



律師中立監察組
NEUTRAL
LEGAL OBSERVERS GROUP

PRESS RELEASE

2 December 2019
Hong Kong

Hong Kong legal observers release ground-breaking legal report on recent events in Hong Kong, with 16 recommendations for participants, Police and Government

The Hong Kong Neutral Legal Observers Group (**HKNLOG**) has released a ground-breaking report of key legal issues arising from the ongoing protests in Hong Kong (**Report**).

The first of its kind in Hong Kong, the Report covers HKNLOG's observations of the protests and events arising from them from 17 August 2019 to 1 October 2019 (**Report Period**) and what it means for the city's much treasured rule of law.

A copy of the Report is available here: <http://www.legalobservers.org.hk/publications>.

Purpose and scope of the Report

The Report aims to raise awareness about issues relevant to Hong Kong's rule of law which forms the bedrock of its status as an international financial centre under the "One Country Two Systems" principle.

This includes:

- 1 reporting on what HKNLOG's members have seen during their observations, and other topical issues relating to or arising from public gatherings and related activities in Hong Kong during the Report Period;
- 2 providing a summary of relevant Court cases handed down during the Report Period; and
- 3 raising awareness of key legal issues relevant to public gatherings and potential concerns that we believe warrant further focus by the Government, Police, participants and members of the general public, in connection with the points above.

While the Report is not exhaustive, the 80 page report closely examines events that occurred between August and October, 2019. It applies legal scrutiny to the behaviour of participants in public gatherings and the Police in a balanced, dispassionate, and impartial fashion. It culminates in 16 recommendations that HKNLOG believes are essential to enable the restoration of trust and strengthen the rule of law in Hong Kong.

An entirely volunteer-led effort, HKNLOG is preparing further reports into other key events that have occurred after the period covered in this report, and will publish them in the forthcoming months.

While HKNLOG recognises that no reports can ever be entirely comprehensive or exhaustive, given the number, scale, and frequency of these events in Hong Kong, its reports are primarily based on its own eyewitness accounts and its analysis limited to a more systematic, empirical, and legally methodical approach that avoids positional arguments and moral judgments.

Therefore, HKNLOG believes the Report can provide a strong foundation to discuss numerous incidents with a better understanding of the law for all parties to the debate.

About HKNLOG

HKNLOG was formed in August 2019 by a group of Hong Kong lawyers to reflect our professional duty to uphold the rule of law, and following key events that rocked Hong Kong including the "721" incident in Yuen Long, the storming of the Legislative Council and escalating use of violence and force.

Among other things, this has involved HKNLOG members attending public gatherings as observers and providing community training to build awareness of Hong Kong residents' rights and obligations. Further details are provided in paragraph 5 of the Report and on our website at www.legalobservers.org.hk.

Despite being less than a year old, HKNLOG currently has over 50 Ordinary Members, all of whom are resident in Hong Kong and registered legal practitioners. Our members come from across the spectrum of age, seniority, race, gender, religion, ethnicity and political views.

HKNLOG is a not-for-profit registered society under the Societies Ordinance (Cap. 151 of the Laws of Hong Kong).

Our mandate

- Assisting our colleagues in the legal profession in discharging their obligations to clients and in the administration of justice
- Conducting research into the full extent and exercise of the rights and obligations of Hong Kong residents under the law, and disseminating that information quickly, efficiently, and widely
- Educating and training Hong Kong residents as to their rights and obligations under the law and encouraging everyone to exercise those rights lawfully, without violence
- Attending public gatherings as independent observers to provide information (where appropriate) and/or record and collect evidence of unlawful behaviour in aid of proceedings
- Conducting ourselves, at all times, professionally and within the boundaries of our professional obligations and the principles stated herein.

The group includes lawyers of all levels from private practice, in house and barristers. All of them are registered to practice law and are resident in Hong Kong. The group and its members act in their personal capacities as neutral observers and will at all times be transparent about their activities.

To ensure that our members will be highly and easily visible on the ground, and distinct from individuals participating in public gatherings or other members of the public, we wear high-visibility green vests and (where applicable) green hard hats with the words “律師中立監察組” and “Hong Kong Neutral Legal Observers Group” on them.

Contacts and social media

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- **Facebook** | <https://www.facebook.com/groups/391668191704965/>
- **Linkedin** | <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/10481288/>
- **Twitter** | @hk_legal
- **Instagram** | @hk_legalobservers

Additional notes:

1. *All references to “Hong Kong” are to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China.*
2. *A Chinese language version of this press release and the Executive Summary of the Report will be issued shortly.*