

Hong Kong : more than 7,600 arrested during unrest

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More than 7,600 arrested during unrest. Only 1,200 of those held have been prosecuted. Police officers earn more than HK\$2 billion in overtime pay since disturbances erupted in June.

Hong Kong police have arrested more than 7,600 people during the social unrest which has gripped the city since June, of whom only one in six has been prosecuted.

During the same period, officers earned more than HK\$2 billion in overtime pay.

The force also revealed details of the amounts of ammunition used in the street clashes, triggered by proposed legislation which would have allowed criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China, among other jurisdictions.

The government has since dropped the proposal, but not before the protests morphed into a wider movement for greater democracy and an investigation into the police's use of force.

Replying to lawmakers on its expenditure this financial year, the Security Bureau said on Tuesday 7 night that **police officers arrested 7,613 people** aged between 11 and 84 years old in **about 1,400 anti-government protests** between June 9 and February 29, for offences including rioting, taking part in an unlawful assembly and wounding.

About 17.5 per cent of the arrestees were under 18.

Among those held, 1,206 had faced charges, of whom 52 had been convicted by a court.

Another 27 had been summonsed and two directly bound over.

Officers had released 513 people unconditionally.

"Violent protesters caused extensive and significant damage in many districts across the territory, wantonly attacked police officers, blocked roads, set things on fire and even assaulted people who held different views," the bureau said.

The biggest number of arrests came in relation to the 13-day siege at Polytechnic University from November 17, during which 814 people were detained. Another 610 protesters were netted off campus that night and the following morning, after the clashes began. There were 352 arrests at a January 1 protest.

Police have faced accusations of brutality and excessive force during disturbances that turned increasingly violent as radical protesters clashed with officers. The bureau estimated that protesters hurled 5,000 petrol bombs and committed arson on more than 750 occasions.

As of the end of February, officers had fired 16,191 rounds of tear gas, 10,100 rubber bullets, 1,880 sponge bullets, 2,033 beanbag rounds and 19 live rounds. A total of 591 officers were injured.

The bureau said protesters launched extremely violent attacks on police, at times threatening officers' lives.

"Some even attempted to snatch away the force's firearms," the official response read. *"Should a revolver fall into the hands of criminals, death and injuries may be caused and the consequences are*

unimaginable.”

The force used 1,491 bottles of pepper spray and wielded batons at 104 protest-related incidents. Its water cannon vehicles and anti-riot trucks were deployed on 65 and 68 days respectively.

The Complaints Against Police Office, which is part of the force, received 1,678 cases stemming from the protests, most of them alleging misconduct, negligence or assault by officers. Personal data of more than 3,200 officers and their relatives were disclosed.

As of the end of February, Hong Kong police had been paid HK\$2.06 billion in overtime during the unrest, with about 12,000 officers receiving around HK\$16,000 per month.

Links

[1]
<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3078849/lawyers-hong-kongs-police-watchdog-defend-its-review>

[2]
<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3074887/hong-kong-hits-back-us-report-police-brutality-saying-city>

[3]
<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3038478/hong-kong-protests-bitter-stand-inside>

[4]
<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3076269/some-complaints-against-hong-kong-police-substantiated>

[5]
<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3078498/minors-arrested-during-protests-mostly-victims>

[6]
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