

Hong Kong authorities grill union which held street stalls on Covid-19 and national security law

mardi 11 janvier 2022, par [LEE Peter](#) (Date de rédaction antérieure : 11 janvier 2022).

The Hong Kong White Collar (Administration and Clerical) Connect Union said the scope of unions is “not confined to the narrow definition of employment relationships.”

An independent Hong Kong trade union has defended its actions and comments made in opposition to the city’s national security legislation after receiving an inquiry from the city’s union administration body regarding alleged rule violations.

The Hong Kong White Collar (Administration and Clerical) Connect Union (HKWCCU) received the mailed inquiry from the Registry of Trade Unions on December 28.

On Monday 10, the union submitted its official response to the registry’s office at the Harbour Building, in Sheung Wan.

After submitting the document, vice-chair of the HKWCCU Angel Cheng told reporters that the registry had asked them about a series of union activities – including street stalls and commentaries about Covid-19 and the national security law. They asked whether the actions were in line with the Trade Unions Ordinance and the union’s constitution.

In its written response, the organisation said that the scope of unions *“includes advocating for and protecting [workers’] economic and social interests”* but is *“not confined to the narrow definition of employment relationships,”* citing international labour conventions listed under Article 39 of Hong Kong’s Basic Law.

The group asked the Registry of Trade Unions for clarification on the definition of rule-breaching activities and said it could be difficult to continue its duties because of unclear boundaries.

Cheng said the issues of concern could impact Hong Kong’s economic and social stability. *“Our union’s actions aimed at preserving a healthy social system, an open and transparent business environment and a good working environment.”*

“All of these are necessary prerequisites for [safeguarding] workers’ rights,” she added.

In June 2020, the white collar rights group was among some 30 unions representing different industries that participated in a *“referendum”* calling for city-wide strikes and class-boycotts against the implementation of the national security law.

The movement was eventually called off as the polls were shy of the proposed threshold.

In response to a question from HKFP, Cheng said the poll was mentioned in the registry’s inquiry. She said the authority also asked about street stalls related to the national security law, and the union’s support for strikes in favour of border closures in the early days of the pandemic. The closure of the mainland border was advocated by the pro-democracy medical union the Hospital Authority Employees Alliance (HAEA).

Disbanding unions

The white collar workers' union registered under the address of now-defunct Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) amid the 2019 pro-democracy protests and unrest, when the city saw a surge of new unions.

However, multiple civil society groups, from newer activist unions to decades-old workers' organisations, have folded since Beijing's national security law came into force.

These include the **HKCTU**, Hong Kong's largest pro-democracy coalition of trade unions, and the **Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union (PTU)**, the city's largest teachers' organisation.

The Registry of Trade Unions also revoked the registration of the **General Union of Hong Kong Speech Therapists** after five former members were charged with allegedly publishing seditious children's books.

Apart from the HKWCCU, the **HAEA** received a similar inquiry from the registry in September last year. It also denied the authority's accusations.

According to *Oriental Daily*, authorities are keeping a close watch over more than 10 new unions, with their registrations at risk of being revoked if any are found to have violated the Trade Unions Ordinance.

Chiu, an HKWCCU committee member, told HKFP after meeting with reporters that it is up to the government whether the union will be disqualified, adding "*there's not much we can do.*"

P.-S.

<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/01/11/hong-kong-authorities-grill-union-which-held-street-stalls-on-covid-19-and-national-security-law/>