

Hong Kong gov't should completely withdraw extradition bill, says pro-Beijing lawmaker Felix Chung

Tuesday 25 June 2019, by [CHENG Kris](#) (Date first published: 24 June 2019).

Pro-Beijing lawmaker Felix Chung has said the Hong Kong government should announce the complete withdrawal of the controversial extradition bill.

The extradition bill was suspended after mass demonstrations and a chorus of criticism from different sectors. However, protesters have continued to call for a total withdrawal of the plan.

Chung, leader of the Liberal Party, said on Monday that if a withdrawal was inconvenient for Chief Executive Carrie Lam to announce, it could be announced by Chief Secretary Matthew Cheung. "Suspension and withdrawal are more or less the same thing, because the government has said the bill will not be discussed again in this term of the Legislative Council," he said.

Calls for inquiry

Another demand from protesters has been for the government to set up an independent inquiry to investigate alleged police brutality.

Chung said he would not support an inquiry solely targeting police. But he said an inquiry could be set up to look into the whole incident, and it could also investigate whether certain groups were behind protesters.

He also suggested that the Executive Council, the chief executive's top policy advisory body, could include people of different opinions, instead of only having pro-establishment voices: "If we can have different voices inside [the Executive Council], then it can reflect the real situation of society. I believe it will be more effective than the current mechanism," he said.

The extradition bill was proposed in February to allow the city to handle case-by-case extradition requests from jurisdictions with no prior agreements – most notably China. Lawyers, journalists, foreign politicians and businesses have raised concerns over the risk of residents being extradited to the mainland, which lacks human rights protections.

Starry Lee, chair of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB), said during a TVB program broadcast on Sunday that – if the government withdraws the bill – she believed her party's supporters would accept the move.

"If we are looking into the future, if the government believes that this can help to mend the rift in society, [then] our supporters would understand," she said.

The pro-Beijing DAB is the largest party in the legislature with 13 seats.

Lee denied her party had been "blindly supporting" the government before the bill was suspended. She added that she did not believe any officials needed to step down over the row, as the original intentions of the bill were good.

Lee also said she would not support an inquiry whose purpose was solely to investigate the police.

Meanwhile, Civic Party lawmaker Kwok Ka-ki said on Monday that if the government only withdraws the bill without agreeing to other demands, protesters may not accept the move.

"If she did it [when announcing the suspension of the bill], people may accept it; she let the incident grow bigger and bigger, and now people will not accept it," Kwok said on a Commercial Radio programme.

"Other than asking her to step down, all four demands are still there," he added.

The other demands are for the authorities to retract the characterisation of the June 12 protest as a "riot," and clear all arrested protesters of charges.

P.S.

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