was carrying a multipurpose knife and a laser pen, which were deemed offensive.¹⁷

Paramedic Jailed for Rioting

Au Yeung Chun Fai (歐陽俊輝), a paramedic, has been sentenced to two years and four months in jail for charges linked to a protest in Mong Kok in November 2019. At the time, he and other protesters were accused of assaulting a bystander from mainland China who refused to erase photos of the scene from their phone. He has already pleaded guilty to taking part in a riot.¹⁸

Bail Application of Minor Charged Under National Security Law Rejected

Law Kai-wing, a member of the Returning Valiant (光城者) self-proclaimed “revolutionary” political group, had his bail application rejected. He was charged over an alleged terrorist conspiracy in relation to the organisation, when he was just 15. Six other members of the organisation have been charged under the National Security Law as well.¹⁹

Tiananmen Vigil Leader Denied Bail

Lee Cheuk-yan (李卓人), the former leader of the group behind Hong Kong’s annual June 4 Tiananmen Square vigil, Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, has been denied bail. The evidence of his alleged breach of the national security law was deemed “strong” and “undisputed.” The judge also highlighted the “real risk” of him absconding, since he sold his property and his wife moved to Britain last year. Lee was already jailed last year for a total of 20 months for his involvement in three unauthorised rallies during the 2019 protests, and a fourth related to a banned June 4 candlelight vigil in 2020 in commemoration of the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre. The vice chairs of the Alliance have also been charged with incitement to subversion.²⁰

¹⁷<https://rsf.org/en/hong-kong-rsf-calls-release-freelance-journalist-sentenced-15-months-possessing-offensive-weapons>

¹⁸<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/12/hong-kong-paramedic-jailed-for-28-months-over-rioting-in-2019/>

¹⁹<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/16/hong-kong-court-rejects-bail-application-of-minor-charged-under-national-security-law/>

²⁰<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3202284/hong-kong-high-court-rules-out-bail-former-leader-tiananmen-square-vigil-facing-subversion-charges>

THE STATE OF THE RULE OF LAW

Hong Kong Ends COVID-19 Restrictions

As Mainland China eases its COVID-19 restrictions, Hong Kong has followed by ending almost all restrictions as well. International arrivals will no longer have to do PCR tests, vaccine passes will no longer be necessary, and there will not be limits to the number of people gathering. The Chief Executive John Lee cited the high vaccine rate and capacity of the healthcare system for this decision.²¹

The BioNTech mRNA vaccine produced in collaboration with Chinese company Fosun has been fully approved for use in Hong Kong this month as well.²²

Pro-Beijing Activist Elected to Election Committee

Adrian Ho (何敬康) is the founder of the Facebook Group “Save HK” which had 100,000 members and was removed by Facebook. He was elected to Hong Kong’s Elector Committee, making him eligible to vote for the city’s chief executive in the future. He stated that he wanted to add his “patriotic, Hong Kong-loving and rational” voice to the legislature.²³

INTERNET FREEDOM IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Google Refuses to Alter National Anthem Search Results

Recently, the Hong Kong protest song Glory to Hong Kong was played at two sporting events in place of the Chinese National Anthem, which is Hong Kong's official anthem as well. Consequently, Glory to Hong Kong has risen to the top of Google search results when people search for Hong Kong’s national anthem.

John Lee, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, asked Google to change its search results, so that China’s national anthem appears as the top result, arguing that this is a "moral issue." Google refused to alter its search results and was in contact with Hong Kong's government to explain their content removal policies. Google previously suspended cooperation with Hong Kong police on data requests after the national security law came into force, and YouTube, which is owned by Google, removed John Lee’s channel after he was sanctioned by the US.²⁴

²¹<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-64107851>

²²<https://investors.biontech.de/news-releases/news-release-details/biontech-and-fosun-pharma-provide-covid-19-vaccine-doses>

²³<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/19/founder-of-hong-kong-top-pro-beijing-facebook-group-save-hk-among-4-elected-to-citys-legislature/>

²⁴<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-63983802>

Hong Kong Author Xi Xi Passes Away

Xi Xi (西西), born in Shanghai in 1937, arrived in Hong Kong with her family in 1950. She was often credited with putting Hong Kong on the map in the literary world. In 2020, she said she was shocked by the sight of young people bloodied in the huge and often violent democracy protests that had swept Hong Kong in the preceding months. She told a local newspaper that “Young people don’t owe us anything. Instead, it is us who owe them an ideal society.”²⁵

THE GREAT PURGE UNDERWAY

Lawyers Leave Hong Kong

Since the imposition of the National Security Law in 2020, many lawyers have left or are planning to leave Hong Kong. They have received anonymous threats by text message and email, had GPS tracking devices placed under their cars, been ambushed by reporters working for state-controlled media, and other forms of intimidation, in addition to accusations of disloyalty. This primarily affects high-profile lawyers, although it has had a chilling effect throughout the legal community, with many other lawyers leaving as well. Many are preparing for the possibility of never returning to Hong Kong.²⁶

Vigil Held for Ürümchi Fire Victims in Hong Kong

Around 50 people, including Mainland Chinese people, met and stood in silence to commemorate the victims of the 24 November Ürümchi fire. Some also held up blank sheets of paper to symbolise censorship. Over 30 police officers cordoned off the area and asked all attendees for their identification. The event was peaceful until the activist Alexandra Wong Fung-yiu (王鳳瑤) “Grandma Wong”, 66, had her umbrella snatched and was knocked over. She was taken to hospital and the attacker was taken away by the police.²⁷

Mainland Student in Hong Kong Holds Blank Paper on China's National Constitution Day

A student from Mainland China held a blank piece of paper in Victoria Park on China’s National Constitution Day (11 November). She was repeatedly stopped by the police. She expressed that Mainland students in Hong Kong have the responsibility to stand up and that

²⁵<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/19/hong-kong-author-xi-xi-credited-with-putting-city-on-literary-map-dies-aged-85/>

²⁶<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/china-lawyers-crackdown-exodus/>

²⁷<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3201318/event-held-hong-kongs-central-mark-fire-mainland-china-killed-10-and-injured-9>

her courage to speak out came from the protestors in Mainland China. The police have stepped up patrols at multiple gathering places to prevent crowds from gathering.²⁸

STATE SECURITY AND ECONOMY

Hong Kong Teachers to Study National Security Law

The Hong Kong Education Bureau has published “Guidelines on Teachers’ Professional Conduct” which requires all registered teachers to have a basic understanding of the National Security Law as well as the Basic Law. In addition, those deemed to have committed serious misconduct will be disqualified for life. Teachers have also been told to report to the school management, the police or relevant departments if they receive any information that might be illegal, “violate the moral standards commonly accepted in society,” or if they uncover any potential illegal activities. This is the latest step in the increasing control that authorities have exerted over teachers and the curriculum since 2019.²⁹

University Students to Pass National Education Course to Graduate

From the current academic year onwards, all university undergraduate students in Hong Kong will have to pass a national education course in order to graduate. Each university in Hong Kong can design their own curriculum, converting both local and national topics. These range from the University of Hong Kong’s 10-hour online course to Chinese University’s 40-hour self-study course. Several universities have made these courses compulsory for postgraduate students as well.³⁰

6 Chinese Diplomats Removed from UK

China has removed six diplomats from the UK, including the Consul-General, after the British the Greater Manchester Police requested that six Chinese officials waive diplomatic immunity so they could be questioned” according to the British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly.

An investigation is taking place over a protest that took place outside the Chinese Consulate in Manchester, in October 2022. At this protest, the Consul General Zheng Xiyuan allegedly dragged a Hongkonger, Bob Chan, into consulate grounds and beat him. Zheng later stated that it was his “duty” to do this in defence of his country and leader.³¹

²⁸<https://www.voachinese.com/a/mainland-student-in-hk-blank-white-paper-rally-on-chinese-constitution-day-20221205/6863115.html>

²⁹<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/16/new-guidelines-tell-hong-kong-teachers-to-study-national-security-law/>

³⁰<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/3202750/universities-hong-kong-will-require-students-pass-national-education-courses-graduating>

³¹<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/12/14/china-removes-6-diplomats-from-uk-after-attack-on-hong-kong-protester-at-manchester-consulate/>

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

COVID Test Requirements for Hong Kong Travellers, and Government Response

Australia, Canada, France, India, the United States and South Korea have introduced a requirement for travellers from Hong Kong to show negative PCR tests before arrival. Japan has also limited the number of airports that Hong Kong travellers can land at.³² This is due to the growing number of COVID cases in Mainland China and the Hong Kong government's step-by-step border reopening plan with the Mainland. Chief Secretary Eric Chan has appealed to several countries and sent letters to the consuls general of several countries saying that the “measures are unnecessary and inappropriate.”³³

WTO Rules in Favour of Hong Kong

The World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled that Hong Kong can continue to label goods ‘Made in Hong Kong.’ In 2020, US President Trump signed an executive order which ended Hong Kong’s special trading status in the US, and the US Federal Register required that Hong Kong-made goods be relabelled as “Made in China ” to be imported into the US. The WTO found that this violated US commitments to the global trade organisation, a judgement that the Hong Kong Government welcomed and which affirmed its distinct customs territory.³⁴

Hong Kong Proposes Crowdfunding Regulations

Hong Kong has proposed new crowdfunding regulations, including a Crowdfunding Affairs Office that will require prior applications for any crowdfunding activity that “raises funds from individuals or entities of Hong Kong, or individuals or entities located in Hong Kong.” It has the potential to apply to anyone, anywhere in the world, as determined by the office. This is a response to the crowdfunding to support political causes since 2019, such as the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund. Nevertheless, it will have much greater impact and globally extend the political vetting of any crowdfunding in Hong Kong.³⁵

“Hello, Hong Kong” Tourism Campaign Launched

In an attempt to bring back the visitors lost since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hong Kong has launched a new tourism campaign called “Hello, Hong Kong”. This coincides with the lifting of restrictions for international arrivals and within Hong Kong. Visitors will be

³²<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-asks-japan-drop-airport-restrictions-with-60000-travellers-affected-2022-12-29/>

³³<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3205430/hong-kongs-no-2-official-appeals-consulates-drop-unnecessary-restrictions-citys-travellers-after>

³⁴https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/hong-kong-economy/article/3204181/wto-rules-hong-kong-its-trade-dispute-us?module=perpetual_scroll_0&pgtype=article&campaign=3204181

³⁵ <https://thediplomat.com/2023/01/hong-kongs-crowdfunding-regulations-could-have-global-ramifications/>

presented with special treats and offers, and over 200 tourism events have already been confirmed for 2023.³⁶

HKETO Bill Introduced

US Senator Marco Rubio and Representative Chris Smith introduced the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO) Certification Act to reevaluate the United States' recognition of HKETOs following Hong Kong's loss of autonomy. This legislation would require the President to certify whether HKETOs in the United States merit the extension of privileges, exemptions, and immunities that they currently maintain.³⁷

This follows from the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Annual Report published in November 2022. One of their recommendations was to eliminate diplomatic privileges conferred on the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices until Hong Kong is deemed sufficiently autonomous from China or if the HKETO is considered an official part of the People's Republic of China's mission to the US.³⁸

In October 2022, Hong Kong Watch published a report on HKETOs, recommending that host states review the offices' special status and privileges because Hong Kong's autonomy has drastically reduced.³⁹

Hong Kong Protestors Face Deportation from the United States

Over 50 advocacy and human rights groups, including Hong Kong Watch, have written an open letter to US President Biden calling on his administration to extend a deadline preventing the deportation of Hong Kong Protestors beyond its current date of February 5.⁴⁰ Many fled the city after the crackdown began, they face harassment abroad and are afraid to return to Hong Kong.⁴¹

Hong Kong Groups Express Solidarity with Mainland Protesters

55 Hong Kong Groups, including Hong Kong Watch, have written and signed an open letter standing "with our friends demanding freedom and justice from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)." This is a response to the peaceful protest in China that started after the 24

³⁶<https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/hong-kong-foreign-visitors-campaign-b2246614.html>

³⁷<https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2022/12/rubio-smith-introduce-bill-to-remove-ccp-influenced-hong-kong-economic-and-trade-offices-from-u-s>

³⁸<https://www.uscc.gov/annual-report/2022-annual-report-congress>

³⁹<https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2022/10/13/new-hong-kong-watch-policy-paper-calls-for-host-countries-to-review-the-status-and-rebrand-hong-kong-economic-and-trade-offices>

⁴⁰<https://www.hkdc.us/press-release/joint-letter-to-president-biden%3A-renew-and-expand-d.e.d.-for-hong-kong-ers>

⁴¹<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/hongkong-exiles-12282022095901.html>

November fire in Ürümchi. Many vigils and peaceful protests have been organised outside Mainland China to express solidarity.⁴²

Chinese Embassy in London Plans Rejected

The Tower Hamlets council voted unanimously against the proposed development to move the current Chinese Embassy to a larger site in Central London, the former Royal Mint, that is opposite the Tower of London and Tower Bridge. It would have been the largest diplomatic base in the UK. According to the planning application, the local council received 51 objection letters from local residents, many of whom were concerned about their safety and feared being swept up into protests outside the Embassy.⁴³

⁴²https://docs.google.com/document/u/1/d/e/2PACX-1vSwUpU5teeXRYrsHl6HgLaOU1p8ZW9wi_cVGPivdQz-MTre20txLGhBZsvR0lnZE7BxCvOI6-B8Xk/pub?urp=gmail_link

⁴³<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/02/london-council-tower-hamlets-rejects-new-chinese-embassy-amid-residents-safety-fears>