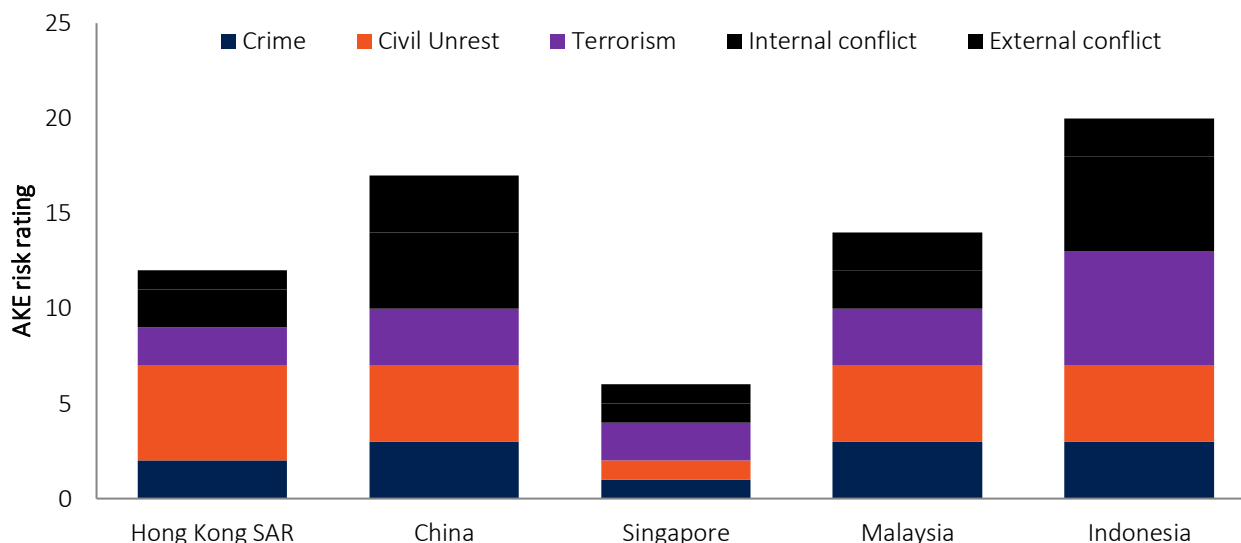




AKE International

Security Risk Brief – Hong Kong SAR

1. COUNTRY COMPARISON



AKE's 1-100 security risk ratings are objective measures of the level of risk in any given country. Sub-ratings for individual risks are updated in real time in response to changing dynamics in the global security environment, and these are in turn used to calculate overall country ratings.

2. KEY POINTS

- Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), although previously assessed to be a low-risk security environment, has seen a wave of violent anti-government protests and clashes in the last weeks. The protests are now approaching their 11th consecutive week. In the first eight weeks, police fired 160 rubber bullets and 1,000 rounds of teargas. There is potential for further escalation in the immediate term, after unprecedented violent at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) on 13 August.
- Incidents have spread beyond the traditional hotspots of Wan Chai, Admiralty, Causeway, or even Mong Kok in Kowloon, with 13 of the city's 18 districts having seen some form of unrest over the last weeks.
- The unrest witnessed at HKIA came on the fifth consecutive day of protests at the transport hub, which caused major air travel disruptions. It may also hail the beginning of a loss of both domestic and international support for anti-government protesters.
- A division has emerged between those who remain furious at Hong Kong authorities and the behaviour of security forces, and those whose have had enough of the disruption caused by the protests or are fearful of the Beijing's response. This has resulted in violent clashes between civilians from opposing groups.
- Meanwhile, Beijing has upped the ante, issuing statements ranging from explicit warnings like 'Play with fire, you'll get burned' to thinly veiled threats such as propaganda clips featuring a military exercise quelling a protest in Hong Kong and deployments of paramilitary forces to neighbouring Shenzhen. While the likelihood of Beijing waiting the protests out outweighs that of deploying military and paramilitary forces to quell the unrest by force, Hong Kong police have been given unconditional support and carte blanche to suppress unrest without subsequent punishment.

3. WILL BEIJING SEND FORCES?

“They want to throw something at a scrambling rat, but fear missing and hitting the pottery instead” – Chinese Proverb

AKE ANALYSIS

AKE’s analysis maintains that the likelihood of mobilising Chinese troops in Hong Kong should not be overstated despite the recent escalation. Such a move would have a range of damaging consequences for China’s core interests and President Xi Jinping himself.

- **Reputational:** The last time Beijing sent in troops to quell pro-democracy protests was at Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989. The event has tarnished the reputation of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to this day, despite decades of efforts to wipe it from public memory.
- **Economic:** A military or paramilitary deployment on the territory would severely damage Hong Kong’s economy. This would come at a large loss for China, not to mention the powerful political figures that store their wealth in the city.
- The move may also lead to international sanctions that would exacerbate China’s slowing economic growth and other financial risks. A major deterioration in the economy puts the CCP at risk of losing public support, something the political elite fears intensively.
- **Political:** AKE sources close to the CCP stated that such a move would have political costs for President Xi Jinping, who is already facing internal opposition for his authoritarianism, crackdown on corruption and handling of the damaging trade war with the US.
- **One Belt One Road:** President Xi Jinping’s ‘One Belt One Road’ initiative is the linchpin of the administration’s foreign policy. Intervention in Hong Kong would result in the loss of Beijing’s soft power, something a succession of Chinese administrations, but especially Xi’s administration, have spent years perfecting in order to woo anyone who will listen.
- **Taiwan:** The deployment of Chinese forces to quell the protests in Hong Kong would rule out hopes for unification with Taiwan, which is considered a renegade Chinese province. Any crackdown in Hong Kong would likely bolster pro-independence forces led by President Tsai Ing-wen in an election in January 2020, and undermine the “one country, two systems” and “peaceful reunification” arguments.

Given the costs at hand, the likelihood of Beijing waiting the protests out currently outweighs that of deploying military and paramilitary forces to quell the unrest by force.

A more likely scenario would be the covert deployment of Chinese agents to support a crackdown on protesters by Hong Kong forces. Signs of Chinese infiltration are already apparent, as are allegations that the central government leverages criminal organisations to maintain stability and social order in Hong Kong through “extra-legal governance”.

4. THE PROTESTS

FORM

- **Background:** The unrest in Hong Kong has so far involved large rallies, marches organised by the Catholic community, violent clashes with security forces, violent clashes with protesters from opposing camps, road and public transport disruptions, sit-ins at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and city-wide strikes. A regular pattern has emerged of mass rallies in the day that deteriorate into violent clashes with security forces and between opposing civilian groups by night.
- **Demands:** The five demands of protesters include:
 1. The withdrawal of the highly contentious extradition bill,
 2. The resignation of Chief Executive Carrie Lam,
 3. The retraction of the government's characterisation of the violent clashes as 'riots',
 4. A full independent inquiry into allegations of police brutality,
 5. The unconditional release of detained protesters.
- **'Be Water' strategy:** To carry out acts of civil disobedience Hong Kong, protesters have moved away from previous 'occupy' strategies as seen during the 'Umbrella Movement' in 2014. The government did not cede and the movement ended in failure. As such, these new protests are aimed at wearing authorities down by draining energy and resources from security forces. The tactics observed in recent weeks are borrowed from Kung-Fu movie star Bruce Lee, who advised "Be formless, shapeless, like water".
 - **High mobility:** Protesters are anonymous, spontaneous, flexible, evasive and seemingly directionless.
 - **Flash mob strategy:** Spontaneous protests are erupting in multiple locations within a short space of time and without warning. The main body of protesters splits into different groups and participants play cat-and-mouse with security forces: creating chaos in a contained location to draw out police before moving on to another target location.
- **Locations:** Incidents have spread beyond the traditional protest hotspots in Wan Chai, Admiralty, Causeway, and Mong Kok in Kowloon, to which the protests during the 2014 'Umbrella Movement' remained confined. Unrest has been reported at tourist attractions, major transport hubs, shopping malls and in residential areas, even the more rural ones in the northern New Territories. So far, protests and/ or clashes have erupted in 13 of the city's 18 districts. Popular protest locations include:
 - The Legislative Council (Legco) building and Central Government Complex area
 - Government House
 - Police Headquarters
 - The Court of Final Appeal
 - The People's Liberation Army (PLA) building
 - West Kowloon station
 - Open grounds such as Victoria Park, Tamar Park, Chater Garden and Southern Playground
- **Leaders:** The protests remain leaderless so as to prevent a crackdown on organisers as was the case during the 2014 'Umbrella Movement'. However, authorities are now arresting protesters en masse. So far 44 people linked to the protests have been linked to 'rioting', a crime that carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

- **The protesters:** A polarisation of the protest movement has developed in the last few weeks, which has resulted in violent clashes between rival groups.
 - **The moderates:** The majority of protesters continue to pressure the government to meet their five demands through peaceful action.
 - **The radicals:** A small but growing number of anti-government protesters have turned to violence to achieve their aims.
 - There are concerns over growing tensions between protesters and Hongkongers who have grown tired of the protracted disruption and/ or fear that the protests will draw retaliation from Beijing.
- **Dress codes:** Anti-government protesters are usually dressed in black, wearing surgical masks, goggles and yellow construction helmets. Counter-protesters – including the suspected triad members who attacked anti-government protesters returning from the city centre and passers-by at Yuen Long MTR station on 21 July – are usually dressed in white and armed with bamboo rods.

TACTICS

- **Acts of civil disobedience:** Protesters have caused mass disruption in the city, blocking major thoroughfares and transport infrastructure. They also express their opposition to the Hong Kong government and Beijing's influence on the territory through acts of both peaceful non-cooperation and violence targeting property and police.
 - **Strikes and acts of non-cooperation:** This tactic was witnessed in full swing on Monday 5 August, when a city-wide mass strike occurred. Civil servants, drivers, teachers, construction workers and others missed work to join rallies around the city – the first general strike in Hong Kong for more than 50 years. Swathes of the city were paralysed, more than 200 flights were cancelled and several lines of the MTR, the rail network serving Hong Kong, were suspended.
 - **Roadblocks:** Protesters are erecting barricades made from dismantled metal railings, public bin receptacles, bricks and umbrellas to obstruct traffic on major thoroughfares such as Harcourt road and the Cross-Harbour Tunnel.
 - **MTR service disruption:** Groups of protesters have caused severe disruptions at major MTR stations and on the Airport Express line. Tactics include crowding station platforms to prevent commuters from boarding trains, obstructing train doors by positioning objects or lying down across the door area and pushing emergency stop buttons. The disruptions caused heated verbal exchanges with commuters as well as low-level scuffles.
 - **Sit-ins:** While sit-ins have become a dated act of civil disobedience in Hong Kong, this nonetheless was the tactic used during a planned protest at HKIA. Thousands of protesters have staged sit-ins in the arrivals and departures halls of HKIA to draw attention to the contentious extradition bill and police violence against protesters. They also called for an investigation into the police's slow response after pro-democracy protesters and bystanders were attacked by suspected triad members at Yuen Long MTR station on 21 July.
 - **Arson:** Protesters have set fires outside police stations. Items set on fire include garbage bins and other miscellaneous items found on the street.

- **Projectiles:** Protesters have dug up bricks from the street and hurled them at security forces, police stations, and vehicles attempting to drive through roadblocks. Other projectiles include iron rods, glass and petrol bombs. Some protesters have been seen using elastic ropes to create slingshots.
- **Vandalism:** Protesters have vandalised multiple buildings, properties, statues and other symbols of the Hong Kong government or mainland Chinese influence over the territory. When protesters stormed the Legislative Council chambers on 1 July, they defaced the interiors, vandalising furniture and spray-painting anti-government slogans.
- **Attacks on biased media groups:** There have been cases where reporters have been attacked and assets damaged because they are accused of bias. For example, protesters smashed up a TVB News van in Kwun Tong.
- **Catholic hymns and rallies:** Hong Kong's Catholic community has also participated in the protests. There have been several candlelight vigils and marches calling for peace amid Hong Kong's political unrest.
- **Clashes:** Violent clashes have been reported almost systematically alongside acts of civil disobedience.
 - **Security forces:** Clashes between protesters and members of the security forces are frequent. Protesters arm themselves with umbrellas or other miscellaneous items and directly confront police in riot gear.
 - **Opposing civilian groups:** There has been a spike in clashes between opposing civilian groups armed with poles and other improvised weapons, as was the case on 5 August in North Point. Hongkongers who are tired of the continuous unrest and disruption have directly confronted anti-government protesters.
 - There have also been at least two cases when vehicles have forcefully driven through crowds of protesters who had set up roadblocks, injuring at least one person.
 - **Triads:** Suspected triad members attacked protesters at Yuen Long MTR station on 21 July. While military intervention by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) remains a last resort, China is using its non-state supporters on the ground – the triads – to attempt to maintain the status quo.
 - **Agitated travellers:** Scuffles were reported between protesters and frustrated air passengers at HKIA on 13 August.
- **Protection:** Protesters have used various tactics to shield themselves from tear gas, confuse security forces and to protect their identity.
 - **Neutralising tear gas:** The newest anti-tear gas tactic involves using a traffic cone to stop gas from spreading. When a tear gas shell lands among the crowd, small mobile teams of "firefighters" race in to cover the shell with the traffic cone. Another team member then moves in to pour water into the cone to douse the shell, putting it out. Perhaps counter-productively, this has resulted in the increased use of tear gas by security forces.
 - **Laser pointers:** Laser pointers emitting green and blue beams of light have been used widely to confuse police officers and deter passers-by from taking photographs that might help identify protesters.

- **Communication:** While the protests appear directionless, they are in fact highly organised with protesters using various strategies to communicate.
 - **AirDrop:** Rather than using Telegram, which was shut down in the early days of the unrest, protesters have turned to peer-to-peer technologies like Apple's 'AirDrop' feature, which uses Bluetooth rather than mobile data or wi-fi. Protesters use AirDrop both to coordinate the protest movement and to spread unsolicited information among the broader community, including to Chinese citizens over the border in Shenzhen. Prior to protests, Hongkongers remind each other to turn on AirDrop.
 - **Sign language and supply chains:** Protesters have developed a unique system of hand signals to send messages through the crowd about what equipment they need to protect themselves from the security forces. From helmets to umbrellas, eye masks, saline solution and pliers, Hong Kong protesters have at least 12 hand signals to communicate with their peers. They form human chains to pass along the items, or some protesters serve as runners to get urgently needed supplies to the frontline.

PLANNED PROTESTS

- **15 August, Wan Chai:** Protest outside Wan Chai Taxation Office
- **17 August, Central & Admiralty:** March from Chater Garden in Central to Government Offices in Admiralty
- **17 August, Kowloon:** March from Hung Hom Pier to Sung Wong Toi Garden in Kowloon
- **18 August, Causeway & Central:** March from Victoria Park in Causeway Bay to Chater road in Central
- **18 August, Tsuen Wan & Kwai Tsing:** March from Tsing Yi Sports Ground to Tsuen Wan Park
- **19 August, city-wide:** "Clean up MTR carriages"
- **25 August, New Territories:** March from Kwai Tiang Theatre in Kwai Chung to Tsuen Wan Park

KEY DATES

- 28 September: Fifth Anniversary of the 'Occupy Central' movement, which began on this day in 2014
- 1 October: 70th Anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC)
- Month of October: Resumption of Legco sessions

5. SECURITY FORCES

RESPONSE

- **Reputation:** The 34,000-member Hong Kong Police Force has long been considered “Asia’s finest”, but its increasing use of force to combat the protest movement has eroded its good reputation. About 600 arrests have been made so far, and police are accused of harassing journalists and passers-by as well as protesters. It should be noted that some senior members of the police force are British. They have been seen directing subordinates to fire tear gas at unarmed protesters.
- **Escalation:** The security force response to the unrest in Hong Kong has escalated significantly since 12 June, when security forces first used tear gas and rubber bullets against protesters. In the first eight weeks of the protests, police fired 160 rubber bullets and 1,000 rounds of tear gas. On Monday 5 August, those figures were nearly matched in a single day.
- **Anti-police anger:** Anger against the police has also escalated, particularly in the wake of the 21 July incident when suspected triad members armed with bamboo rods injured 45 people when they attacked protesters and commuters at Yuen Long MTR station. The police arrived around 30 minutes after the first emergency calls. Critics accused them of delaying their response to allow the gang to carry out the beatings.
- Hongkongers are increasingly accusing police of inflaming protester rage by using excessive force. Tear gas has been used inside malls and in residential areas, while countless videos of police officers beating subdued protesters or firing rubber bullets at protester heads have gone viral.
- **Face of the government:** Police themselves have become targets of angry protesters and residents, as shown by the direct attacks on police stations and police dwellings. Anti-police anger is further exacerbated by the fact that the force has become the most visible face of a Hong Kong government that has been keeping a low profile in recent weeks. Police officials are now hosting daily news conferences, while Chief Executive Carrie Lam has not been seen since her brief appearance on 5 August when she praised police forces.
- **Motivation:** Authorities in Beijing are pressuring Hong Kong security forces to get tougher to resolve the crisis. Essentially, authorities in Hong Kong appear to have been given carte blanche to suppress the unrest without subsequent punishment.

TACTICS

- **Crowd control tactics**
 - **Brutality:** Security forces have been accused of using excessive force to quell unrest. Police in riot gear armed with batons have been seen charging at crowds in enclosed areas such as shopping malls and beating subdued protesters. Police have also been accused of verbally and physically assaulting protesters.
 - **Kettling:** The police seem to be trying to keep protesters stationary and sap their morale by massing around them, a technique known as ‘kettling’. This tactic is dangerous as it prevents people from leaving, and risks fuelling violent clashes between protesters and police.

- **Restraint:** Hong Kong police have at times exercised a controlled approach to avoid bloody clashes, including when protesters rampaged through the Hong Kong Legislative Council building on 1 July. However, some have called the approach a “PR show” after officers were accused of using excessive force against protesters in June.
- **Crowd control equipment:** While non-lethal if used correctly, some of the below equipment has been used at close range and despite poor visibility due to tear gas smoke, increasing the risk of serious injury or death.
 - **Pepper spray:** Pepper spray is a non-lethal chemical agent that irritates the eyes, nose and throat. It is used frequently to disperse crowds.
 - **Pepper balls:** Also called pepper-spray projectiles, they can be fired from guns and have the same subduing effect as pepper spray. Pepper balls were used in Hong Kong for the first time on 12 June.
 - **Sponge grenades:** This is a non-lethal plastic projectile with a foam rubber nose that resembles rubber bullets. They are designed to cause blunt pain to temporarily disable or confuse its target. Being hit by a sponge grenade from within 10 metres would cause severe injury or even death. They were first publicly mentioned for riot control in July.
 - **Rubber bullets:** Properly known as rubber baton rounds, they are another non-lethal method of crowd control which can cause serious injury or death if used inappropriately. They are more lethal than sponge grenades because they are harder and smaller. Nearly 400 rubber bullets have been fired since the beginning of the protests.
 - **Bean bag rounds:** Also known as flexible baton rounds, these non-lethal weapons consist of a small fabric pillow filled with about 100 lead pellets weighing about 0.04kg. They are designed to temporarily incapacitate or disable their target but can cause permanent injury if shot at the head. They were last used in Hong Kong in 2005.
 - **Tear gas:** Tear gas, formally known as ‘lachrymator’, irritates the eyes, causing a burning sensation and tearing. Police have fired nearly 2,000 rounds of tear gas since the beginning of the protests, sometimes aiming directly at heads and spinal cords. Tear gas was also used in confined areas and densely built up residential areas. As with all non-lethal weapons, there are risks of permanent injury or death when tear gas is used inappropriately.
 - **Water Cannons:** Security forces have been testing three anti-riot vehicles armed with water cannons, which cost US\$2.12m each. The tests have included using a dye in the liquid mixture, to mark individuals for identification later. If dye is used it can lead to unwarranted harassment or detention after the event. The water can also have other additives including a range of chemical irritants added.
- **Injunction orders:** The Airport Authority secured an injunction to ban demonstrations in all but two designated terminal zones at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) after five consecutive days of highly disrupted protests, which escalated into violent clashes on 13 August. Under the injunction, anyone loitering or interfering with the authority or the Aviation Security Company (Avseco) from executing the court order will also be viewed as having violated it. The injunction order effectively shifts enforcement from police to the court bailiffs to maintain order.
- **Prosecution:** Beijing has repeatedly said that Hong Kong protesters should face harsh punishments for breaking the law. Mainland authorities will likely support Hong Kong authorities to carry out mass police operations against suspects.

- **Arrests:** Police say over 600 people have been arrested since June, including 44 people who have been charged with ‘rioting’, a sentence that carries a maximum prison sentence of 10 years. Hong Kong laws on ‘unlawful assembly’ and ‘rioting’ fall far short of international standards.
- **Stop and search:** Hong Kong police are carrying out ID checks to identify protesters, a practice which may result in investigation or arrest at a later stage. Failure to present a valid ID is an offense under Hong Kong law. Police also have the right to inspect the external components of phones, to look at fingerprints etc.

6. RISKS

GENERAL PUBLIC

- **Attacks:** There is a risk of being caught up in attacks by civilian groups. The attacks carried out by suspected triad members at Yuen Long MTR station on 21 July targeted protesters, commuters and bystanders indiscriminately.
- **Clashes:** There is a real risk of becoming caught up in violent clashes among civilians of opposing groups and between protesters and security forces, particularly at unauthorised protests. These have erupted in residential areas with little warning, taking by-passers by surprise.
- **Vehicle ramming:** There is a risk of death or injury due to the potential for frustrated drivers to ram into crowds of protesters and roadblocks. There have been at least two incidents when cars have rammed into roadblocks or crowds of protesters, injuring one person.
- **Police brutality:** Bystanders suspected of taking part in the protests have reportedly been physically and verbally assaulted by police carrying out stop and search operations.
- **Travel disruption:** The protests and city-wide strikes have caused severe disruptions in road and public transport infrastructure in Hong Kong. There remains a high risk of disruptions to air travel after hundreds of flights were cancelled amid protests at HKIA on 12 August and 13 August, when travellers were prevented from accessing departure gates and check in counters.

JOURNALISTS

- **Attacks:** There is a risk of journalists being targeted in attacks by civilian groups. Journalists have been attacked for being perceived as being biased towards one side or another. There is also a risk of being affected by indiscriminate attacks, such as the attacks carried out by suspected triad members at Yuen Long MTR station on 21 July.
- **Clashes:** There is a real risk of becoming caught up in violent clashes among civilians of opposing groups and between protesters and security forces, particularly at unauthorised protests.
- **Vehicle ramming:** There is a risk of death or injury due to the potential for frustrated drivers to ram into crowds of protesters who have set up roadblocks. There have been at least two incidents when cars have rammed into roadblocks or crowds of protesters, injuring one person.

- **Police brutality:** Journalists have sustained injuries after being caught up in security force measures to quell unrest and disperse crowds using crowd control tactics and equipment.
- **Travel disruption:** The protests and city-wide strikes have caused severe disruptions in road and public transport infrastructure in Hong Kong. There remains a high risk of disruptions to air travel after hundreds of flights were cancelled amid protests at HKIA on 12 August and 13 August, when travellers were prevented from accessing departure gates and check in counters.
- **Legal:** Journalists may be caught up in mass police operations aiming to arrest people for ‘rioting’ and ‘unlawful assembly’. Journalists may be arrested for trespassing, for example.

7. PROJECTIONS

PROJECTIONS

- Protests and violent clashes will continue to take place across Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories over the short-term.
- There will be an increase in the frequency and intensity of clashes between opposing civilian groups. Tightly-knit communities and ethnic clans who do not support the protests will be the main instigators of violent attacks on protesters.
- Rumours have been circulating that some Fujianese associations and clan communities were mobilising relatives and friends from their hometowns on the mainland to come and settle scores following a clash in North Point on 5 August.
- Security forces are expected to step up stop and search activities, as well as mass arrests for “rioting” and “unlawful assembly”.
- There is potential for further disruption at major transport hubs such as the airport and the MTR. Flight cancellations, delays and other disruptions at HKIA will persist over the immediate term
- There is a risk of further violent unrest at HKIA should protesters breach an injunction order against public assembly in certain public areas.
- There will be further city-wide strikes, including in the public sector.

8. SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1: PROTESTS FIZZLE OUT

There is historical precedent for this scenario. Past protests in Hong Kong have tended to fizzle out after months of levels of unrest despite the government refusing to back down.

- **Exhaustion:** With protesters exhausted by weeks of non-stop activism and no tangible outcomes, the protest movement begins to simmer down. Fear of arrest may compound incentives to de-escalate tensions.
- **Loss of relevance:** A measured response by Hong Kong security forces may serve to undermine claims of police brutality, which have become the main focus of protester anger. An independent inquiry into allegations of police brutality – one of the five key demands of anti-government protesters – may also serve to appease the movement.
- **Waning of support:** Should a small number of protesters increase hardline tactics – including violence and travel disruption – the movement may lose international support and the moderates will seek to distance themselves from the movement.
- **Back to school:** As student protesters return to school in late August and early September, protests may become less frequent, with lower turnouts.

Hong Kong's 'Summer of Rage' becomes another failed protest movement, although the risk for a renewed phase of unrest remains high.

SCENARIO 2: ESCALATION OF THE PROTEST MOVEMENT AND FURTHER VIOLENCE

There is increased potential of a short-term further escalation. Triggers include but are not limited to:

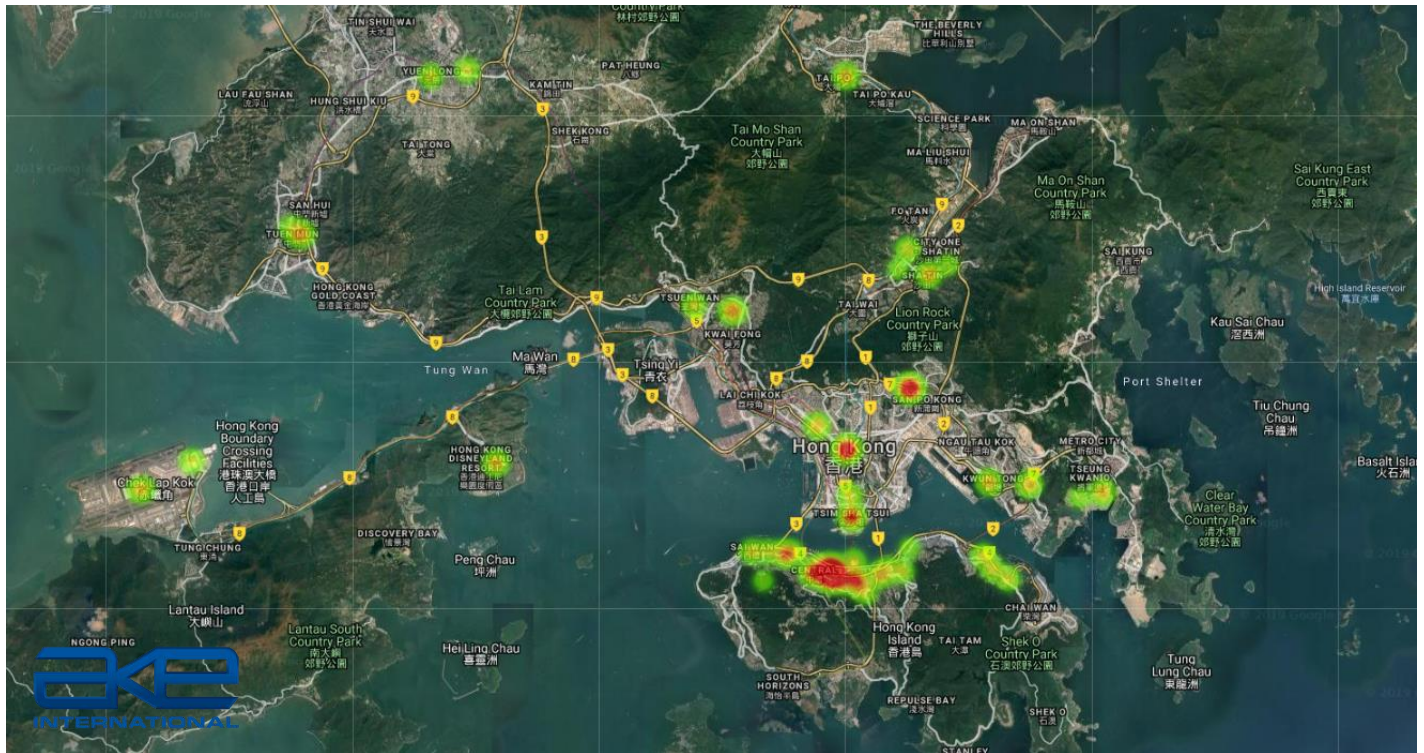
- **Intensified security force response:** Security forces, supported by Beijing, carry out mass arrests and step up the use of excessive force to quell unrest. This may include the rolling out of armoured trucks with water cannon.
- **Casualties and/ or fatalities:** Security forces are using increased levels of force against protesters, heightening the risk of permanent injuries and even fatalities due to misuse crowd control equipment. A female protester was allegedly shot in the eye by a bean bag round during protests on 11 August, further escalating anger against Hong Kong police. Bloody eye patches have become the latest symbol of the protests.
- **'Martyring':** There have been four cases of high-profile suicides over Hong Kong's predicament, which have triggered protests. Further cases will create rallying points for aggrieved protesters.
- **Central government intervention:** Allegations that undercover members of mainland security forces were present at the HKIA protests on 13 August fuelled the anger of anti-government protesters. In addition, the central government has drawn parallels between the protesters and "terrorists", which may trigger more unrest similar to the protests seen after protesters were called "rioters" and later charged as such.

SCENARIO 3: BEIJING IMPOSES MARTIAL LAW ON HONG KONG, DEPLOYS CHINESE SECURITY FORCES

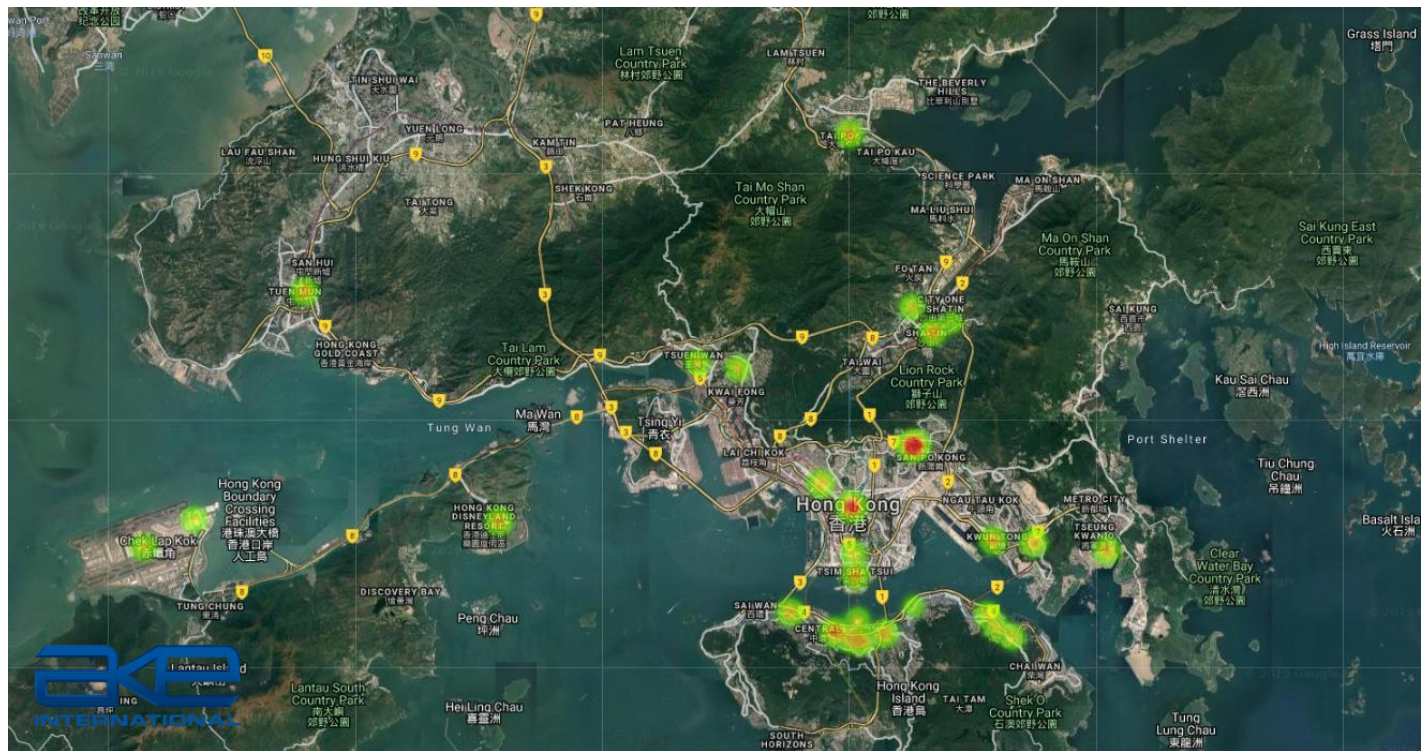
- **Red lines:** There are three possible red lines that need to be crossed for Beijing to deploy its security forces to Hong Kong:
 1. Foreign forces intervene
 2. A declaration of independence
 3. The use of Hong Kong as a base for subversion on the mainland
- **At Hong Kong's request:** In July Chinese defence ministry spokesman Wu Qian said the PLA could be deployed to Hong Kong to maintain order at the request of the Hong Kong government under Article 14 of the 1997 Garrison Law.
- The PLA already has a presence in Hong Kong, with its headquarters next to the Hong Kong government and legislative buildings. The units are hardly seen during daylight as conspicuous movements and exercises are kept to a minimum to avoid intimidating or angering locals. However, the PLA forces are geared toward taking military action against foreign foes—not suppressing urban riots.
- Chinese officials have used “terrorism” to describe the protests, invoking a term used to justify sending in forces to repress minority Muslims in the far west region of Xinjiang. In this scenario, the term “terrorism” would likely be used to license a coming crackdown.
- **People's Armed Police (PAP):** Rather than the PLA, it is more likely but just as worrying that Beijing would deploy the People's Armed Police (PAP). PAP vehicles have been sighted in neighbouring Shenzhen, where they are purportedly assembling for a military exercise. If China does decide to take the unprecedented step of imposing martial law on Hong Kong and enforcing it, the PAP would be a logical choice given its extensive experience in quelling protests in Xinjiang and Tibet as well as other parts of China.

This scenario is not in the interest of Beijing as it would be a brutal blow to its global reputation among other political and economic consequences (see Section 3). While this does not rule out the risk, it remains a solution of absolute last resort.

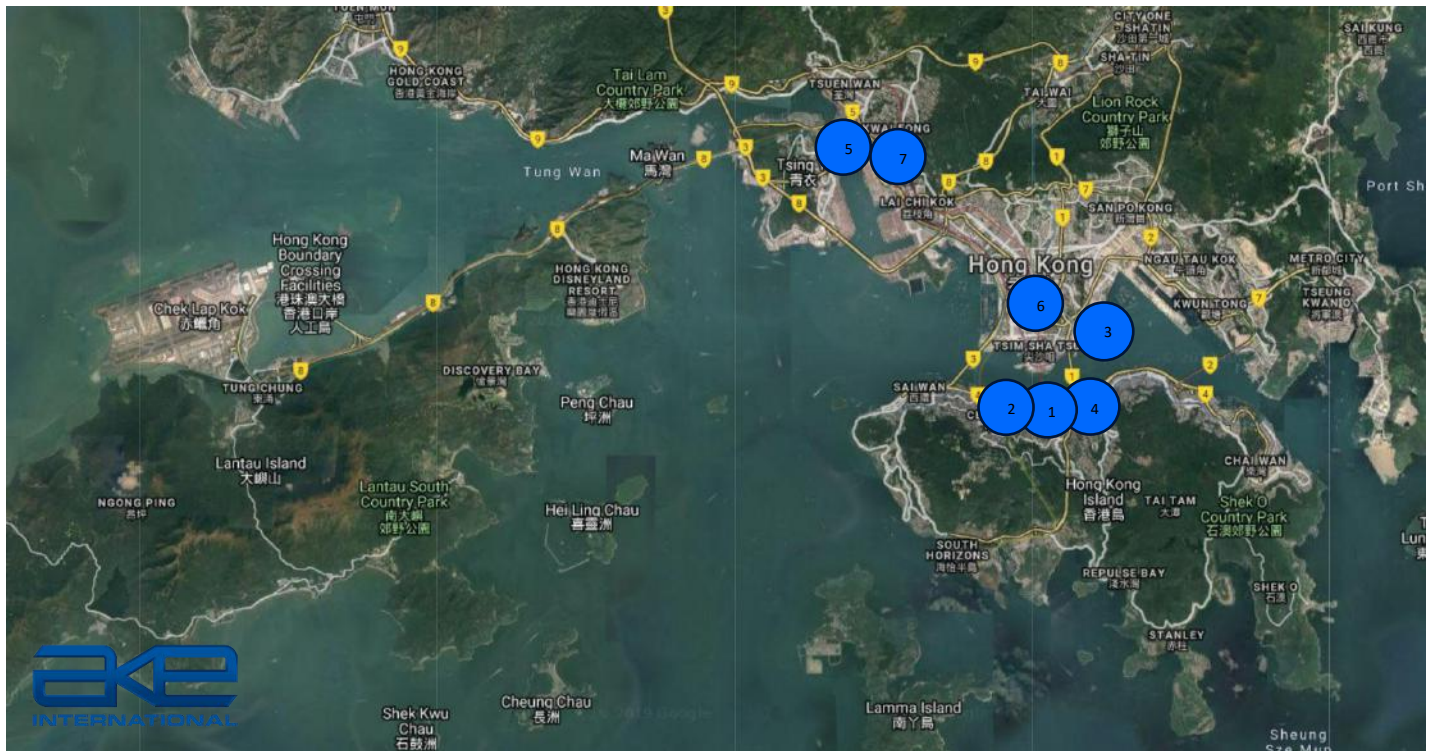
9. MAPS AND CHARTS



Map 1: Protests since 9 June 2019 – Source: AKE's Global Intake



Map 2: Protests since 1 August 2019 – Source: AKE's Global Intake



1. **15 August, Wan Chai:** Protest outside Wan Chai Taxation Office
2. **17 August, Central & Admiralty:** March from Chater Garden in Central to Government Offices in Admiralty
3. **17 August, Kowloon:** March from Hung Hom Pier to Sung Wong Toi Garden in Kowloon
4. **18 August, Causeway & Central:** March from Victoria Park in Causeway Bay to Chater road in Central
5. **18 August, Tsuen Wan & Kwai Tsing:** March from Tsing Yi Sports Ground to Tsuen Wan Park
6. **19 August, city-wide:** "Clean up MTR carriages"
7. **25 August, New Territories:** March from Kwai Tiang Theatre in Kwai Chung to Tsuen Wan Park

Map 3: Planned protests in Hong Kong 15-25 August – Source: AKE's Global Intake

10. RISK MITIGATION ADVICE

GENERAL PUBLIC

- Stay up-to-date with current events, including monitoring media outlets and social media to stay aware of planned protests and other local developments.
- It is advisable to avoid strikes and protests as they can involve poor crowd control and turn violent at short notice.
- Remain vigilant in and around areas where demonstrations are taking place. Move away quickly to a safe place if there are signs of disorder.
- Avoid wearing black as this could be used to identify you as an anti-government protester, making you a target of counter-protest groups and pro-China organised criminal gangs.
- Do not walk away, question or be reluctant to comply when asked by security forces to produce a Hong Kong ID or valid national ID. Authorities have the right to search if you do not comply.

JOURNALISTS

- Stay up to date with current events, including monitoring media outlets and social media to stay aware of planned protests and other local developments.
- Identify yourselves clearly as Press. Wear protective clothing including bullet-proof vests, helmets, goggles, tear gas protective masks.
- Remain vigilant in and around areas where demonstrations are taking place. Move away quickly to a safe place – such as into a building or to the side of the crowd - if signs of disorder emerge. It may be preferable to find a higher vantage point to cover the protests rather than moving into the crowds.
- Be prepared to evacuate protest areas by road. Ensure your vehicle is ready to depart at short notice if the situation turns violent or becomes threatening.
- Do not walk away, question or be reluctant to comply when asked by security forces to produce a Hong Kong ID or valid national ID. Authorities have the right to search if you do not comply.
- There is no requirement under Hong Kong Law that journalists must wear press cards or press IDs. However, it is in the best interest of journalist personnel to wear one if one is available.