

Organisers planning another mass rally in Hong Kong warn police not to reject their request as move would effectively mean imposing curfew in city

Tuesday 16 July 2019, by [CHEUNG Tony](#), [LUM Alvin](#) (Date first published: 16 July 2019).

Civil Human Rights Front, which organised two mass protests that drew historic numbers onto the streets in June, wants to hold march this weekend

Security Bureau denies reports government is looking into declaring a curfew and banning demonstrations following escalation of violence

Organisers planning another mass march against Hong Kong's embattled government this weekend have warned police that denying them a permit to proceed would effectively mean imposing a curfew on the city after the force asked them on Tuesday to postpone the protest because of safety concerns.

The Civil Human Rights Front, which organised two mass protests that drew historic numbers onto the streets in June against the government's now-suspended extradition bill [1], said it wanted to hold the latest march on Saturday or Sunday, rather than push it back to August as requested by police.

The two sides met hours after the Security Bureau denied reports that the government was looking into declaring a curfew and banning demonstrations following unprecedented protest violence [2] in Sha Tin last Sunday that left at least 28 protesters, police officers and journalists injured.

"The government will continue to follow the existing mechanism requiring notification to the police and the Letter of No Objection. Apart from this, the government has no other plans," a spokesman said.

The front's planned march would be a major protest among a series in the pipeline, including - a social workers' silent march from Wan Chai to the Chief Executive's Office in Admiralty on Sunday,

- rallies against Chinese state-owned publishers at the Hong Kong Book Fair [3] on Wednesday,
- demonstrations in Mong Kok, Hung Hom, Western district and Tseung Kwan O in the coming weekends.

Front convenor Jimmy Sham Tsz-kit said rather than suggesting a postponement, police should allow them to go ahead with the march from Causeway Bay to the city's administrative and legislative centre in Admiralty or the Court of Final Appeal in Central on either Saturday or Sunday.

"They hope we will reschedule the march to August due to public safety concerns," Sham said.

"But if police are handling controversies by withholding a Letter of No Objection from us, they are just responding to people's human rights demands by further suppressing them."

Sham said he would follow up with police at another meeting on Wednesday.

Some users of popular online forum LIHKG suggested they would escalate protest action on July 21

as Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor [4] had failed to respond to their calls for a complete withdrawal of the bill, among other demands, by July 14.

Asked about the possibility of violence after the main march, because of the pattern of clashes after peaceful rallies, front vice-convenor Figo Chan Ho-wun said it would depend on factors such as the government's response to people's demands and how police handled the crowd.

The group had originally planned a rally on Tim Mei Avenue outside government headquarters on July 21, but expanded it into a march, after organisers of another protest on the same day cancelled their plan, apparently in a show of solidarity with the front.

The weekend march will call for the appointment of a judge-led inquiry into the use of force by police against protesters as well as the total withdrawal of the unpopular bill which would have allowed the transfer of fugitives to mainland China and other jurisdictions with which Hong Kong has no extradition deal.

How a peaceful rally led to bloodshed and chaos in Hong Kong mall
[5]

The police request for a postponement came after frontline officers warned top brass they were reaching breaking point in the face of constant clashes with protesters.

At least 47 people were arrested over the violence at Sha Tin's New Town Plaza shopping centre after a peaceful protest which drew 115,000 people, according to organisers.

Two members of youth group Demosisto, Chu Yan-ho and William Liu Wai-lim, were released on bail of HK\$3,000 (US\$385) on Tuesday after being detained for more than 40 hours.

The pair were arrested on Sunday night on suspicion of unlawful assembly, after they attended the Sha Tin protest. Police armed with warrants searched their homes on Tuesday afternoon, but the pair said officers did not seize anything.

In another development, a new survey by the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute, headed by former University of Hong Kong pollster Dr Robert Chung Ting-yiu, found that three top officials' popularity ratings had hit a new low, while the city's leader fared slightly better [6].

Carrie Lam continued to lobby support from her pro-establishment allies on Tuesday, meeting rural group Heung Yee Kuk, whose chairman, Kenneth Lau Ip keung, said they had raised concerns about the escalating anti-government protests.

"Stability and safety are the basic elements for the success of Hong Kong. If we lose these elements, Hong Kong will lose a lot of development opportunities," said Lau, also a lawmaker and an adviser in Lam's cabinet.

Lau said the chief executive had acknowledged Hong Kong's deep-rooted problems such as housing [7].

Links

[1] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/hong-kong-extradition-law>

[2] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3018579/hong-kong-police-chief-condemns-thug-protesters-after>

[3] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/hong-kong-book-fair>

[4] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/carrie-lam>

[5]

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3018718/head-wounds-severed-finger-police-and-protesters>

[6]

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3018882/embattled-hong-kong-leader-carrie-lams-approval-rating>

[7] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/hong-kong-housing>

P.S.

<https://scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3018885/organisers-planning-another-mass-rally-hong-kong-warn>