

Hong Kong police officers beat an unarmed protester during anti-mask-ban rallies as Chinese army sends its first warning that it is willing to clamp down on pro-democracy activists

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Body

- New footage shows Hong Kong riot policemen kicking and punching one activist during rallies on Sunday
- The city was paralysed by three days of protests after its leader on Friday used emergency law to ban masks
- China's **army** gave its first warning to activists last night after protests pointed lasers at one of its barracks
- Two activists, 18 and 38, today became the first people to be charged with violating the law on face covering
- Chris Patten, the last British governor, warned 'people are going to get killed' as the city faces more protests
- The city's government may ban access to the internet to contain months of unrest, a pro-China politician said
- It said today 'the public order of the whole city is being pushed to the verge of a very dangerous situation'

Hong Kong has been plunged into further chaos and violence after its leader Carrie Lam invoked a colonial-era emergency law to ban activists from wearing masks to conceal their identity during rallies.

The semi-autonomous city was paralysed by three days of protests involving thousands of masked activists, which saw the rail network and business outlets deemed pro-China badly vandalised. More protests have been planned.

New footage has purported to show a group of policemen beating one unarmed **protester** after tackling him to the ground during the anti-mask-ban demonstrations on Sunday.

Chinese military gave its first-ever warning to activists last night after some protests pointed lasers at one of its barracks in Hong Kong.

Sources have claimed that the city's government may ban access to the internet in a bid to contain months of increasingly brutal unrest.

Two teenagers, one 14 and one 18, were shot by police with live rounds last week as **protesters** began to hurl 'more dangerous' petrol bombs at police and officers were given more liberty in the use of force.

Two **protesters** were charged Monday with violating Hong Kong's new ban on wearing masks at rallies.

'People are going to get killed', warns Hong Kong's last British governor

Hong Kong police officers beat an unarmed protester during anti-mask-ban rallies as Chinese army sends its first warning that it is willing to clamp down on pro....

Chris Patten, the last British governor of Hong Kong, has warned that people could be killed as violence escalated in the city, leading two teenagers to be shot.

'Before long, unless we are very, very lucky, people are going to get killed, people are going to be shot,' former British governor Chris Patten told Sky News.

'The idea that with public order policing you send police forces out with live ammunition is preposterous.'

Carrie Lam, the city's Beijing-backed leader, has banned protesters from wearing masks in a bid to end the violence by militant activists.

'She would have to be crazy to be making these decisions on her own without being pressured into them. The face mask business, absolutely madness,' said Patten.

'I fear for the future, unless Carrie Lam actually intervenes and understands the importance of dialogue.'

An 18-year-old student and a 38-year-old woman were the first to be prosecuted under the ban, which came into force Saturday under sweeping emergency powers aimed at quashing violence in the protests for more democratic freedoms.

At least five anti-riot officers were filmed attacking one activist, who had already been brought to the ground, in a trending video posted on Facebook by singer Tommy Yuen, who urged the public to 'share it as soon as possible'.

The 40-second clip shows the policemen punching and kicking one man dressed in black. The team stopped the assault when one passer-by threw a cup of coffee towards them.

The incident was believed to have taken place on Prince Edward Road East in Kowloon, reported local news outlet 01HK.com.

The report said a group of demonstrators had fled from a shopping mall and a number of police officers were tasked to capture them.

Onlookers can be heard shouting at the officers 'stop' and 'he is going to die'.

Another clip released by Frontal Media shows a group of police officers beating one protester on the head and trying to stop a woman, believed to be a paramedic worker, from saving the demonstrator.

The incident was captured on Sunday when police tried to disperse protesters in Wan Chai, reported Apple Daily.

China's Hong Kong military garrison warned protesters last night they could be arrested for targeting its barracks with lasers - the first direct interaction between the People's Liberation Army and protesters.

The garrison raised a yellow flag at the top of their barracks in Kowloon Tong, warning activists: 'You are in breach of the law. You may be prosecuted.'

A pro-Beijing lawmaker today defended the army, claiming its warning did not count as military action, reported South China Morning Post.

Hong Kong may ban internet to contain unrest

Hong Kong's government may curb access to the internet in a bid to contain months of increasingly violent pro-democracy protests.

'As long as there are possible ways to stamp down on the riots, the government will not rule out the possibility of placing a ban on the internet,' said Ip Kwok-him, a veteran pro-Beijing politician and member of Hong Kong's executive council.

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Ip said the internet has been crucial to protesters, who have no public leaders and use online forums and encrypted messaging apps to mobilise.

But he said the government recognised any online shutdown could have a knock-on effect.

'I think a condition for implementing the Internet ban would be not to affect any businesses in Hong Kong,' he said.

The executive council is Hong Kong's cabinet, an advisory body to Lam.

Maria Tam Wai-chu was quoted saying 'my view is, the raising of a warning flag is a normal act' when she was interviewed by a local radio station.

The introduction of colonial-era emergency powers on Friday banning face masks has sparked some of the most violent clashes in four months of demonstrations in the Asian financial hub.

The overnight rampages brought a warning from Chris Patten, the city's last British governor, that people could be killed.

'Before long, unless we are very, very lucky, people are going to get killed, people are going to be shot,' Mr Patten told Sky News.

'The idea that with public order policing you send police forces out with live ammunition is preposterous.'

Beijing-backed leader Lam said the ban on face masks was necessary to end violence and that it was her own government's call, not an order from Beijing. Offenders could be jailed for up to one year by the legislation.

Mr Patten said Lam would have to be 'crazy' to be making these decisions on her own.

He said: 'The face mask business [is] absolutely madness which people will protest against.'

He added that the way forward would be to engage with the demonstrators, especially the peaceful ones.

Ip Kwok-him, a veteran pro-Beijing politician and member of Hong Kong's executive council, said controls on the internet could be introduced to combat violence - remarks that are likely to spark further fury from the public.

'As long as there are possible ways to stamp down on the riots, the government will not rule out the possibility of placing a ban on the internet,' he told AFP.

Ip said the internet has been crucial to protesters, who have no public leaders and use online forums and encrypted messaging apps to mobilise.

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'I think a condition for implementing the Internet ban would be not to affect any businesses in Hong Kong,' he said.

Hundreds of protesters gathered in Hong Kong shopping malls on Monday demanding 'freedom' ahead of expected new protests.

Demonstrators formed large circles inside multi-level shopping malls and chanted 'disband Hong Kong police force', 'fight for freedom, stand with Hong Kong' and 'I have the right to wear a mask', as shoppers on a public holiday looked on.

Many protesters, police and journalists have been injured in clashes, with police using rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons against demonstrators, some of whom throw bricks and petrol bombs.

A journalist working with Hong Kong's public broadcaster was recovering in the hospital on Monday after being hit by a petrol bomb on Sunday night.

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On Monday, Hong Kong's metro rail system, which typically carries about five million passengers a day, was only partially operating due to what authorities said was 'serious vandalism' on Sunday night. Some stations were torched in the protests.

Many shops and Chinese banks were also extensively damaged.

The city government said in a statement 'public safety has been jeopardised and the public order of the whole city is being pushed to the verge of a very dangerous situation'.

The anti-government protests, which started in early June, have plunged the former British colony into its worst political crisis in decades and pose the biggest popular challenge to Chinese President Xi Jinping since he came to power in 2012.

What started as opposition to a now-withdrawn extradition bill has grown into a pro-democracy movement against what is seen as Beijing's increasing grip on the city, which protesters say undermines a 'one country, two systems' status promised when Britain handed Hong Kong back to China in 1997.

China dismisses such accusations, saying foreign governments, including Britain and the United States, have fanned anti-China sentiment.

NBA comes under fire in China after Houston Rockets manager showed support for Hong Kong protesters

The National Basketball Association (NBA) has come under fire in China for its response to a tweet by a Houston Rockets official in support of Hong Kong protests for democracy.

The Rockets' general manager, Daryl Morey, apologised on Monday for the tweet he swiftly deleted on the weekend.

But his support for the protests in the financial hub angered Beijing, Chinese fans and the team's partners in a key NBA market.

'I did not intend my tweet to cause any offence to Rockets fans and friends of mine in China,' Morey tweeted on Monday.

'I was merely voicing one thought, based on one interpretation, of one complicated event,' he said, adding that he had since heard and considered other perspectives.

The Rockets are widely followed in China, partly because they drafted Chinese player Yao Ming in 2002, who became a star and helped build the NBA's following there.

Morey's initial tweet included an image captioned: 'Fight For Freedom. Stand With Hong Kong.'

It prompted sportswear brand Li-Ning and sponsor Shanghai Pudong Development Bank (SPD Bank) Credit Card Center to suspend work with the Rockets, while the team's games were dropped by China's state broadcaster.

The post was later deleted and 47-year-old Morey, the NBA's executive of the year in 2018, said his views did not represent the team or league.

In a separate statement, the NBA said 'we recognise that the views expressed by Houston Rockets General Manager Daryl Morey have deeply offended many of our friends and fans in China, which is regrettable'.

The Chinese-language version issued by the NBA appeared to go further than the English statement, saying: 'We are extremely disappointed in the inappropriate remarks made by Houston Rockets General Manager Daryl Morey'.

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The NBA added, 'we have great respect for the history and culture of China and hope that sports and the NBA can be used as a unifying force to bridge cultural divides and bring people together'.

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