MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the arrest of Cardinal Zen and the trustees of the 612 relief fund in Hong Kong (2022/2751(RSP))

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
European Parliament resolution on the arrest of Cardinal Zen and the trustees of the 612 relief fund in Hong Kong
(2022/2751(RSP))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to all its previous resolutions on Hong Kong, in particular those of 20 January 2022 on violations of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, of 8 July 2021 on the case of Apple Daily, of 21 January 2021 on the crackdown on the democratic opposition in Hong Kong, of 19 June 2020 on the PRC national security law for Hong Kong, of 18 July 2019 on the situation in Hong Kong, of 24 November 2016 on the case of Gui Minhai, jailed publisher in China,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on China, in particular those of 16 September 2021 on a new EU-China strategy and of 20 May 2021 on Chinese countersanctions on EU entities and MEPs and MPs,

– having regard to its recommendation of 13 December 2017 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) on Hong Kong, 20 years after handover,

- having regard to the Hong Kong Annual EU report on political and economic developments in 2021 of 05 May 2022,

- having regard to the Council conclusions on Hong Kong of 28 July 2020,

– having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the VP/HR to the European Parliament and the Council of 12 March 2019 entitled ‘EU-China – A strategic outlook’ (JOIN(2019)0005),

- having regard to the Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the Chief Executive election of 8 May 2022,

- having regard to the G7 Foreign Ministers’ Statement on the Hong Kong Chief Executive Selection of 9 May 2022,

- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 16 December 1966, and the concerns raised by the UN Human Rights Committee in its List of Issues for Hong Kong of 26 August 2020,

– having regard to the adoption of the National Security Law in Hong Kong by the Standing Committee of the China’s National People’s Congress on 30 June 2020,

– having regard to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) adopted on 4 April 1990, which entered into force on 1 July 1997,
having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom and the
Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong of 19 December 1984, also known as the Sino-British Joint Declaration,

having regard to the EU’s ‘One China’ policy and to the principle “One country two systems”,

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,

- having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the promotion of and respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law are at the center of the long-standing China policy of the EU, in line with the EU’s commitment to upholding these values in its external action;

B. whereas since the Chinese government imposed the National Security Law (NSL) on June 30, 2020, the Hong Kong authorities have waged an intensifying crackdown on the city, erasing basic civil and political rights long protected in Hong Kong, arresting prominent pro-democracy leaders, shutting down independent media, labor unions, and civil society groups, and have established a hotline for informers to report suspected violations; whereas Hong Kong and Beijing officials have decapitated the once-thriving pro-democracy movement and created a climate of fear among the general public; whereas the NSL is in complete violation of the “One Country Two Systems” principle and the Sino-British Declaration, which have been fully breached by the PRC;

C. whereas on May 11 and 12 2022, the police arrested a retired Roman Catholic bishop Cardinal Joseph Zen, a former legislator Cyd Ho, a singer-activist Denise Ho, an academic Hui Po-Keung, a senior barrister Margaret Ng, on charges of collusion with foreign forces (Article 29 NSL); whereas Hui Po-Keung was arrested at the airport on his way to take up an academic post in Europe;

D. whereas all five were trustees of the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund, which provided medical, legal, and psychological aid for protesters arrested during the 2019 pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong; whereas in 2021, Hong Kong police had opened an investigation into the fund for alleged violations of the NSL, which was subsequently forced to disband in October 2021;

E. whereas the arrests came days after Beijing appointed the former security chief, John Lee, as the city’s chief executive;

F. whereas the review of Hong Kong’s compliance with ICCPR is ongoing and is expected to be finalised in July 2022;

1. Condemns in the strongest terms the arrest of the trustees of the 612 Humanitarian Support Fund, marking a new and deeply worrying phase in the crackdown of what remains of Hong Kong freedoms and civil society;
2. Believes that the arrest is the clear demonstration of John Lee’s declared intentions to fight back against all critical voices even more strongly and to further intensify the crack down; is deeply concerned that this development is the beginning of an even more ruthless course of suppression for the opposition and therefore calls on the Council to urgently address the situation in Hong Kong with a view to resolutely responding with new measures, including sanctions against individuals in Hong Kong and China, notably John Lee;

3. Calls on the Member States to continue implementing the Council Conclusions on Hong Kong of July 2020, including the preparation of concrete responses to the possible extraterritorial effects of the NSL and the implementation of a 'lifeboat scheme' for Hong Kong pro-democratic activists and political leaders, including facilitating the issuing of emergency visas and providing temporary shelter in the Member States; urges the 10 Member States which still have applicable extradition treaties with China to suspend them;

4. Reiterates its call on the EEAS to ensure adequate resources for the European Union Office to Hong Kong (EU Office) to continue conducting and adequately step up trial observation and human rights monitoring; calls on the EEAS and the EU Office to provide regular reporting of the most prominent trials, as well as on the evolution of the more general human rights situation in Hong Kong;

5. Urges the EU Office and EU Member States’ diplomatic personnel to do everything they can to provide protection and support to peaceful activists and political leaders in Hong Kong, notably by paying visits to the political prisoners in jail; deplores the climate of fear that the NSL has generated among Hong Kong civil society, including due to the arbitrary offence of “collusion with foreign and external forces”; 

6. Denounces the abusive use of pre-trial detention and bail denial and regrets the prohibition to report on hearings related to bail conditions; deplores that pre-trial detention and stringent bail conditions de facto neutralise the whole pro-democratic opposition and prevent its representatives from access to communication channels;

7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the NSL as a top priority on the agenda of all EU-China meetings, including in diplomatic consultations in preparation of those meetings; Calls on the EEAS and the Council to agree to the setting up of a Human Rights Dialogue with Hong Kong in light of the gravity of the deteriorating situation;

8. Stresses the importance of the EU and the Member States keeping up the engagement at the UN Human Rights Council towards the establishment of a UN human rights monitoring mechanism on China;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government and Parliament of the People’s Republic of China, and the Chief Executive and the Assembly of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.