

Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters gather in shopping malls across city to chant slogans

Sunday 10 May 2020, by [CREERY Jennifer](#), [CHEUNG Tony](#), [GRUNDY Tom](#), [HO Kelly](#), [SUM Lok Kei](#), [WONG Rachel](#) (Date first published: 10 May 2020).

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Hong Kong protests: hundreds gather in shopping malls across city to chant slogans, stage singalongs

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3083709/hong-kong-protests-hundreds-gather-shopping-malls-across>

by Sum Lok-kei and Tony Cheung (SCMP)

Officers armed with non-lethal guns enter Moko Mall in Mong Kok and fire what is believed to be a pepper ball to disperse protesters.

Police also enter several other malls and ask demonstrators to leave, warning that they are violating public-gathering restrictions amid the pandemic.

Hundreds of protesters gathered in at least 10 shopping malls across the city on Sunday to chant slogans and sing the anthem of the anti-government movement, Glory to Hong Kong.

Police said they arrested one man who had materials capable of making petrol bombs.

In the evening, a small group of protesters in the busy Mong Kok shopping district attempted to block roads by setting trash and rubbish bins on fire but were quickly dispersed by police.

Officers in riot gear then took up guard on the street, firing pepper spray on a number of occasions, including twice at reporters, and taking away several people.

Earlier, protesters circulated messages online, urging people to gather in malls by 3pm. The shopping centres included Harbour City in Tsim Sha Tsui, Cityplaza in Taikoo Shing and Moko Mall in Mong Kok.

Since April 26, when hundreds gathered in Cityplaza to chant slogans, Hong Kong has seen a revival of protests, which had died down because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The protesters had earlier planned a march from Tsim Sha Tsui to Mong Kok demanding the resignation of Hong Kong's embattled leader Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor. But the event was postponed indefinitely after police objected on the grounds of restrictions on public gatherings to curb the spread of the virus.

In Tsim Sha Tsui, dozens of officers had been on patrol from the early afternoon. At least a dozen people were searched and two were taken to police vehicles. At about 3pm, a crowd of people, including some with placards, gathered on the steps leading to Harbour City. The crowd retreated into the mall after officers marched towards the building, but police did not initially enter the mall and protesters continued to chant slogans.

Shortly after 4pm, police entered the mall, saying there was a public gathering of more than eight people inside. A few were held up inside the mall as police cordoned off parts of the building. Among those taken away was a 13-year-old boy who claimed to be a student reporter. He was later released after police warned his mother against allowing him to take part in "illegal child labour". The boy said: "Police asked me twice if I was working as an illegal child worker, but I explained I was only a volunteer."

Police armed with non-lethal guns also entered Moko Mall, and fired what was believed to be a pepper ball to disperse protesters.

One man was arrested after officers seized items including petrol, towels and several lighters after intercepting a group of protesters, the force later said on its Facebook page.

Police said they did not rule out the possibility the materials, purportedly for making petrol bombs, would be used, seriously endangering public safety.

Officers also entered other malls and told people to leave.

Earlier in the day, police asked media personnel to disperse from Tsim Sha Tsui, adding they might be violating the ban on public gatherings larger than eight. A Post reporter was searched despite showing his press card.

During the search, an officer told him: "Don't play with your phone, smartphones are fragile these days."

Another officer filmed the journalist after he was asked to remove his mask. He was later let go.

Among the crowd at Harbour City was a family of four celebrating Mother's Day.

The mother said she was not aware a protest was planned but it did not affect her. "I explained to my daughters what [the protesters] were trying to say," she said.

A 19-year-old student, who did not want to be named, said he expected protests to become more frequent as the coronavirus came under control locally.

"With or without the ban, people will come out, and those who are out are prepared to be arrested," he said.

Some shops at Harbour City closed early, but others served customers with shutters closed.

In a statement, a police spokesman said protesters had gathered in various shopping malls across the city, holding banners, shouting slogans and undermining public order.

"Police received reports from the public and entered the malls to enforce the law," he added, noting that gatherings of more than eight people in public places were prohibited.

Protests first broke out in June last year, sparked by a now-withdrawn extradition bill. The demonstrations later evolved into a wider anti-government movement, with clashes between radical protesters and police turning increasingly violent. With the onset of the coronavirus epidemic, the campaign began losing momentum.

Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters chant slogans at malls as police quash

Mother's Day street demo

<https://hongkongfp.com/2020/05/10/hong-kong-pro-democracy-protesters-chant-slogans-in-malls-as-police-fan-out-to-prevent-street-demo/>

by Jennifer Creery, Tom Grundy, Kelly Ho and Rachel Wong (HKFP)

Hundreds of protesters gathered in shopping malls across Hong Kong on Sunday as riot police quashed plans to hold a pro-democracy march before it began.

The abortive protest - which some dubbed "Mother's Day outing" to coincide with the annual holiday - was meant to kick off at in Tsim Sha Tsui, according to online posts.

The event was also later labelled "Hong Kong independence, the only way out."

Dozens of officers in riot gear patrolled surrounding roads before the start time, stopping and searching bystanders including those wearing first aid and press vests.

Earlier this week, police banned Sunday's march citing coronavirus social distancing measures.

On the Telegram messaging app, organisers on Wednesday announced the protest would be cancelled, but said: "Our determination to strive for democracy and freedom will not waver in the slightest by the government's gathering ban."

The government imposed social distancing rules last month in a bid to curb the coronavirus outbreak, which has infected 1,040 people in the city.

Hong Kong has not recorded any local infection for more than two weeks, whilst social distancing rules were relaxed on Friday to allow gatherings of up to eight people.

Several people are caught up in the melee as police pull bystanders in for stop and searches.

At around 2:30pm, police began to set up cordons near the Star Ferry pier.

Crowds then retreated into the neighbouring Harbour City shopping mall, raising their hands to signal "Five demands, not one less," while chanting familiar protest slogans including "Hongkongers, take revenge" and "Liberate Hong Kong, the revolution of our times."

Pro-democracy activist Tam Tak-chi of People Power expressed surprise at the police delay in entering the Tsim Sha Tsui shopping mall despite previously conducting clearance operations in plazas.

"I was in Diamond Hill, the Hollywood plaza, and last night, they give us half an hour to sing songs, to voice out our demands," he told HKFP.

"I think because the shops here [are] quite high end and the police may think that some very important residents will be here to buy presents for Mother's Day. So I think they are now thinking, considering what time is the best time to come in."

Crowds formed in shopping malls across the city in response to online calls to chant slogans and sing pro-democracy songs.

They gathered at Times Square in Causeway Bay, MOKO in Mong Kok, Cityplaza in Tai Koo, apm

mall in Kwun Tong and New Town Plaza in Sha Tin.

Mrs Lam, who is in her late 50s, told HKFP that she had chosen to celebrate Mother's Day at Tsim Sha Tsui's Harbour City following online calls for a "Sing with you" protest. She said such protest showed Hong Kong people had not forgotten the pro-democracy movement after almost a year: "I feel very sad for many [comrades], like those who have been jailed and those in exile in Taiwan. Hong Kong is their birthplace, they shouldn't be forced to leave this place. The government has no right to suppress our right to say whatever we want."

Lam added she thought a fundamental change in Hong Kong's political system - to implement universal suffrage - was key, otherwise fulfilling other demands would only be an achievement on the surface.

Chan, a 17-year-old secondary student, told HKFP that she had not joined protests for months since the coronavirus outbreak hit Hong Kong in late January. But as the city recorded zero local infections for 21 days in a row, she felt the pro-democracy protests should pick up where it left off: "It's important to keep the movement going. I know there is a risk of being fined by police for breaching the gathering ban, but I've considered it and I'm prepared."

Meanwhile, over at Mong Kok's upscale MOKO mall, police fired pepper ball projectiles in response to a drinks bottle being thrown from above, according to RTHK.

The broadcaster reported that a 12-year-old girl was arrested, whilst a 13-year-old student journalist was taken away.

In statement on Sunday afternoon, police said protesters had "held banners, chanted slogans and breached public peace. Police entered several shopping malls to enforce the law because the force received reports from citizens."

Citing social distancing regulations, the force added: "Anyone participating in or organising banned group gatherings commit an offence... The police urge all protesters to stop gathering or committing acts which may breach public peace, and leave the scene immediately. Officers will enforce the law resolutely."

Protests erupted last June over a now-axed extradition bill. They escalated into sometimes violent displays of dissent against police behaviour, along with calls for democratic reform and anger over Beijing's encroachment.

The unrest subsided in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.