

Hong Kong : About the mobilization against anti-mask law

Saturday 5 October 2019, by [CHAN Holmes](#), [CHENG Kris](#), [CLEMENT Jacques](#), [MOK Danny](#), [TING Victor](#), [YUJING Liu](#)
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Contents

- [Rampaging Hong Kong protesters](#)
- [Violence reaches a once \(...\)](#)
- [Hong Kong's MTR, banks and](#)
- [Hongkongers defy mask ban in](#)

Rampaging Hong Kong protesters bring large parts of city to standstill, destroying property after anti-mask law announced

Published: 1:06am, 5 Oct, 2019 - Victor Ting, Yujing Liu, Danny Mok (SCMP)

<https://scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3031656/rampaging-hong-kong-protesters-bring-large-parts-city>

They trashed and burned shops, bank outlets and metro stations, forced the closure of the entire railway network and blocked roads

Police, who were expecting a backlash over new law, were not seen at many flash points for hours as rampage continued.

Rioting anti-government protesters paralysed large swathes of Hong Kong with wanton destruction on Friday 4, hours after the city's leader announced that a law against wearing masks would be imposed at midnight.

They vandalised and burned shops, bank outlets and metro stations, forced the closure of the city's entire railway network and blocked roads, wearing masks in open defiance of the new law.

Police, who were expecting a backlash, were not seen at many flash points for hours as radical protesters went on the rampage.

Police began taking control later at night, firing tear gas at violent mobs on both sides of the harbour, from Wong Tai Sin, Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan to Causeway Bay and Aberdeen.

Even as Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor announced the ban from government headquarters at Tamar in the afternoon, the chaos was brewing just blocks away.

Around 1,000 protesters, many of them office workers in suits and pupils in school uniform, gathered on Pedder Street in Central shortly after 4.30pm.

They were soon joined by more, and similar protests began mushrooming across the city, causing traffic chaos.

The protesters built barricades on Man Yiu Street outside the Hong Kong MTR station, stopped traffic on Connaught Road Central and Des Voeux Road Central, and burned a national flag and giant red banner celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China on a bridge connecting Jardine House and Chater House.

Among the now familiar plethora of slogans, a new refrain was taken up: *"No crime masking our face, no reason to enact the law."*

As night fell, the anarchy intensified and spread.

Police said an officer had opened fire with live ammunition when he was attacked by protesters in Yuen Long. Video footage posted online showed the officer, in a white T-shirt, being beaten by a mob and dropping a drawn gun as he was hit by a petrol bomb. The officer grabbed the gun back from a protester who picked it up in the chaos.

A 14-year-old boy suffered a gunshot wound in the leg just before the incident but there was no official confirmation of a link.

Police spokeswoman Yolanda Yu Hoi-kwan briefed reporters about the Yuen Long violence at 2:45am on Saturday, describing it as an incident of "rioters" attacking a plain-clothes officer who had fired his pistol in self-defence before his attackers threw two petrol bombs.

"While evading the blast, [the officer] dropped his pistol and magazine on the floor," Yu said. "A rioter tried to take the pistol and was stopped by him. While waiting for reinforcements, another petrol bomb was thrown to the officer and his feet were on fire. The officer therefore failed to pick up the dropped magazine as he retreated.

"The police later received a report that someone was shot by a gun. We are very concerned about the situation. He's now in hospital, and we have yet to reach him at this stage, but we believe his gun wound is related to the open fire incident in Yuen Long."

Rioters ramped up their sustained **campaign of destruction against the city's rail operator**, having accused it of colluding with the police force to close down stations.

In Kwun Tong, Sha Tin and Sha Tin Wai MTR stations, they destroyed turnstiles, smashed advertisement billboards and daubed graffiti on the walls and ticket machines. A train was seen with its roof on fire in Sha Tin, and in Shek Mun a water hydrant was set off, flooding the station. As the night wore on, huge fires were lit at entrances of Causeway Bay, Mong Kok and Tsuen Wan MTR stations.

By 10.30pm, they had forced the closure of every MTR station in an unprecedented shutdown of the entire railway network.

Shops and banks with links to mainland China were also targeted by rioters. They smashed the glass facade of a Bank of China branch in Tsuen Wan and threw petrol bombs inside.

ATMs were smashed or set alight in Mong Kok and other areas.

In Central, they smashed shop windows of MX, a food chain owned by Maxim's. Its founder's daughter, Annie Wu, infuriated protesters last month by calling them rioters and saying they did not represent Hong Kong.

Another mob set paper and cardboard alight outside the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce offices, while other protesters broke the gates at a branch of China Travel Service in Sha Tin.

Earlier in the afternoon at Chater Garden, Central, Tim Wong Kwok-wai, a 25-year-old marketing officer, said Lam's move would inflame passions and provoke greater unrest in the city.

"Just as Carrie Lam has held the first dialogue session with the public, she is now bringing forward the anti-mask law, shattering any trust and foundation for further talks," he said.

Banker Joe Wu, 30, said he was more worried about what the law would lead to.

"Peaceful protesters will still come out, just not wearing masks, if masks are banned. And police are already arresting everybody else on the streets, who may be just shouting at them, so it doesn't make much difference," he said.

"But I am deeply concerned about the next step. What evil law will the government introduce next,

after opening the floodgate of emergency powers? They can do anything."

Links

- [1] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3031542/traffic-standstill-thousands-again-take-streets-hong-kong>
- [2] <https://t.co/PnPavQiZp4>
- [3] https://twitter.com/SCMPHongKong/status/1180142467494158336ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [4] <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3031649/extremely-necessary-beijing-backs-hong-kong-mask-ban>
- [5] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3031657/hong-kong-leader-rolls-out-emergency-mask-law-quell-anti>

Violence reaches a once peaceful Hong Kong suburb as anti-mask law sparks escalation

5 October 2019 - 11:08 - Jacques Clement (AFP)

<https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/10/05/violence-reaches-peaceful-hong-kong-suburb-anti-mask-law-sparks-escalation/>

In one peaceful community previously untouched by the months of unrest that have shaken Hong Kong, it was an unexpected sight: the methodical ransacking of the local subway station over a three-hour period.

Clashes raged in multiple locations throughout the former British colony on Friday night after Hong Kong's leader invoked colonial-era emergency powers to ban pro-democracy protesters wearing face masks.

Police used tear gas to disperse protesters who had taken over roads, vandalised subway stations, set street fires and trashed pro-China businesses — testing again the capacity of the city's law enforcement, who many accuse of using excessive force.

Around 8:30 pm on Friday 4, it was the turn of Tseung Kwan O, which sits across a bay from the main island of Hong Kong.

For three hours, not one police officer was visible in the district, which is popular with Westerners.

'Like a queen'

The demonstrators had all the time in the world to ransack the local station run by the MTR Corp, the company operating the city's underground rail system, which the protesters accuse of siding with the pro-Beijing government.

"MTR supports the government by closing stations on purpose to prevent demonstrators moving around," said one student, 19, who identified himself only as JC.

"But they help transport the police," he said, as rail services were suspended throughout the semi-autonomous territory's network.

"Banning masks doesn't change anything," added JC, hiding his own face — like other protesters — to avoid being identified for prosecution.

Tape covers his fingertips so he leaves no prints.

"The main problem is that she goes through the law without the LegCo," JC continued, referring to

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam who was appointed by an overwhelmingly Beijing-friendly committee.

Under sweeping powers unveiled on Friday 4, Lam does not need the approval of the city's legislature, known as LegCo, to introduce laws. *"She's like a queen now,"* JC said.

As in many of Hong Kong's New Towns, the subway station is the nerve centre of local life.

Graffiti at the entrance read: "Communist railway".

Inside, fire hoses were unwound and water flowed down escalators leading to train platforms.

The sprinklers were activated too, and the floor flooded as loudspeakers blared an automated message about the "emergency," telling people to leave immediately.

Outside, armed with metal barriers, protesters systematically broke each pane of glass along a 200-metre (600-foot) facade.

'Upping our game'

"What happened wasn't planned," Nathalie, a 32-year-old worker, said enthusiastically, hailing the movement's ability to mobilise through social networks.

"That's the most impressive part of the movement. Everything was triggered by the press conference" at which Lam announced the mask ban, Nathalie adds.

"The government doesn't listen to us. So we are upping our game."

By 11:30 pm, six vans arrived near an intersection beside the MTR station where hundreds of protesters had erected small makeshift barricades.

About 20 riot police finally appeared. The protesters pulled back and JC changed from his black jacket — the colour of clothing favoured by protesters — into something in a less conspicuous shade. Then he melted away.

A shirtless man, cigarette in his mouth and beer in hand, walked to the middle of the junction to challenge the officers, much to the approval of the demonstrators. Then he backed down.

By 11:45 pm, more than three hours after it all began, the police got back in their vans and headed off.

Protesters let out cries of joy, then very quickly dispersed, leaving the residents of Tseung Kwan O to pick up the pieces.

Hong Kong's MTR, banks and malls close down after mask ban sparks city-wide unrest

5 October 2019 14:43 Holmes Chan

<https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/10/05/hong-kongs-mtr-banks-malls-close-mask-ban-sparks-city-wide-unrest/>

The streets of Hong Kong were quiet on Saturday 5 morning as dozens of shopping malls and banks closed their doors and MTR services remained suspended.

Protesters gathered the night before in almost every district across the city to protest an anti-mask law, which Chief Executive Carrie Lam enacted through emergency legislation. During the night, an off-duty **police officer shot a 14-year-old** in the thigh during a skirmish with a crowd of protesters in Yuen Long.

The rail operator took the unprecedented step of shutting down all of its services at around 10:30pm on Friday 4, and in the early hours of Saturday 5 announced that the suspension will

continue until further notice.

"Since outbreaks of violence continue to occur at multiple districts, maintenance staff is unable to travel to the damaged stations to inspect and assess the extent of damages at our stations or to carry out repair works," the MTR Corporation said.

Most major banks in Hong Kong also kept their services to a minimum.

- The Bank of China - which has been the target of protesters' ire - said that some of its facilities were "seriously damaged," and closed all of its branches except for the one at Bank of China Tower.
- Chinese-owned banks ICBC, CCB and Wing Lung Bank closed all of their branches for the day.
- HSBC said that only five of its offices were open on Saturday 5: its Hong Kong Island headquarters, as well as its branches in Mong Kok, Tsim Sha Tsui, Tsuen Wan and Kwun Tong.
- The Hang Seng Bank said only its Hong Kong island and Kowloon headquarters were in service. Standard Chartered and the Bank of East Asia both said that services were limited to their Central offices.

Supermarket ParknShop announced on Saturday morning that it would shutter all its stores for the day. The Watsons chain store stopped all services except for their airport outlet.

According to local media reports, more than 15 shopping malls also closed its doors, including the IFC mall in Central, Elements, World Trade Centre in Causeway Bay, MOKO mall in Mong Kok, Kwun Tong's APM, V Walk in Sham Shui Po, Yoho Mall in Yuen Long and more.

Protests condemned

Secretary for Security John Lee on Saturday said that it was "expected" that the anti-mask regulation would be met with some resistance. Speaking on a radio programme, he said that the police have not yet reported making any arrests under the new law.

The aim of the law was to curb the trend of people breaking the law while masked, Lee said, though he admitted that the current situation cannot be solved with one regulation.

Appearing in a televised message with top officials on Saturday 5, **Carrie Lam** condemned violent protests and defended the use of the Emergency Regulations Ordinance. She said many businesses were closed on Saturday.

"The extreme behaviour of rioters caused a very dark night in Hong Kong, semi-paralysing Hong Kong society, making many people very worried and scared," she said. *"The Hong Kong SAR is determined to stop violence. I urge you to support the SAR government to stop violence in accordance with the law, condemn violence, and be determined in severing ties with rioters."*

The Hospital Authority said on Saturday morning that 31 people were hospitalised as a result of the clashes, with two in a serious condition. **The 14-year-old boy shot in the thigh was in stable condition** after being treated at Tuen Mun Hospital.

'Effective measures'

Yang Guang, spokesman for the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of **China's central government**, voiced support for the law on Friday: *"The current chaos in Hong Kong cannot continue indefinitely. Now it has reached an important moment to stop the storm with a more distinct attitude and more effective measures... An important moment has come for stopping the violence with a clearer attitude and more effective measures."*

However, senior China researcher Maya Wang at **NGO Human Rights Watch** said that the authorities should be upholding rights, not undermining them.

"The face mask ban suggests that the government is willing to go even further to violate rights to

quell the protests,” she said. “Concerned governments should be speaking out about this new restriction on fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong or expect to see even more draconian measures in the future.”

Hongkongers defy mask ban in fresh protest

5 October 2019 17:56 - Kris Cheng (HKFP)

<https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/10/05/hongkongers-defy-mask-ban-fresh-protest/>

Several hundred Hongkongers marched from Causeway Bay to Central after the government issued an anti-mask law by invoking the colonial law Emergency Regulations Ordinance (ERO).

The crowd first gathered at the Sogo department store in Causeway Bay at around 2pm:

“Hongkongers, resist!” many chanted. *“Five demands, not one less!”* **The protest had not received police approval.**

Mass demonstrations and unrest have continued for more than 17 weeks, first sparked by an extradition bill which will soon be withdrawn. But the protests have morphed into a – sometimes violent – wider movement against the police use of force and calls for democracy.

After failing to stop the protests, the government invoked powers under the **ERO – first introduced in 1922** – to enact a law to ban masks at lawful and unauthorised protests. **The ERO has not been used since the 1967 leftist riots.**

At the march on Saturday 5, a large banner that read “Glory to Hong Kong,” referring to a popular protest song, was unfurled in Wan Chai. The banner was made by the **League of Social Democrats** and had been displayed at several shopping malls.

The crowd dispersed after they reached Chater Road in Central though, at around 5:35pm, riot police ran towards two people wearing masks near the HSBC headquarters, searched them and took them away. The two were alone, were not close to any protesters, and were released soon after.

Another man wearing a head scarf, but not a mask, was detained by police outside Prince’s Building.

New Territories

Meanwhile, another group of protesters gathered in Sheung Shui at around 3:30pm. They broke windows at a **China Mobile** branch, as well as a metal gate of a **Maxim’s cake** shop, according to Apple Daily. Protesters have been targeting **Chinese state-run companies** and some Hong Kong brands whose management have denounced the movement or have alleged ties to people attacking protesters.

Protesters also spray painted slogans on shops, which they deemed to be business hubs for parallel traders. Residents have often complained that they are forced to bear higher prices and had fewer choices when buying groceries owing to cross-border traders.

At the Tai Po Mega Mall, dozens conducted a sit-in and folded origami cranes to create slogans such as “five demands, not one less.”

A group of protesters also formed a human chain near the Harbour City mall in Tsim Sha Tsui, though many online called for a “rest day” ahead of larger protests planned for tomorrow.