



## History of Hong Kong

**1842**

**China cedes Hong Kong island to Britain after the First Opium War. Over the decades, thousands of Chinese migrants fleeing domestic upheavals settle in the colony.**

**1860**

The Convention of Beijing cedes Kowloon formally to Britain.



Hong Kong was already a busy port in the 1890s, when this picture was taken after the passing of a damaging typhoon

**1898**

China leases the New Territories together with 235 islands to Britain for 99 years from 1 July.

**1941**



Image source: Getty Images

*Japanese forces seized Hong Kong in 1941*

Japan occupies Hong Kong. Food shortages impel many residents to flee to mainland China. The population drops from 1.6m in 1941 to 650,000 by the end of the Second World War.

**1946**

Britain re-establishes civil government. Hundreds of thousands of former residents return, to be joined over next few years by refugees fleeing the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists in China.



<b>1950s</b>	Hong Kong enjoys economic revival based on light industries such as textiles
<b>1960s</b>	Social discontent and labour disputes become rife among poorly-paid workforce.
<b>1967</b>	Severe riots break out, mainly instigated by followers of China's Cultural Revolution.
<b>Late 1960s</b>	Living conditions improve and social unrest subsides.
<b>1970s</b>	Hong Kong is established as an "Asian Tiger" - one of the region's economic powerhouses - with a thriving economy based on high-technology industries.

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## Countdown to handover

<b>1982</b>	<b>Britain and China begin talks on the future of Hong Kong.</b>
<b>1984</b>	Britain and China sign Joint Declaration on the conditions under which Hong Kong will revert to Chinese rule in 1997. Under the "one country, two systems" formula, Hong Kong will become part of one communist-led country but retain its capitalist economic system and partially democratic political system for 50 years after the handover.
<b>1984</b>	The Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong (Sino-British Joint Declaration)



**1989**



Image source, Getty Images

The massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square leads to calls for the introduction of further democratic safeguards in Hong Kong.

*Sino-British talks preceded the 1984 Joint Declaration on reversion to Chinese rule*

**1990**

Beijing formally ratifies Hong Kong's post-handover mini-constitution or Basic Law.

**1992 October**

Chris Patten, the last British governor of Hong Kong, with a brief to oversee the colony's handover to China. He announces proposals for the democratic reform of Hong Kong's institutions aimed at broadening the voting base in elections. China is outraged that it has not been consulted and threatens to tear up business contracts and overturn the reforms after it has taken control.

**1994 June**

After nearly two years of bitter wrangling, Hong Kong's legislature introduces a stripped-down version of Chris Patten's democratic reform package. The new legislation widens the franchise but falls far short of providing for universal suffrage.

**1995**

- Elections held for new Legislative Council (LegCo).



## One country, two systems



Image source, Getty Images

*Governor Chris Patten receives the Union Jack flag after it is lowered for the last time at Government House*

- 1997** July - Hong Kong is handed back to the Chinese authorities after more than 150 years of British control. Tung Chee-hwa, a Shanghai-born former shipping tycoon with no political experience, is hand-picked by Beijing to rule the territory following the takeover
- 1998** May - First post-handover elections held.
- 2001** February - Deputy Chief Executive Anson Chan, a former deputy to Chris Patten and one of the main figures in the Hong Kong administration to oppose Chinese interference in the territory's affairs, resigns under pressure from Beijing and is replaced by Donald Tsang.
- 2002** September - Tung Chee-hwa's administration releases proposals for controversial new anti-subversion law known as Article 23.



## Calls for reform

**2003**

July – A day after a visit to the territory by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, 500,000 people march against Article 23. Two Hong Kong government members resign. The bill is shelved indefinitely.



Image source, Getty Images

*A planned anti-subversion law sparked protests in 2003; Article 23 was subsequently shelved*

**2004**

April - China rules that its approval must be sought for any changes to Hong Kong's election laws, giving Beijing the right to veto any moves towards more democracy, such as direct elections for the territory's chief executive.

**2004**

July - Some 200,000 people mark the seventh anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to Chinese rule by taking part in a demonstration protesting Beijing's ruling against electing the next chief executive by universal suffrage.

Britain accuses China of interfering in Hong Kong's constitutional reform process in a manner inconsistent with self-governance guarantees agreed before the handover.

**2004**

September - Pro-Beijing parties retain their majority in LegCo elections widely seen as a referendum on Hong Kong's aspirations for greater democracy. In the run-up to the poll, human rights groups accuse Beijing of creating a "climate of fear" aimed at skewing the result.

**2005**

March – After being rebuked by Chinese President Hu Jintao, Tung Chee-hwa resigns, citing failing health. He is succeeded in June by Donald Tsang.



September - Pro-democracy members of LegCo make unprecedented visit to Chinese mainland. Eleven members of the 25-strong pro-democracy group had been banned from the mainland for 16 years.

December - Pro-democracy legislators block Mr Tsang's plans for limited constitutional reforms, saying they do not go far enough. Mr Tsang said his plans - which would have changed electoral processes without introducing universal suffrage - went as far as Beijing would allow.

**2006**

July - Tens of thousands of people rally in support of full democracy.

**2007**

July - Hong Kong marks 10th anniversary of handover to China. New government under Chief Executive Donald Tsang is sworn in. Plans for full democracy unveiled.

## Timetable

**2007**

December - Beijing says it will allow the people of Hong Kong to directly elect their own leader in 2017 and their legislators by 2020. Mr Tsang hails this as "a timetable for obtaining universal suffrage", but pro-democracy campaigners express disappointment at the protracted timescale.

**2008**

September - Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp wins more than a third of seats in legislative elections, retaining a key veto over future bills.



Image source, AFP

*Fears about the potential erosion of democratic freedoms grew in 2014*





**2009** June - Tens of thousands of people attend a vigil in Hong Kong on the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. The territory is the only part of China to mark the anniversary.

**2010** May - Five opposition MPs are returned to their seats, in by-elections they triggered by quitting - a move intended to pressure China to grant the territory full democracy.

**Opposition Democratic Party, traditionally hostile to Beijing, holds its first talks with a Chinese official since the 1997 handover.**

**2012** July - Leung Chun-ying takes office as chief executive, succeeding Donald Tsang.

September - Pro-democracy parties retain their power of veto over new laws in Legislative Council elections, but perform less well than expected. Turnout, at over 50%, was higher than in 2008.

**2014** June - More than 90% of the nearly 800,000 people taking part in an unofficial referendum vote in favour of giving the public a say in short-listing candidates for future elections of the territory's chief executive. Beijing condemns the vote as illegal.

### **Pro-democracy protests**

July - Tens of thousands of protesters take part in what organisers say could be Hong Kong's largest pro-democracy rally in a decade.

August - Chinese government rules out a fully democratic election for Hong Kong leader in 2017, saying that only candidates approved by Beijing will be allowed to run.

September-December - Pro-democracy demonstrators occupy the city centres for weeks in protest at the Chinese government's decision to limit voters' choices in the 2017 Hong Kong leadership election. More than 100,000 people took to the streets at the height of the Occupy Central protests



**2015** June - Legislative Council rejects proposals for electing the territory's next leader in 2017. Despite pro-democracy protests and a lengthy consultation process, the plans remained the same as those outlined by China in 2014.

**2016** August - Hundreds of protesters rally against the disqualification of six pro-independence candidates from Legislative Council elections on 4 September.

September - A new generation of pro-independence activists win seats in Legislative Council elections in the highest turnout since the 1997 handover from Britain to China.

November - Thousands of people gather in central Hong Kong to show their support for China's intervention in the territory's political affairs after Beijing moves to have two pro-independence legislators removed from office.

November - The high court disqualifies pro-independence legislators Sixtus Leung and Yau Wai-Ching from taking their seats in the Legislative Council after they refused to pledge allegiance to China during a swearing in ceremony.



Image source ,AFP/Getty Images

*In 2017 Hong Kong marked 20 years since the city's handover from British to Chinese rule*

**2017** March - CY Leung's deputy Carrie Lam wins the Electoral College to become the next chief executive.

June - Chinese President Xi Jinping visits Hong Kong to swear in Chief Executive Carrie Lam, and uses his visit to warn against any attempt to undermine China's influence over the special administrative region.  
(<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-49340717>)





## 2019

February - The Hong Kong government announced proposed amendments to the “Fugitive Offenders Ordinance”, sparking 285 days of protests. Over 2 million Hong Kong citizen went to the streets to oppose the government. For more: [Hong Kong: Timeline of extradition protests](#),

September - Chief Executive Carrie Lam formally announced the withdrawal of the bill but refused to establish an independent investigation into police misconduct.

June-Nov - Hong Kong sees anti-government and pro-democracy protests, involving violent clashes with police, against a proposal to allow extradition to mainland China.

November - 2.94 million Hongkongers voted in the District Council elections, securing a landslide victory for the pro-democracy camp, signalling public dissatisfaction with Carrie Lam’s administration.

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On June 30, 2020, China introduced the National Security Law in Hong Kong to prevent four types of offenses that endanger national security; secession, subversion of state power, terrorism, and collusion with foreign forces. The goal was to restore order and help the economy.

The law gives police broad powers—they can arrest people on suspicion of committing a crime, freeze theirs and their family’s assets, and hold them without a time limit. Judges are chosen by the government, and people can't pick their own lawyers. This is very different from Hong Kong’s usual legal system.

<sup>ii</sup>As a result, many people in Hong Kong felt their rights and freedoms were being taken away. Losing trust in the government, many chose to leave. In 2021, the UK started the BNO 5+1 visa program to help Hongkongers immigrate, and other countries like Canada and Australia also offered support.



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## Hong Kong Residents Moving Worldwide

Since the National Security Law was introduced in 2020, about 600,000 people have left Hong Kong for places like the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Taiwan.

According to figures from the UK Home Office, over 220,000 BNO visa applications have been approved, and about 161,000 Hongkongers have moved there, mostly for political reasons. To live in the UK, they must show they can support themselves and pay a fee to help fund the NHS (National Health Service). They are not allowed to claim public benefits, but they can live anywhere in the country. It is estimated that over 1000 Hong Kong residents are living in Warwickshire.

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<sup>i</sup> Source from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-16526765>

**National Security Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Hong Kong National Security Law)**

<sup>ii</sup> Read more: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-52765838>

Source: <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/ous/nationaleducation/hk/resource-library/gallery/the-hong-kong-security-law/>

Source: <https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-hant/%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF%E7%A7%BB%E6%B0%91%E6%BD%AE>

Source: <https://www.i-cable.com/%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E%E8%B3%87%E8%A8%8A/206071/23%E6%A2%9D-%E8%AD%A6%E6%96%B9%E5%8F%AF%E7%94%B3%E4%BB%A4%E7%A6%81%E8%AB%AE%E8%A9%A2%E5%80%8B%E5%88%A5%E5%BE%8B%E5%B8%AB-%E6%94%BF%E5%BA%9C-%E9%98%B2%E9%80%9A%E9%A2%A8%E5%A0%B1>

Source: [https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-](https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-tw/%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF%E8%AD%A6%E5%8B%99%E8%99%95%E5%9C%8B%E5%AE%B6%E5%AE%89%E5%85%A8%E8%99%95)

[tw/%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF%E8%AD%A6%E5%8B%99%E8%99%95%E5%9C%8B%E5%AE%B6%E5%AE%89%E5%85%A8%E8%99%95](https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-tw/%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF%E8%AD%A6%E5%8B%99%E8%99%95%E5%9C%8B%E5%AE%B6%E5%AE%89%E5%85%A8%E8%99%95)

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[tw/%E4%B8%AD%E8%8F%AF%E4%BA%BA%E6%B0%91%E5%85%B1%E5%92%8C%E5%9C%8B%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF%E7%89%B9%E5%88%A5%E8%A1%8C%E6%94%BF%E5%8D%80%E7%B6%AD%E8%AD%B7%E5%9C%8B%E5%AE%B6%E5%AE%89%E5%85%A8%E6%B3%95](https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-tw/%E4%B8%AD%E8%8F%AF%E4%BA%BA%E6%B0%91%E5%85%B1%E5%92%8C%E5%9C%8B%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF%E7%89%B9%E5%88%A5%E8%A1%8C%E6%94%BF%E5%8D%80%E7%B6%AD%E8%AD%B7%E5%9C%8B%E5%AE%B6%E5%AE%89%E5%85%A8%E6%B3%95)