

# **Covid-19: Hong Kong health chief says 7,000 medics who went on strike will be handled with ‘established mechanism’**

Friday 20 November 2020, by [CHAU Candice](#) (Date first published: 19 November 2020).

Hong Kong health chief has said that 7,000 medical workers who went on strike earlier this year over the government’s response to Covid-19 will be *“handled with an established mechanism.”* **Secretary for Food and Health Sophia Chan** said in the Legislative Council on Wednesday that the Hospital Authority (HA) is currently looking through the responses from **medics who went on strike in February** after they **were asked for an explanation.**

**The Hospital Authority Employees Alliance (HAEA) initiated the strike between February 3 and 7** after Chief Executive Carrie Lam refused to attend the negotiations.

Aside from border closures, they urged the authorities to ensure a stable supply of medical masks and requested sufficient isolation wards, support for healthcare staff looking after patients in isolation, as well as a halt all non- emergency services.

The Authority and the Alliance had an open meeting on the first day of the strike, but the strike action escalated to a full week after the demands were left unmet. The Alliance, which has 10,000 members, ended the strike action after staff voted against extending it.

**The strikes were criticised by the HA, who emailed medics in October asking them to explain the period of leave.**

Citing the Employment Ordinance, Sophia Chan said the HA would *“take a serious and prudent approach in following up on the matter... and handle it in a fair and just manner according to the established mechanism.”*

She was replying to a question from pro-Beijing lawmaker Elizabeth Quat, who asked if mechanisms were in place to stop a strike from happening again.

In response to the HA’s October email, the **High Authority Employees Alliance (HAEA) - a union for medical workers** – said they would stay united against the authority’s attempt to divide the union and suppress their right to strike.

*“Unions exist to unite powerless individuals as a collective power. **If the HA plans on starting a purge, we [the Alliance] will not rule out collective action to resist the authority’s white terror.**”*

Also in October, a manager of a group of radiologists at the Princess Margaret Hospital refused to hand over the names of team members who joined the strike.

Hong Kong has seen 5,480 cases of the coronavirus and 108 deaths.

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<https://hongkongfp.com/2020/11/19/covid-19-hong-kong-health-chief-says-7000-medics-who-went-on-strike-will-be-handled-with-established-mechanism/>