



BRIEF OVERVIEW: HONG KONG NATIONAL SECURITY LAW

Prepared by *McMaster Stands with Hong Kong* for the *Student Representative Assembly*

July 12, 2020

SUMMARY

- The new national security law is an unprecedented crackdown on Hong Kong
- Students who speak up risk being charged with vague offenses like “subversion”
- The law applies to everybody, including Hong Kong students here in Canada

BACKGROUND: 2019-2020 HONG KONG PROTESTS

- Protests sparked by fears of a bill allowing extradition of Hongkongers to China
- Further inflamed by the extreme police brutality in response to the protests
- Instead of listening to the 5 demands, the government’s crackdown is worsening

OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL SECURITY LAW

- Criminalizes “secession,” “subversion,” “terrorism,” and “collusion with foreign forces”¹
- Upon conviction: Minimum three years in prison and *maximum life in prison*²
- Sets up a secret police force in Hong Kong that will operate above the law³

KEY CONSIDERATIONS	IMPACT ON MCMASTER STUDENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• China has unilaterally forced this law upon Hong Kong, violating HK’s treaty-guaranteed autonomy• Charges outlined in the law are overly broad and purposefully vague• Police now have sweeping powers over the Hong Kong internet⁴• Sensitive books have been banned⁵• Political persecution is on the rise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law applies to people outside of Hong Kong, including people in Canada• Hong Kong students at Mac who speak up about human rights may be charged with “subversion” and endanger friends/family in Hong Kong• Student safety is being seriously threatened here and students are facing pressure to self-censor

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-52765838>

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-53238004>

³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/beijings-secret-police-get-a-room-with-a-view-in-hong-kong/2020/07/08/c0e7de7e-c0e8-11ea-8908-68a2b9eae9e0_story.html

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/07/business/hong-kong-security-law-tech.html>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/05/hong-kong-books-by-pro-democracy-activists-disappear-from-library-shelves>



BRIEF OVERVIEW: CONCERNS WITH USING ZOOM AT MCMaster

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Zoom's weak security, Chinese censorship, and Zoom-bombing all threaten student safety at McMaster. The SRA should ask the university to use alternative platforms for online learning.

• CONCERNS PART 1: ZOOM'S SECURITY WEAKNESSES •

- U of T's Citizen Lab⁶ found "several security issues regarding Zoom," including:
 - Zoom has routed encryption keys through servers in Beijing
 - Zoom's popularity and weak security make it a target for intelligence agencies
 - Human rights activists targeted by authoritarian regimes are at high risk

• CONCERNS PART 2: CHINESE GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP AND SURVEILLANCE •

- In June, Zoom banned US-based activists commemorating the Tiananmen massacre⁷
- Zoom has admitted to surveilling and censoring users at the request of the CCP
- Hong Kong and PRC students are **at particular risk** from Zoom's weak security

• CONCERNS PART 3: ZOOM-BOMBING, RACISM, AND HATE •

- Toronto NDP MPP Chris Glover had a Zoom meeting disrupted with child porn⁸
- FBI issues warning about Zoom after many experience racist and hateful attacks⁹
- Neo-Nazis and other hate groups have found it easy to infiltrate Zoom calls¹⁰

CONCLUSION

- Zoom's surveillance (on behalf of the CCP) is a **major threat** to all McMaster students
- BIPOC students are **actively harmed** by the hate and racism that Zoom permits
- Despite their recent PR moves, Zoom's transparency and track record remain very poor

⁶ <https://citizenlab.ca/2020/04/move-fast-roll-your-own-crypto-a-quick-look-at-the-confidentiality-of-zoom-meetings/>

⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/11/technology/zoom-china-tiananmen-square.html>

⁸

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/toronto-mpp-s-virtual-town-hall-faces-disturbing-zoom-hacking-attack-1.4940537>

⁹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/zoombombing-fbi-warning-1.5519024>

¹⁰ <https://www.thestar.com/edmonton/2020/04/01/it-was-like-nazis-had-walked-into-your-living-room-anti-semitism-groups-zoom-meeting-crashed-with-hateful-messages.html>

- SRA should call upon McMaster to update its policy to NOT use Zoom, and instead use alternatives—such as Microsoft Teams, which we already pay for and have access to