

# Labour unions and high school students against national security law on Hong Kong

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On 28 May Beijing made a decision to impose its national security law on Hong Kong, which implies the end of Hong Kong autonomy.

## June 4 candle vigil assembly

In a few days the Hong Kong government banned the coming June 4 candle vigil assembly, which had been going on for the last thirty years non-stop. This was the first time it was banned.

**Yet on the night of June 4, thousands of people went to the Victoria park** in defiance of the ban. It was another victory of people's power. On top of this was that on that night there were **also multiple assemblies in many parts of the city**. It is obvious that when many people went they also had protesting against the national security law in their mind.

Soon after the June 4 event, a coalition of more than 20 labour unions and a high school students group say they will hold a ballot with their members or fellow students on June 14 to decide on whether to hold a general strike and class boycott against the national security law.

## Towards a three days strike?

- As of June 6, the **trade union alliance includes 23 members**, covering sectors like transport, IT, catering, accounting and medical workers.

The alliance said they will go ahead with the **strike if 60 percent of the more than 60,000 expected voters approve the idea of a three days strike**. The next day the government condemned the alliance as manufacturing chaos. The Confederation of Trade Unions' chairperson, Carol Ng, has announced the **HKCTU's support of the proposal**.

- Meanwhile, the **high school students group**, which has close connection to Joshua Wong's Demosisto, also **planned to hold a similar referendum** on the same day to determine whether the students will support the idea of a class boycott as well.

## A new trade union movement

One of the fruit of the 2019 Revolt was that it stimulated the sudden growth of a new trade union

movement among those around twenties or thirties years old activists.

In October 2019 they founded a telegram channel called "*united front for a two million strong general strike*" whose objective was to found new unions as leverage to strike against the government. Very soon the subscribers to this channel reached **80,000, with 42 new unions founded.**

- One of them is the **Union for New Civil Servants** which was initiated by a group of young civil servants, with Michael Ngan as one of the main leaders. He took part in the Umbrella Movement in the capacity of the Vice Chairperson of the Chinese University student union.

- Another newly founded union was the **Hospital Authority Employee Union** (HAEA). Its vice-chairperson, Ivan Law, was the chairperson of the Hong Kong Student Federation's Standing Committee, showing how the previous movement had trained up a whole section of youth for the future new union movement.

The HAEA had proved its strength. In the Chinese New Year of 2020, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, it called for a five days strike to demand the shutting down of the border, with thousands of members taking part.