

# Hong Kong officially withdraws controversial extradition bill from legislature

Wednesday 23 October 2019, by [CHENG Kris](#), [CHUNG Kimmy](#), [LAM Jeffie](#), [LUM Alvin](#) (Date first published: 23 October 2019).

Kris CHENG (HKFP)

<https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/10/23/just-hong-kong-officially-withdraws-controversial-extradition-bill-legislature/>

Hong Kong's government has officially withdrawn the controversial extradition bill which sparked over 20 weeks of protest and civil unrest. The move came a week late due to protests at the Legislative Council during the Chief Executive's policy address.

The second reading for the bill resumed on Wednesday 23 afternoon. Secretary for Security John Lee then announced the bill was withdrawn.

In response, Democratic Party lawmaker Ted Hui asked if he will resign. Lee said he had nothing to add.

*"John Lee! Step down! Teresa Cheng! Step down!"* democrats chanted.

LegCo President Andrew Leung ordered Civic Party lawmaker Kwok Ka-ki to leave. Kwok refused, prompting Leung to suspend the meeting.

## 20 weeks of unrest

The proposed legal amendment, which would have allowed fugitive transfers to mainland China, led to a large-scale protest march on June 9 which - according to the organiser - was attended by one million people.

The government refused to axe the bill, citing the need to close a legal loophole.

Protesters and police then clashed outside the legislature on June 12, resulting in the first use of tear gas by police since the 2014 Umbrella Movement. Demonstrations have continued every weekend since.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam announced the suspension of the bill on June 15, though the move failed to allay public anger. Two million people marched in protest the next day, according to organiser estimates.

On July 9, Lam declared the bill "dead" but stopped short of announcing a full withdrawal.

Responding to one of the core demands made by protesters, Lam finally said on September 4 that the bill would be formally withdrawn at the legislature.

Kwok Ka-ki told reporters on Wednesday that Lee should explain why the government refused to withdraw the bill until now, adding that lawmakers should seek responsibility from the government: *"If even Lee can escape our questions today, [Justice Secretary] Teresa Cheng and Carrie Lam must bear responsibility and step down,"* he said.

Despite the scrapping of the bill, protesters' demands have evolved into calls for an independent

commission of inquiry into police's handling of the unrest, retraction of the use of the word "riots" to characterise the protests, amnesty for all arrested protesters, as well as universal suffrage. Many have also called for disbanding of the police force.

## **Hong Kong's 'dead' extradition bill finally buried as government formally withdraws it**

**Alvin Lum, Kimmy Chung, Jeffie Lamn (SCMP)**

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3034263/hong-kong-government-officially-withdraws-extradition-bill>

*Convenor of pro-democracy bloc Tanya Chan says protesters also have other demands, including an independent probe into alleged police brutality and the implementation of universal suffrage. But Beijing-friendly lawmaker Gary Chan says city leader Carrie Lam has already acceded to protesters' demands.*

Hong Kong's extradition bill [1], declared "dead" months ago by the government, was finally buried on Wednesday 23 with the formal withdrawal of the much-hated legislation which sparked the city's worst crisis in decades.

**But there was little hope it would be enough to ease the anti-government protests and civil unrest gripping the city for well over four months now.**

The announcement was made by **Secretary for Security John Lee Ka-chiu** in the legislature, following Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor's promise in September that it would be officially withdrawn.

*"As members of the public have diverging views over the bill, which has created social conflicts, the government has decided to suspend the legislation effort following research and reflection,"* Lee said at the Legislative Council meeting on Wednesday.

*"To spell out the government's position clearly over the legislation effort, in accordance with the Legco's rule 64(2), I formally announce the withdrawal of the bill."*

The development came six hours after the murder suspect, Chan Tong-kai, whose case sparked the introduction of the bill, was released from prison [2] as he finished his sentence on money-laundering charges.

The controversial bill was proposed in February to make allowance for the transfer of fugitives to jurisdictions the city does not have an extradition agreement with, including mainland China.

The government claimed the bill was aimed to plug loopholes exposed by a homicide case last year in which the Taiwanese authorities were unable to extradite Chan, a Hongkonger, accused of killing his pregnant girlfriend in Taipei.

Formulated with little consultation, the proposed legislation triggered an outcry among the pro-democracy bloc and the business sector and prompted millions to take to the streets in June. Lam suspended the bill on June 15, and declared it "dead" in July, but the moves did little to defuse the increasingly violent protests.

**Civic Party lawmaker Tanya Chan, the convenor of the pro-democracy bloc, said the withdrawal came as "too little, too late".**

**She said the government's slow response over the issue had deeply polarised the city. Chan also said the ongoing political crisis would not be solved by the mere withdrawal of the bill as the protesters also had other demands, including an independent probe into police's use of force on them and the implementation of universal suffrage.**

**On media reports that Beijing was planning to replace Lam with an “interim” leader by March 2020, Chan said the issue of Hong Kong’s protests was much beyond the city leader’s resignation.**

***“We will need an inquiry to hold a section of the officers accountable for using excessive force. It’s a matter of citizens’ safety.”***

**But Beijing-friendly lawmaker Gary Chan Hak-kan, of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, said Lam had already acceded to the protesters’ demands.**

He said more dialogue sessions should be held now for the government to forge a consensus among the public to break the impasse, which had entered its fifth month.

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#### **Links :**

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

[2] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3034128/hong-kong-murder-suspect-c-han-tong-kai-who-triggered>

[3] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hongkong/politics/article/3010273/hongkong-extradition-bill-chaos-and-confusion-reigns-how>

[4] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hongkong/politics/article/3018253/extradition-bill-crisis-why-are-young-people-hong-kong>