

China's Xi Jinping meets Hong Kong leader, backs Carrie Lam's 'hard work' amid protests

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Xi met Lam in Shanghai, ahead of import expo, to express support for effort to restore order. Meeting was first for the two leaders since Hong Kong unrest broke out in June.

Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed “*high trust*” in Hong Kong’s embattled leader Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor in a meeting with Lam on Monday in Shanghai and “*fully affirmed*” the chief executive’s response to unrest that has rattled the city since June, according to official media.

The formal sit-down was the first official meeting between the two since anti-government protests [1] began in early June, sparked by the now-withdrawn extradition bill [2].

Responding to a report presented by Lam on the recent situation in Hong Kong, **Xi Jinping** affirmed the “*hard work*” done so far by the city’s chief executive to stabilise the situation and restore order, state news agency Xinhua reported, adding that Lam had Beijing’s trust in terms of work that still needed to be carried out.

“The central government has high trust in you and fully affirms the work of you and the governance team of Hong Kong,” Xi was quoted as saying. *“To curb the violence and stop the chaos in accordance with the law is still the most important task faced by Hong Kong.”*

“At the same time, we must do a good job in dialogue with the community and improve people’s livelihood,” Xi said. *“I hope that people from all walks of life in Hong Kong will comprehensively and accurately implement the ‘one country, two systems’ policy and the Basic Law and work together to safeguard Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability.”*

Xi is in Shanghai to open the China International Import Expo which is expected to open on Tuesday, after inspecting the city’s “urban renewal work” on Sunday.

The Post reported earlier that Carrie Lam had been called to Beijing for an unscheduled meeting with Vice-Premier Han Zheng on Wednesday, with sources saying this would involve key policy directives on the protest-hit city, amid discussions on the national security law.

Hong Kong was high on the agenda of **the fourth plenum [4] of the Chinese Communist Party**, a top-level closed door meeting of China’s political elites at end of October.

The meeting’s communique said China will continue to uphold the one country, two systems principle, but also called for actions [5] to “*establish a sound legal system and enforcement mechanism for safeguarding national security in the special administrative regions*”.

In a news conference following up on Monday’s 4 meeting, **Shen Chunyao, head of the National People’s Congress committee overseeing the Basic Law**, said the most direct way for Beijing to exercise authority over Hong Kong and Macau was through the appointment of their principal officials.

He added the committee needed to improve the way it interpreted the Basic Law, Hong Kong’s mini-constitution.

“We also need to establish and improve the legal system and enforcement mechanism for the special administrative region [of Hong Kong] to safeguard national security, and support the SAR to strengthen its law enforcement,” he said.

Shen also vowed to “*strengthen*” national education in Hong Kong and Macau, especially among public officials and young people.

He added there would be new measures to integrate Hong Kong and Macau into mainland China’s economy.

According to Xinhua, Politburo member and top diplomat Yang Jiechi, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and **Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi**, who oversees the country’s police force, were present in Lam’s meeting with Xi.

This is the second time Zhao Kezhi, who is newly added to China’s top level Hong Kong and Macau affairs decision-making body, appeared in meetings with Xi.

He appeared in Xi’s meeting with Macau’s new leader mid September, signalling China’s security forces might become increasingly involved in Hong Kong and Macau-related affairs, to make sure the turmoil does not spill over to mainland China.

Civil unrest including violent street demonstrations have gripped Hong Kong since June. They were ignited by an ill-fated bill that would have allowed for extradition to mainland China, but quickly developed into a wider movement against Lam’s government.

Links

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

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

[3] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3036260/daughter-maxims-founder-hits-out-a-gain-hong-kong-protesters>

[4] <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3036003/how-beijing-plans-use-powers-contained-basic-law-tighten>

[5] <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3035913/beijing-reiterates-call-hong-kong-prioritise-national-security>

[6] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3030735/hong-kong-leader-carrie-lam-sought-president-xi-jinpings>

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<https://scmp.com/news/china/article/3036308/chinas-xi-jinping-meets-hong-kongs-leader-affirms-lam-shard-work-needed>