

HD **Hong Kong** lawmakers demand inquiry into city leader's payoffleung says the **transaction** occurred before #124he took office

WC 637 words

PD 6 November 2014

SN The Nation

SC THENAT

LA English

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HONG KONG

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Hong Kong's democratic lawmakers called for an official inquiry into the city's embattled leader yesterday, saying that he "has no political integrity" after receiving large undeclared payments from an Australian **company**.

It came hours after the territory's former governor Chris Patten criticised **Hong Kong**'s lack of leadership in the face of mass democracy protests, which have lasted more than a month.

Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying's approval ratings are at an all-time low as demonstrators continue to occupy key parts of the city.

Adding to his woes, Leung was forced to deny allegations made by an Australian newspaper last month that he had failed to declare HK\$50 million (Bt212 million), which he received from Australian engineering **company** UGL while in office.

The payments relate to a deal struck in December 2011, months before Leung took office, but a week after he announced his candidacy, during UGL's **purchase** of insolvent **property** services **firm** DTZ, for which Leung was director and chairman of its regional operations.

Leung's office has said the deal was "a confidential **commercial** arrangement and a standard business practice" which did not need to be declared.

But accusations of dishonesty continue to dog him.

"Leung Chun-ying has no political integrity at all ... until now he hasn't made it clear why he didn't make a declaration," lawmaker Claudia Mo said yesterday in the Legislative Council, the city's de facto parliament.

Mo put forward a motion backed by more than 20 other lawmakers for a select committee to investigate. A complaint by members of the city's Democracy Party has already been lodged with the city's corruption bureau.

"Obviously there is something he can't say. Are there details that he doesn't dare come out to talk about? It's not clear to **Hong Kong** people what he has been doing," Mo said.

Speaking before the UK parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee late on Tuesday, Patten, the last British governor of the territory, said that there was a "seriously sad" and "extraordinary lack of leadership" from the chief executive in response to the protests which have gripped the city.

"The worry now is that it's become increasingly difficult for anybody to climb down," he said.

Beijing ruled in August that candidates for the city's next leadership elections in 2017 must be vetted by a loyalist committee in what protesters call "fake democracy".

The student movement calling for full democracy for **Hong Kong** are hoping to take their protest to Communist Party rulers in Beijing and are expected to announce details of their new battle plan today.

The plan signals a shift in the focus of the protests away from the government which has said it has limited room for manoeuvre. But **China** is highly unlikely to allow any known pro-democracy activists into Beijing, especially if the trip coincides with this weekend's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum there.

"I think one of the ways we can solve this problem is to go to Beijing personally and have a direct dialogue with Beijing officials on this matter since the **Hong Kong** government claims that all decisions have to be passed up to the NPC," Alex Chow, leader of the **Hong Kong** Federation of Students (HKFS), said last week, referring to **China**'s parliament, the National People's Congress.

The protesters blocked key roads leading into three of **Hong Kong**'s most economically and politically important districts for weeks.

The HKFS has not said whether its planned trip was to coincide with Apec, which would mean, if allowed, it would take place in front of an audience of world leaders.

NS gpir : Politics/International Relations | gcat : Political/General News

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