

Thousands show up for pride parade on LGBT rights in Hong Kong

Saturday 16 November 2019, by [CHAN Ho Him](#), [WAKEFIELD Lily](#) (Date first published: 16 November 2019).

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Thousands show up for pride parade on LGBT rights in Hong Kong, as some wear masks and chant anti-government protest slogans

<https://www.scmp.com/print/news/hong-kong/society/article/3038058/thousands-show-pride-parade-lgbt-rights-hong-kong-some-wear>

Organisers say attendance halved from last year's 12,000 because of political crisis and anti-mask law deterring many participants.

Police rejected march but allow rally in Central, citing safety issues.

by Chan Ho-him (SCMP) - Published: 8:28pm, 16 Nov, 2019

Thousands from Hong Kong's LGBT community showed up at an annual pride rally on Saturday 16 after police banned organisers' application for a march for the first time since the parade was held in 2008.

At Edinburgh Place in Central, a smaller crowd turned up for this year's carnival-like event, with the theme "Equal Justice, Equal Rights".

The gathering calls for equal treatment and better protection for sexual minorities, including legislation on sexual orientation-based discrimination.

Organisers said more than 6,500 people participated in the rally, but tensions from the ongoing anti-government movement and the anti-mask law contributed to a drop in attendance as those wishing to hide their identities would be deterred.

On Thursday 14, police rejected the Hong Kong Pride Parade organising committee's application for a march from Victoria Park to Edinburgh Place "*in the interests of public safety and public order*", only approving a rally. Earlier, organisers had estimated the number of participants this year to drop by half from 12,000 at last year's march.

Many in colourful outfits showed up on Saturday, carrying rainbow flags as before, but some were also masked and dressed in black - the signature look of anti-government protesters.

Mo, a Form Six student from the LGBT community, wore a black T-shirt and a black mask to the rally in defiance of the anti-mask law to show support for protesters' five demands, as some of his schoolmates were arrested over the past few months during demonstrations.

The 17-year-old said he was a frontline protester who had helped built roadblocks last week and extinguish tear gas canisters in clashes with police. He said Saturday's rally was mostly peaceful and

it was a “pity” that police rejected the march.

“Every year, the pride parade is held. Police had only rejected this year’s march two days before despite an application being filed much earlier ... I believe when there is no police presence, everything will be peaceful,” he said, adding that he had participated in the pride parade for the past two years.

But Brian (not his real name), a lawyer in his 50s from Britain who has lived in Hong Kong for more than 20 years, said police’s decision to ban a march was “understandable” although it was “disappointing” because it could have built up better momentum for the event.

“[It was based on] safety, [including] worries about whether it would get hijacked for other purposes. I can understand that ... but I’m not going to blame one side or another,” he said.

Kwok, a mother in her 30s who joined the rally for the first time with her husband and 7-year-old daughter, said she felt freedom of expression in the city had been shrinking amid increasing numbers of rallies and marches being rejected by police, so she came to show support and “connect” with the LGBT community.

Ricky Chu Man-kin, chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission, who attended Saturday’s rally wearing a rainbow-coloured wristband, said the watchdog would be stepping up the process of getting the proposal for the sexual orientation discrimination ordinance passed into legislation “very soon”.

Some details of legal provisions would be drafted on less controversial areas such as employment and educational rights, as well as the equal use of public services and facilities, which would then be put into consultation.

“Talks of the legislation have lasted for 24 years, we are trying to take a step forward now and see what the results will be,” Chu said. *“I can foresee the process would be lengthy and might take up a lot of time, but I’m still optimistic.”*

Diplomats from at least seven consulates also came to show support as openly gay figures including lawmaker Raymond Chan Chi-chuen were also present at the rally. Participants chanted protest slogans such as “there are no rioters, only tyranny” throughout the rally.

Links

[1]

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3037772/police-ban-takes-parade-out-hong-kong-pride-celebrations>

[2]

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3037134/we-are-here-we-are-queer-we-will-never-disappear-hong-kong>

Hong Kong queer community banned by police from marching during Pride amidst violent protests in the city

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/11/15/hong-kong-queer-community-banned-police-march-pride-violent-protests-city-masks/>

by Lily Wakefield - November 15 -

For the first time, the LGBT+ community in Hong Kong has been banned by police from marching in its annual Pride parade amidst violent protests in the city.

According to South China Morning Post, organisers of the march were told that the event on Saturday November 16 would be reduced to a standstill gathering.

Director of the parade's organising committee, Yeo Wai-wai, said the police had informed them just 48 hours before the event, rather than the usual month in advance, so they were left with little time to inform guests.

The police cited disruption in other areas amidst violent protests against the now withdrawn 2019 Hong Kong extradition bill as the cause of the ban.

Yeo Wai-wai said: *"The police have been clamping down on freedom. Sexual minorities are no exception."*

She added the annual event, which has been running since 2008, has never before faced a ban by police because it is known for being peaceful and inclusive. The only time the march has not taken place since its inception was in 2010 because of a lack of resources.

The government has also imposed a mask ban to deter violent protesters, but this could discourage people joining the Pride event as LGBT+ people who have not come out to their family and friends often wear masks to protect their identities.

The parade regularly includes lawmakers and diplomats, and Yeo Wai-wai said: *"There is a chance that they could not make it because of such a late confirmation."*

Hong Kong's only openly gay lawmaker Raymond Chan Chi-chuen said that a Pride march has nothing to do with the current political unrest.

He added: *"Does that mean the city will no longer have any marches now?"*

In October, a Hong Kong court turned down a judicial challenge against a government policy which denies civil partnerships to same-sex couples.

Amnesty International Hong Kong described the court's ruling as *"a bitter blow"* to Hong Kong's LGBT+ community, who had hoped the city would follow the lead of Taiwan, which recently became the first country in Asia to legalise same-sex marriage.