

UN Human Rights Council 45: UK Statement for the Item 4 General Debate

Today, we focus on the serious situation in China.

In Hong Kong, Beijing's imposition of the National Security Law is a serious breach of the legally binding Sino-British Joint Declaration. It violates Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and directly threatens rights and freedoms.

The National Security Law is being implemented with the apparent intention to eliminate dissent. It allows prosecution of certain cases in mainland China, a jurisdiction where defendants are often held for long periods without charge or access to legal counsel, and where we have concerns about judicial independence, due process, and reports of torture.

Also of grave concern, in Xinjiang, there is compelling evidence – including from the Chinese authorities' own documents – of systematic human rights violations.

Culture and religion are severely restricted, and we have seen credible reports of forced labour and forced birth control. Staggeringly, up to 1.8 million people have been detained without trial.

Across the country, we also remain seriously concerned about the pressure on media freedom.

Madam President, we call on China to uphold the rights and freedoms in the Joint Declaration, to respect the independence of the Hong Kong judiciary, allow unfettered access to Xinjiang and to release all those who are arbitrarily detained.

Thank you.