

HONG KONG FREE PRESS

Annual Report



The
Trust
Project



International
Press
Institute



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Dear readers and supporters,

Despite an ever-tightening situation for press freedom, Hong Kong Free Press persevered in 2023, bolstering our [ethics code](#) and winning [several awards](#) and [credibility hallmarks](#). Plus, we [completed our expansion](#) - our team of [nine experienced journalists](#) now includes a dedicated editor, photojournalist and social media/production manager, providing more capacity for original, award-winning reporting (pg.13).

We published a podcast - [HKFP Yum Cha](#) (pg.7) - for the first time, delivered workshops at schools and conferences, and joined the [Society of Publishers in Asia and the International Press Institute](#) (pg.10). HKFP also spent the year disclosing and expanding our policies, standards and reporting guidelines in order to gain the [Trust Project hallmark](#) in December. The world's first global transparency standard proves a news outlet's commitment to original reporting, accuracy, inclusion, and fairness (pg.9.)

Meanwhile, we reported on an unprecedented year for the city, with a record-low turnout at the [newly-restricted local elections](#), and the authorities putting [HK\\$1 million bounties](#) on the heads of self-exiled activists whilst [pressuring their families](#) back home. Our team also covered the withdrawal of [pandemic restrictions](#), the continuing [security law crackdown](#), the trial of media tycoon [Jimmy Lai](#), and the closing arguments in the [47 democrats](#) and [Stand News cases](#).

HKFP is the city's [most transparent news outlet](#) (pg.14) and - with our impartial stance and balanced coverage - we will continue to occupy the remaining space for press freedom in 2024. With more outlets shuttered, and the spectre of [Article 23](#) - the city's homegrown security law - looming, it will likely be another bumpy ride (pg.17), but our newsroom still has breathing room to report freely on any local, hard news story. We remain [dedicated to Hong Kong](#) as we are still able to speak to sources on-the-ground and exercise privileges lost in mainland China: bearing witness in court and at the legislature, and asking tough, direct questions of officials.

I am happy to present our Annual Report, as we round-up our best coverage, achievements, and accounts from the past 12 months - all made possible by HKFP Patrons. The price of a weekly coffee, the equivalent of an hour's work per month, or whatever you can afford, will help us [keep the lights on and return to sustainability over the coming year](#) (pg.21). And for those of you who are already HKFP Patrons, thank you for your kind support, and for helping keep independent media alive in Hong Kong.



Tom Grundy,
Editor-In-Chief & Founder,
Hong Kong Free Press.



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Founded in 2015, **Hong Kong Free Press** is an impartial, non-profit, award-winning English-language newspaper. Run by journalists, backed by readers and completely independent, HKFP is governed by a public code of ethics.

7 million

Pageviews in 2023

460+

Writers since 2015

HK\$3.8m

Raised in 2023 [predicted]

25,800

Stories published

895

Monthly HKFP donors

HK\$1.4m

Loss in 2023 [predicted]

#2 on social media among all local English-language news outlets.



426,030 Twitter followers
- up 0.7% in 2023.



175,964 Instagram fans
- up 29% in 2023.



378,686 Facebook followers
- up 1.7% in 2023.



2,624 Telegram followers
- up 0.7% in 2023.



27,350 YouTube subscribers
- up 18% in 2023.



2,908 LinkedIn fans
- up 43% in 2023.

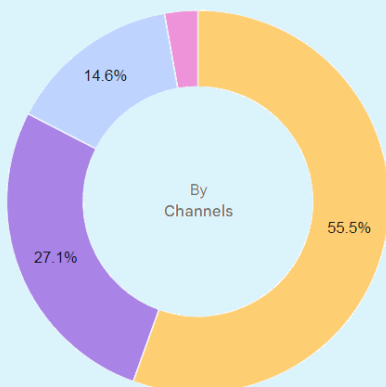


11,591 newsletter subscribers
- down 1.8% in 2023.

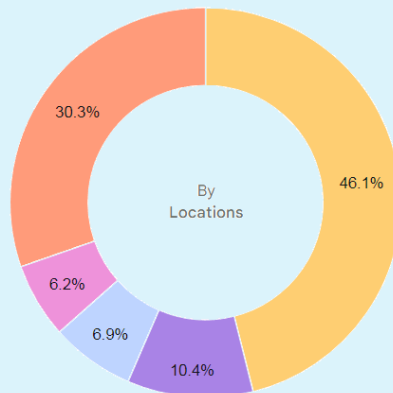


1,079 Mastodon fans
- up 68% in 2023.

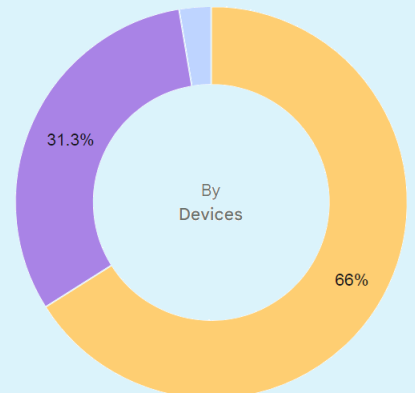
Traffic sources



Reader location



Reader device



Organic Search | Direct
Organic Social | Referral

Hong Kong | United States | United Kingdom
Singapore | Others

Mobile | Desktop | Tablet
Smart TV | 3

Original features: In 2023, the government completed an overhaul of its electoral systems, bringing local councils in line with Beijing-decreed changes to ensure only pre-approved “patriots” could run as district representatives. We spoke to [local councillors dismayed by the decision](#), went out with [candidates ahead of the opposition-free election](#), and heard from [voters who said they had “lost interest” in the process](#), which saw a record-low turnout of 27.5 per cent.

We also explored how the [narrative surrounding the District Council changed](#) from 2019, when the pro-democracy camp’s landslide victory was accepted by the government, to 2023, when officials claimed the local bodies had been influenced by “independence elements.”

Despite the transformations to Hong Kong’s governance being touted as “improvements,” marginalised groups told us how they felt [left behind by Hong Kong’s “patriots-only” legislature](#). Additionally, analysis showed that [government spending had faced less scrutiny](#) since the opposition was shut out.

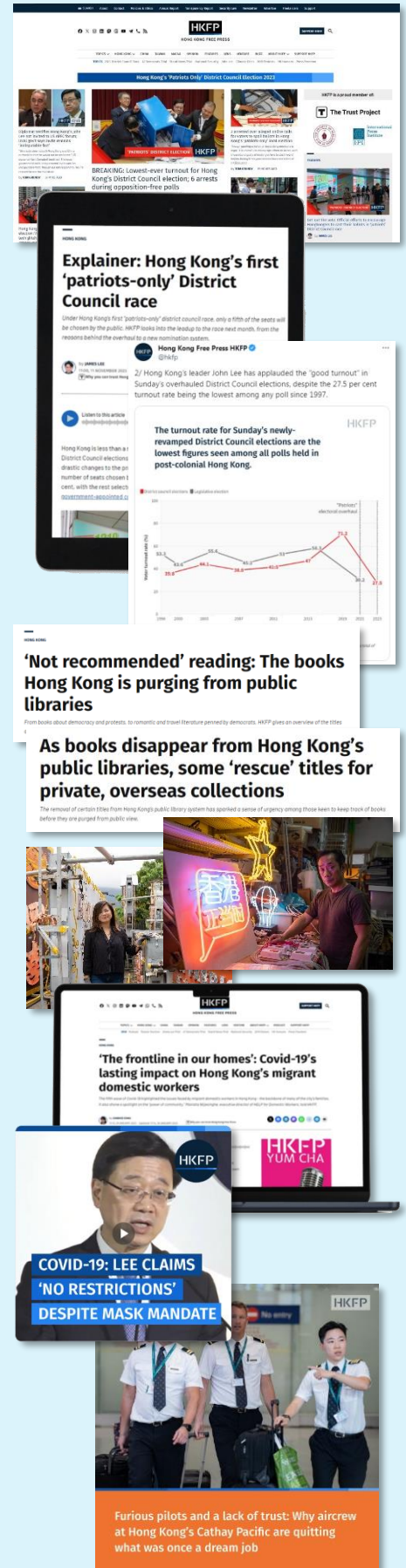
Former Liberal Studies teachers warned that [critical thinking had been removed from the curriculum](#), as the final exams for the short-lived subject were held. And as books disappeared from Hong Kong’s public libraries, we examined some of the [titles considered too sensitive for general consumption](#), and [met those committed to keeping track of the “vanished” volumes](#).

But books were not the only thing to disappear in 2023. We bade farewell to [Sham Shui Po’s beloved fabric market](#), saw [countless neon signs being switched off](#), and documented how Tsim Sha Tsui’s [street photographers fell foul of new licensing regulations](#).

It was also in early 2023 that Hong Kong finally said goodbye to the last of its Covid-related restrictions. We explored how [children may struggle to face the world](#) after three years of mask wearing, the pandemic’s lasting [impact on the city’s migrant domestic workers](#), and the first [Ramadan since limits on the number of people who could gather](#) were lifted.

Then, when Mpox entered Hong Kong, we heard from one patient [how little the city had learned from previous unpopular forced isolation programmes](#).

The end of Covid curbs heralded the return of tourists, most notably those from mainland China. However, we discovered that visitors in 2023 seemed [more interested in taking snaps for social media](#) than spending money, and [long-haul arrivals were few and far between](#). We looked into a [scarcity of pilots and low morale at the city’s flagship airline](#), which exacerbated the matter, and investigated how, despite government efforts, [Hong Kong’s evening economy had taken a hit](#).



The Guardian

HONG KONG FREE PRESS

HKFP was proud to continue its partnership with **The Guardian** in 2023, collaborating with the British broadsheet in covering the [opposition-free local elections](#), and the [landmark security law trial of Jimmy Lai](#). We also produced a multimedia feature about the [city's fading neon heritage](#).

We explored how a similar economic slowdown north of the border had resulted in queues outside Hong Kong banks as [mainland Chinese sought higher interest rates and security for their savings](#). And we spoke to restaurateurs from mainland China who [increasingly saw Hong Kong as a "stepping stone" to overseas success](#), as US-headquartered advisory firms in China were [raided and on the receiving end of law-enforcement action](#).

In Hong Kong, which has a proudly low violent crime rate, high-profile murders grabbed international headlines and shone a spotlight on gender and mental health issues. We explored [how women were treated by local media](#), and why so many reports [relied on gore, inaccuracies and sensationalism](#). We also heard from mental health practitioners, who said [staff shortages at public psychiatric facilities failed patients](#).

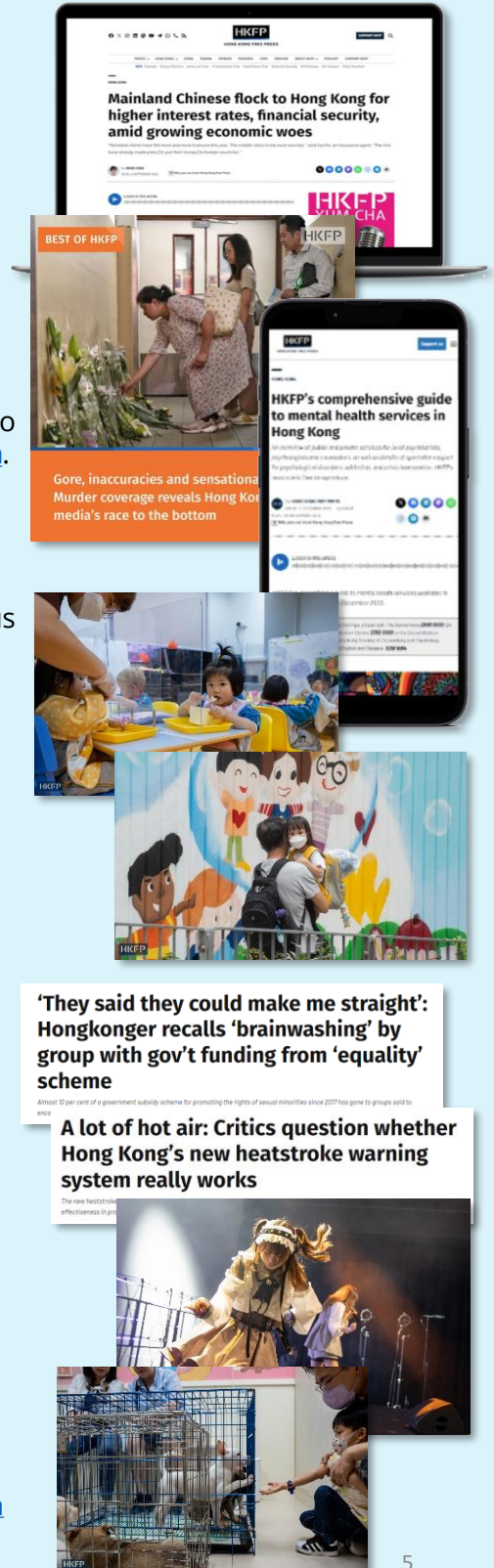
Also in the news was Hong Kong's falling fertility rate and official efforts to boost baby-making. But young couples told us it would take [more than a HK\\$20,000 handout to convince them to have kids](#). Others simply said they did not want to raise their children in the city, and [were thinking of starting a family overseas](#).

As LGBTQ rights prevailed in court, we looked at how one landmark ruling in favour of transgender individuals had in fact seen [some applications to change gender markers on identity cards suspended](#). We also spoke to several people who had [survived conversion therapy programmes run by government-backed groups](#).

As extreme weather set dubious new records for the city, we heard from climate experts, who [warned that such events would become "normal,"](#) while outdoor workers most at risk from rising temperatures told us why [a new heat stroke warning system was unlikely to protect them](#).

We also turned to photography to tell stories in 2023, following Hong Kong's [underground idols as they strove for recognition on the fringes of a subculture](#), [spending time at a stray animal shelter](#), and turning the lens on the hostile architecture designed to keep homelessness off the streets.

Further afield, we shone the spotlight on [Hong Kong journalists documenting Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#), and looked at the ways [Taiwan was seeking to come to terms with its painful past under martial law](#).



Explanatory reporting: We continued our [monthly explainers](#) on the impact of Beijing's national security legislation on the city, and looked in-depth into [how the first three years of the law had changed Hong Kong in a two-part piece](#). A second two-partner published to mark the third anniversary of the legislation explored new legal precedents set under it, from [non-jury trials](#) to whether overseas lawyers can [participate in national security cases](#).

We explained [Beijing's first interpretation of the law](#), which addressed that very question, examined what redacted [police reports revealed about official views on the Tiananmen crackdown](#), and asked if it was legal for Hongkongers to [publicly commemorate those who died during the crackdown](#) in 1989.

[Chief Executive John Lee's first year in office](#) was reviewed, as was [the issue of "soft resistance"](#) - a vague term adopted by authorities and cited with increasing frequency as a threat to national security. And with Hong Kong's own security law, Article 23, back in the spotlight, we looked at [why it failed in 2003](#) and what we can expect as it is resurrected.

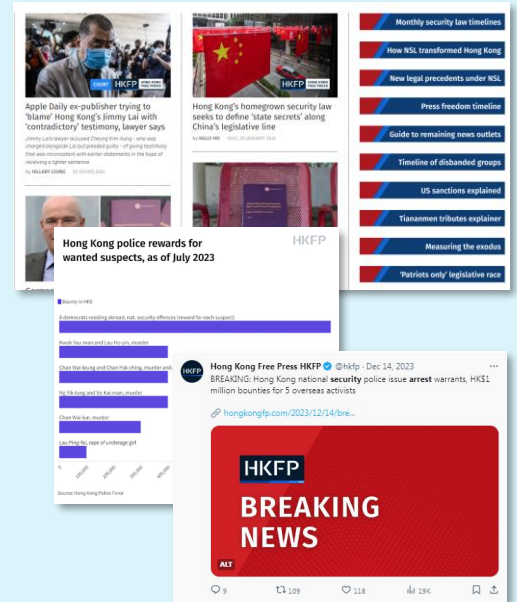
We also explored how, and why, the government was [seeking to ban protest anthem *Glory to Hong Kong*](#), and published explainers on [the District Council electoral overhaul](#), including how the changes [gave new powers to three government-appointed committees](#).

As one of the city's last political cartoons was pulled from the pages of Ming Pao, we looked at [where the city's satirists had gone](#), and with the dissolution of the pro-democracy Civic Party, [we looked back over its history](#).

When Hong Kong became the first Asian city to host the Gay Games, we asked [why the inclusive sporting event had attracted such controversy](#), and rounded-up the [legal rulings that have shaped LGBTQ rights](#) in Hong Kong.

Interviews: In 2023, we spoke to Hongkongers who were dedicated to making a difference in their city, from [journalist Bao Choy](#), whose conviction for making false statements linked to a documentary she made about a mob attack in Yuen Long in 2019 was quashed in June, to [transgender rights activist Henry Tse](#), who fought for the right to be recognised as a man without undergoing full surgery - and won.

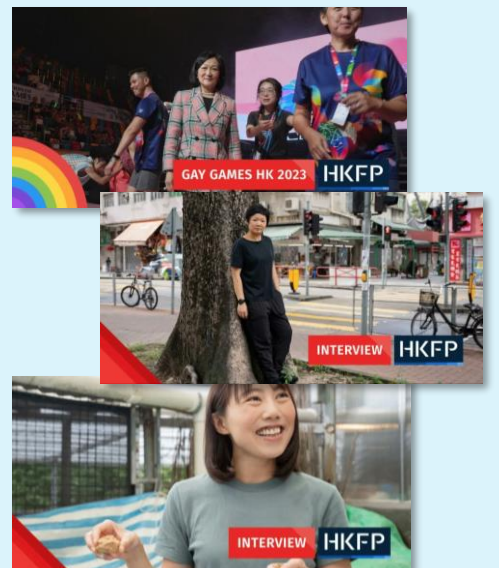
We interviewed several creatives for whom sustainability was central to their work, including [designers Niko Leung](#), who makes ceramics from Hong Kong construction waste, and [Toby Crispy](#), who is fighting fast fashion and the waste it produces with her "slow stitch" initiative.



Explainer: Where did Hong Kong's political cartoonists go?

Explainer: A history of Hong Kong's pro-democracy Civic Party

The pro-democracy political party, which was established in 2006 as the city debated how its leaders might be elected, voted to dissolve on Saturday, marking a further blow to Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement.



We also discussed Hong Kong's changing media landscape with [journalism professor Francis Lee](#), and caught up with Jon Chiu, the creator of a font [designed to help people learn Cantonese](#).

And ahead of the second Clockenflap music festival of the year, we caught up with Taiwan-based [Running Youth](#), who were making their hometown debut, post-punk duo [Gong Gong Gong](#), and local band [Bad Math](#) on making melancholy music to dance to.

Scoops: We revealed that National Day displays of patriotism across the city had [cost the government more than HK\\$31 million](#). And we broke the news of Clockenflap's takeover by music concert multinational Live Nation through an [exclusive interview with two of the festivals' founders](#).

We also dug into the data surrounding District Council candidates, and discovered that [75 per cent of them were on the committees responsible for nominating who could run](#), and exposed how [Beijing had brought in new rules for consulates in Hong Kong](#), demanding that the job titles, residential addresses and identification details of all locally-employed staff be provided.



Podcast: HKFP launched its first podcast in 2023, hosted by Associate Editor Mercedes Hutton.

HKFP YUM CHA



HKFP Yum Cha invited a different guest to us each week to discuss their area of expertise, be that fighting for democracy, researching Hong Kong's history, promoting mental health care, or trying to keep the city's neon craft alive. **Listen on all major podcast platforms...**





A Hong Kong Free Press opinion piece won an honourable mention at the prestigious **Society of Publishers in Asia Awards** in June. [Yuen Chan's op-ed about media freedom](#) competed in the Excellence in Opinion Writing: Regional category.

Published on Press Freedom Day the previous year, Chan's opinion piece argued that alarm over the "death" of press freedom in the city was premature: "Despite the closures, the arrests, the smears, the sad and reluctant departure of their peers, there are journalists who simply continue to do their jobs," Chan wrote. "When big gestures become foolhardy, dangerous or impossible, small acts of solidarity with those quietly toiling at the coalface become more important than ever."



HKFP also won an honourable mention for photography at Asia's 2023 **Human Rights Press Awards**, held in the US in May.

A shot by Britt Clennett, which shows a worker rolling up a "Hong Kong Asia's World City" banner as police officers pass by, won a prize in the Single Image category. "These awards recognise the journalists who are shedding light on some of the most critical issues of our time in Asia," said executive director of Human Rights Watch Tirana Hassan.

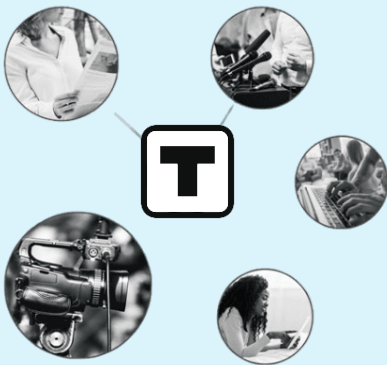
Year	Award	Title	Prize
2016	Human Rights Press Awards: University English language writing	Sexual harassment at Hong Kong's universities – rarely reported, but not rare	Merit
2019	Human Rights Press Awards: Student Video & Audio (English)	'I am prepared to be imprisoned' – Chinese human rights lawyer Lin Qilei	Winner
2020	Index on Censorship's 2020 Freedom of Expression Award	Hong Kong Free Press shortlisted	Finalist
2020	SOPA: Excellence in Photography (Regional)	Shots of the 2019 Hong Kong protest movement	Finalist
2020	SOPA: Excellence in Explanatory Reporting (Regional)	Hong Kong's new methodology of protest, explained	Honourable mention
2021	Nobel Peace Prize	Hong Kong Free Press nominated	Nominated
2021	SOPA: Excellence in Opinion Writing (Regional)	Hong Kong's protest movement in perspective	Honourable mention
2023	SOPA: Excellence in Opinion Writing (Regional)	Press Freedom Day: As long as there are journalists in Hong Kong, there will be journalism	Honourable mention
2023	Human Rights Press Awards: Single Image	Rolling up 'Asia's World City'	Merit

Hong Kong Free Press is proud to have gained the **Trust Project** hallmark following a rigorous, months long vetting process. The global transparency standard that [proves a news outlet's commitment](#) to original reporting, accuracy, inclusion, and fairness.



The Trust Project

Throughout 2023, HKFP [publicly disclosed and expanded its ethical policies, standards, reporting and corrections guidelines](#) to adhere to the [eight Trust Indicators](#). The move sought to improve media literacy and battle “fake news,” misinformation and online propaganda.



First adopted in March 2020, [our newly-revamped guidelines](#) lay out HKFP’s mission, our priorities, our expectations for staff conduct and impartiality, as well as how we deal with issues such as AI, advertising, anonymity, balance, security, sourcing and issues of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and identity.

The nine Trust Project Indicators:

1. Best Practices – who is behind the news?

If a journalist’s organization has rules they must follow to make sure their reporting is independent, accurate and honest, then their news will be more trustworthy.

2. Journalist Expertise – who made this?

We are rarely there to see events in the news for ourselves, so we rely on the journalist. They should follow strict standards for gathering solid evidence and multiple perspectives.

3. Labels – news, opinion, or what?

It’s important to know whether your news is impartial or deliberately biased. Stories should be clearly labelled if they are designed to persuade us to agree. If it’s journalism, then it’s meant to help us develop our own opinions.

4. References – what are the sources?

When a journalist is developing a news story, they may use information from eye witnesses, documents and other places – called sources. When a journalist shows their sources, we can check their reliability for ourselves.

5. Methods – why was it built?

If we know why a journalist chose a particular story and how they reported it, it’s easier to interpret it. A journalist’s methods help us know how fast-moving, well-researched or impartial the story may be.

6. Locally sourced – do they know you and your community?

If a journalist knows and lives in the community, they can explain an event or issue more sensitively and accurately. If not, they can improve their reporting by going there and speaking to others who have local and community knowledge.

7. Diverse voices – who is in the news, who is missing?

If certain voices or experiences are missing from the news, we don’t get the full picture. Look for voices less commonly heard in society, often because of race, class, generation, gender, sexual orientation, ideology or the region they live in.

8. Actionable feedback – does this news site listen to me?

By inviting and listening to public feedback, journalists can make sure their work is accurate and complete. The public also might help them find important news they had overlooked.

We now join around 300 newsrooms across the world displaying the Trust Mark symbol, including the BBC, Washington Post, Sky News, CTV and the Economist.



For more information, go to thetrustproject.org

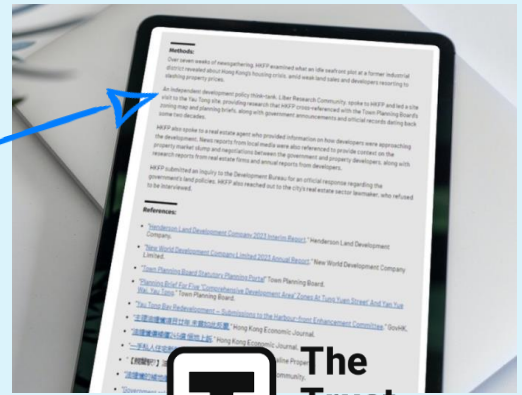
Methodology: Among the changes at HKFP, we are now revealing details of our methodology – and adding a clear, separate list of references – below any story that is complex, complicated or potentially controversial.

Corrections: Aside from appearing clearly at the bottom of articles, any corrections – [under a bolstered Corrections Policy](#) – are also being gathered in a [single log](#).

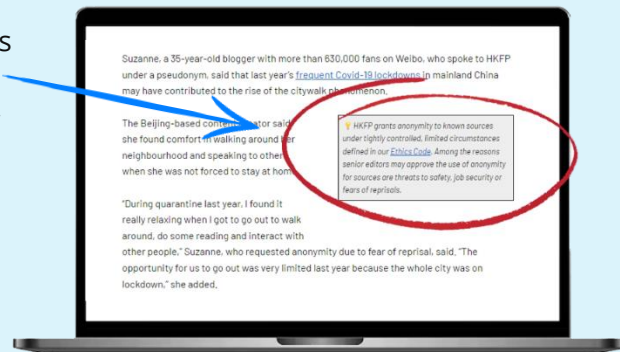
Labelling: How we label [paid-for content](#) is now clearer, with more prominent labelling, whilst links to our policies and ethical guidelines can be found at the top of every article.

Unnamed sources: We have also disclosed more details about when we may use unnamed sources. An in-line “info box” now appears in articles to explain when, how, and why, we may use anonymous sources, [with the full rules disclosed in our Ethics Code](#).

Our [Policies, Ethics and Best Practices](#) guidelines are living document. In an ever-changing city, with the space for press freedom and trust in media in decline, we will continue to evolve – and disclose – our professional practices and guiding principles.



The Trust Project



NewsGuard

An Ethics Code, fact-checking procedures and a corrections policy govern HKFP's impartial, 100% independent reporting. In 2022, we again scored full marks in **NewsGuard's credibility assessment**, meeting all 9 criteria.

- ✓ No false content.
- ✓ Avoids deceptive headlines.
- ✓ Clearly labels advertising.
- ✓ Differentiates news & opinion.
- ✓ Discloses ownership & financing.
- ✓ Regularly corrects or clarifies errors.
- ✓ Gathers/presents information responsibly.
- ✓ Provides the names, bios, contacts of writers.
- ✓ Reveals who's in charge; declares any conflicts.



International Press Institute

In 2023, HKFP also joined the **International Press Institute** – a 73-year-old global organisation dedicated to the protection of press freedom and improvement of journalistic practices.

The IPI global network of editors, media executives and leading journalists shares a commitment to quality, independent journalism, representing digital, print and broadcast news outlets in nearly 100 countries and territories. It has consultative status with the UN, UNESCO and Council of Europe.



HKFP also joined the **Society of Publishers in Asia** – the only English-language Hong Kong outlet among its ranks. SOPA was founded in 1982 to “champion freedom of the press, promote excellence in journalism and endorse best practices for publishers...”

It hosts the prestigious annual SOPA awards, and seeks to uphold media standards and freedoms while celebrating and supporting professional journalism.

HKFP completes expansion: Our team of nine experienced journalists now includes a dedicated editor, photojournalist and social media manager, providing more capacity for original, award-winning reporting. The investments were made possible by [HKFP's monthly Patrons](#), who provide regular, sustained support to protect our independence and press freedom.

The latest recruits to take their seats at our new Kennedy Town newsroom were: award-winning journalist **Irene Chan**; **Hans Tse**, who has an academic research background; and **James Lee**, who joined us from The Standard. Together, they formed our new, frontline reporting team, along with Social Media and Production Manager **Shan Chan** who brought both a journalistic and marketing background to the team.



Ethics and media literacy: We bolstered our ethical guidelines and standards by joining The Trust Project in 2023. HKFP produced three new “behind the scenes” videos in an effort to improve media literacy and demystify how independent newsrooms operate.



With Covid restrictions lifted, we also began to host students at our office once again, as well as reach out to the community by delivering workshops in local schools.



Splice Beta conference: Our senior team were invited to speak at Splice Beta 2023 in Thailand in November – a digital media conference for small Asian news outlets. We shared what we had learned about media funding over eight years of operations, later repeating the workshop for the Hong Kong Journalists Association and the local Culture And Education Foundation Conference.

New income streams: HKFP signed up with Moody's, Newsbank and Opera News to resyndicate its news articles on a paid basis. We began to accept Octopus payments for the first time, and we also joined Patreon, enabling more readers to support us.







Football team: Fall River Marksmen Football Club in Massachusetts continued its 'reverse sponsorship' deal with HKFP, emblazoning our logo on their kit and selling them to raise funds for our newsroom back in Hong Kong.

New channel and apps: HKFP updated and redesigned its mobile apps twice in 2023, ahead of a 2024 relaunch. And we are now reaching readers via a new Whatsapp channel.

Trusted worldwide: HKFP's reporting has been cited by numerous int'l outlets.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL The New York Times QUARTZ The Telegraph The Washington Post
BBC Daily Mail BUSINESS INSIDER BuzzFeed STRAITS TIMES
INDEPENDENT Bloomberg REUTERS ALJAZEERA **VICE theguardian Vox**

No paywall: We will always ensure our news remains accessible & free of charge.

<p>HKFP Apps:</p> 	<p>Anti-Censorship apps:</p> 
<p>Social Media & Direct Distribution:</p> 	
<p>Paid Syndication:</p> 	<p>Partnerships:</p> 

Hong Kong's 2024 media landscape:

Independent English-language daily news:



Chinese-language daily news (digital):



English-language traditional daily news (digital/print):



Other small digital outfits include: Channel C, HK Court News, Hong Kong Feature, ReNews.

Chinese-language traditional news (print):



Outlets closed in 2021-23:



The 2024 HKFP core team: We are structured as a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, with no shareholders. HKFP does not answer to any business tycoon, mainland Chinese conglomerate or media mogul. We are run by journalists, and are answerable only to ourselves and our readers.



Editor-in-Chief Tom Grundy is a British multimedia journalist based in Hong Kong since 2005. He has a BA in Communications & New Media from Leeds University and an MA in Journalism from the University of Hong Kong. He has contributed to BBC World TV/radio, Quartz, Al-Jazeera, DW-TV and others.



Associate Editor Mercedes Hutton is a British journalist who has lived in Hong Kong since 2012. She has a BA in English and Film from the University of Sussex and is interested in social and environmental issues. She previously worked at the South China Morning Post and has written for the BBC.



Reporter Kelly Ho has an interest in local politics, education and sports. She formerly worked at South China Morning Post Young Post, where she specialised in reporting on issues related to Hong Kong youth. She has a bachelor's degree in Journalism from the University of Hong Kong, with a second major in Politics and Public Administration.



Reporter Irene Chan previously worked at Initium Media as chief editor for local news and has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Fudan University and a master's degree in social work from the Chinese University. Irene is the recipient of multiple SOPA and Human Rights Press Awards.



Reporter Hillary Leung has an interest in social issues and politics. Previously, she reported on Asia broadly - including on Hong Kong's 2019 protests - for TIME Magazine and covered local news at Coconuts Hong Kong.



Photojournalist Kyle Lam is a Hong Kong Baptist University graduate who has worked as an award-winning photojournalist and reporter since 2013. His work has been published by HK01, the EPA, Bloomberg and Ming Pao.



Reporter Hans Tse was previously a social science researcher and freelance reporter. He holds an M.Phil in communication from the Chinese University.



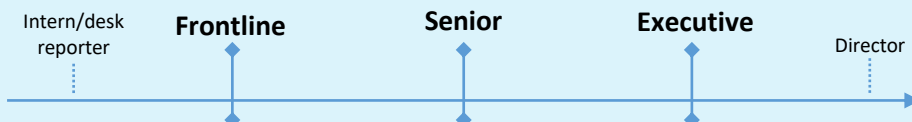
Reporter James Lee has a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in Journalism from the Chinese University. He was previously a reporter at The Standard.



Social Media & Production Editor Shan Chan holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Communication from the Chinese University. She previously worked in local news and in digital marketing.



Guest Editor Tim Hamlett has been involved in HKFP since 2015 and writes a regular column. He came to Hong Kong in 1980 to work for The Standard and has contributed to, or worked for, most of Hong Kong's English-language media outlets.



Hong Kong Free Press would be impossible without the support and assistance of our countless tech, editorial, accounting, freelance staff and volunteers, as well as Newspack and The Hive.

Our finalised, audited income up to 2022, and our predicted income for 2023:

Income	2023*	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Direct contributions	HK\$3,618,236.94	HK\$3,587,606	HK\$4,497,890	HK\$6,357,972	HK\$6,056,859	HK\$2,463,408	HK\$1,769,760	HK\$1,063,125
Ads & content sales	HK\$233,699.46	HK\$418,957	HK\$143,695	HK\$110,247	HK\$271,066	HK\$136,084	HK\$328,759	HK\$92,276
Events	HK\$0	HK\$0	HK\$0	HK\$0	HK\$263,361	HK\$24,390	HK\$0	HK\$8,352
Bank interest, insurance claim, exchange gain	TBC	HK\$6,516	HK\$3,945	HK\$10	HK\$226	HK\$21	HK\$1	HK\$12
Gov't Covid subsidy	HK\$0	HK\$96,000	HK\$0	HK\$216,000	HK\$0	HK\$0	HK\$0	HK\$0
Total:	HK\$3,844,936.40	HK\$4,109,079	HK\$4,645,530	HK\$6,697,010	HK\$6,591,512	HK\$2,623,903	HK\$2,098,520	HK\$1,163,765

*2023 predicted, not yet audited.

Current revenue streams:

Contributions: includes one-off & monthly Patron contributions by cheque/transfer, cash, PayPal & Stripe credit/debit card (inc. Apple Pay & Google Pay), PayMe, Octopus, CoinDragon, Tap & Go, as well as merch sales profit & shopping referral links.

Ads & content sales: includes ad income from display ads; Apple News & Facebook ads, Google/YouTube ads, directly purchased rate card ads & content sales [from media outlets, institutions and syndication partners LexisNexis, Opera News, Moody's, NewsBank, ProQuest, Dow Jones Factiva & Nordot etc...]



Surplus/deficit:

2015 total surplus:	HK\$91,654
2016 total deficit:	-HK\$45,569
2017 total surplus:	HK\$445,796
2018 total surplus:	HK\$574,042
2019 total surplus:	HK\$3,698,358
2020 total surplus:	HK\$3,245,356
2021 total surplus:	HK\$783,164
2022 deficit:	-HK\$970,190
2022 predicted deficit:	-HK\$1,400,711

Advertising partners:

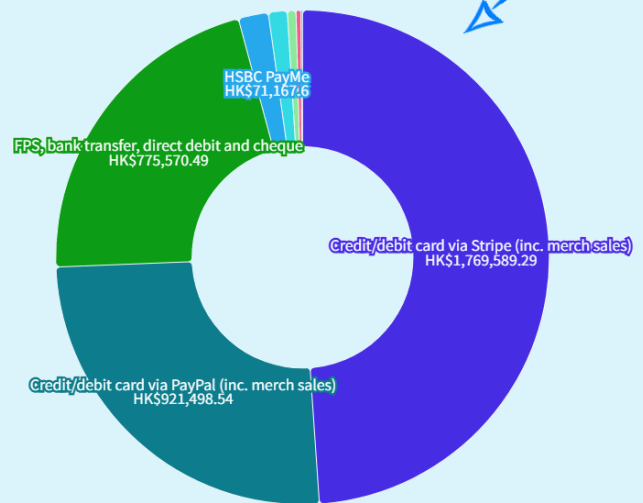


Direct contributions:



How readers funded HKFP in 2023:

Most readers contribute by credit/debit card.



Reader supported: 94% of HKFP's income comes directly from our readers, assuring our press freedom and independence.

Surplus recycled: As a non-profit, with no shareholders, investors or umbrella company overseeing it, any surplus is recycled back into the HKFP newsroom for future use.

Future security: As of 2021, HKFP LTD is obliged to retain a HK\$1.5m legal defence fund in light of new challenges to press freedom, in addition to an emergency fund of HK\$1m.

Efficiency: HKFP is run as efficiently and prudently as possible, in order to maximise the impact of our donors' generosity. We make savings by partnering with other media outlets, using free software/tools and making full use of teamwork and automation.

HKFP is predicted to make a record loss of HK\$1.4m in 2023. Although we are able to reinvest our previous surplus, we will need to work on a return to sustainability and halt the fall in HKFP Patrons in 2024.

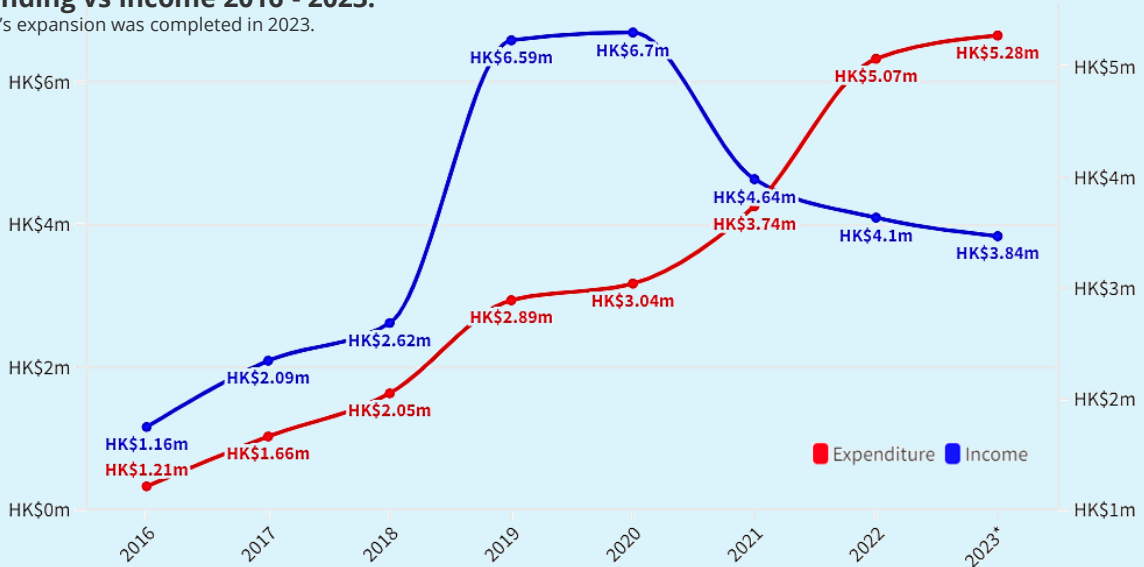
Finalised expenditure for our latest audited year, 2022, & our predicted 2023 spending:

Expenditure	2023*	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Full-time staff payroll	HK\$4,072,093	HK\$3,624,759	HK\$1,952,853	HK\$1,599m	HK\$1,606m	HK\$1,49m	HK\$1,340m	HK\$1,035m
Mandatory Provident Fund (pensions)	HK\$151,150	HK\$137,960	HK\$76,662	HK\$72,221	HK\$68,123	HK\$69,234	HK\$66,180	HK\$50,942
Web & software, newswire, commission	HK\$213,998	HK\$227,068	HK\$138,532	HK\$132,269		HK\$129,543	HK\$58,693	HK\$33,083
Office, sundry, recruitment/training, telecom	HK\$380,306	HK\$447,234	HK\$273,244	HK\$109,289	HK\$164,256	HK\$110,414	HK\$57,565	HK\$25,801
Meals/drinks for volunteers/staff/sources	HK\$41,540	HK\$20,506	HK\$25,178	HK\$18,324	HK\$29,686	HK\$14,028	HK\$17,106	HK\$25,531
Legal, professional, registration, audit	HK\$2,239	HK\$114,143	HK\$37,365	HK\$96,505	HK\$12,340	HK\$7,385	HK\$45,231	HK\$10,845
Travel & insurance	HK\$153,427	HK\$174,445	HK\$67,513	HK\$72,391	HK\$50,615	HK\$78,067	HK\$8,169	HK\$8,267
Stationery, merch, postage, printing	HK\$65,233	HK\$44,240	HK\$207,392	HK\$208,544	HK\$42,311	HK\$11,827	HK\$686	HK\$17,124
Bank charges, penalties & exchange losses	HK\$1,533	HK\$2,155	HK\$4,232	HK\$13,752	HK\$4,240	HK\$1,705	HK\$1,170	HK\$2,218
Freelancer payments & gear	HK\$152,779	HK\$246,454	HK\$936,072	HK\$595,693	HK\$289,387	HK\$64,400	HK\$34,090	HK\$0
Tax	TBC	TBC	HK\$59,518	HK\$408,496	HK\$509,211	HK\$29,816	HK\$13,343	HK\$0
Advertising	HK\$38,127	HK\$37,527	HK\$78,745	HK\$6,914	HK\$36,597	HK\$34,371	HK\$10,261	HK\$0
Membership, research/polls, repairs & other	HK\$11,600	HK\$2,778	HK\$5,060	HK\$118,800	-	-	-	-
Total:	HK\$5,284,025	HK\$5,079,269	HK\$3.74m	HK\$3.04m	HK\$2.89m*	HK\$2.04m	HK\$1.65m	HK\$1.20m

*2023 predicted, not yet audited.

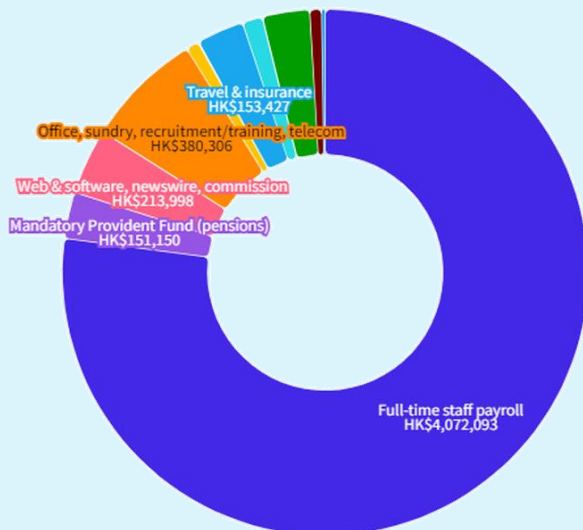
Spending vs income 2016 - 2023:

HKFP's expansion was completed in 2023.



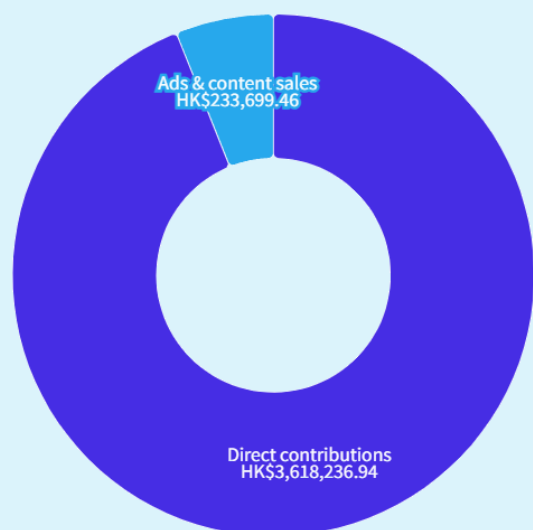
How HKFP invests in Hong Kong journalists:

Over ¾ of HKFP's income goes towards paying local reporters.



Powered by readers:

94% of HKFP's income comes directly from our readers.



HKFP Patrons in 2023: HKFP relies on a membership model. Small amounts of income from a large pool of Patrons help support our team, sustain our operations, and guarantee our newsroom's independence and longevity. Our monthly income as of January 2024:

HK\$182,551

Monthly income from Patrons **before** fees

895

No. of monthly Patrons

HK\$203

Average monthly contribution

HKFP Patrons 2017 - 2023:

HKFP's membership model since its launch in 2017.



⚠️ Our number of patrons declined by 8% in 2023, whilst the average monthly contribution rose by 5%.

💰 66% of monthly contributors donate via credit/debit card (Stripe,) whilst the rest use PayPal.

👉 Figures exclude those who contribute by cheque/bank transfer.

💡 HKFP Patrons are given priority and/or free entry to HKFP events, merch and our Annual Report, and help keep the site free-to-access for those who cannot afford to contribute.

👛 **Investing in people:** HKFP competes with international media when it comes to staff pay and conditions. We are proud to set – or exceed – industry standards in order to foster talent and retain staff in an increasingly tough environment. 80% of HKFP's spending goes towards staff remuneration and pensions. When you support HKFP, you can be assured that your contribution is going *directly* towards local journalists – not to shareholders or a profit-making conglomerate.



Staff benefits include:

- ✓ Clear payscale and annual appraisal.
- ✓ Up to 23 days annual leave.
- ✓ 4 months maternity, 3 months paternity leave.
- ✓ Healthcare, dental and physio coverage.
- ✓ Mental health support options.
- ✓ Secure laptop and phone.
- ✓ Monthly travel allowance.
- ✓ Hong Kong Journalists Association membership.
- ✓ Remote working benefits.

HKFP staff have gone on to work at: **BBC** **AFP** **CNN** **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.** **Bloomberg**

January 2023

- Defunct independent Hong Kong news outlet Citizen News [removed all of the content from its website and social media platforms](#), as the online publication marked a year since it ceased operations.
- Newspaper [Ming Pao was criticised by one of the city's top officials](#) over a comic strip about Beijing's recent interpretation of the national security law.
- Hong Kong broadcaster TVB [dropped all BBC channels from its streaming service](#).
- Britain will stand up to "Chinese aggression" and defend Hong Kong's freedoms, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak [vowed after his government intervened in the case of jailed media tycoon Jimmy Lai](#).
- A committee on safeguarding national security in Hong Kong [urged the city's government to change the law](#) as quickly as possible so it can ban a British lawyer from representing former pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai at his security trial.
- The Immigration Department [barred freelance photographer Michiko Kiseki](#) from the city last month.
- The local legal team representing jailed Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai in his high-profile national security trial said [it was not "professionally associated"](#) with an international group of lawyers who reportedly met with a UK minister over Lai's case.
- Chief Executive John Lee said there were [people using journalism as a cover to pursue political aims](#), personal benefit, or "launder money" in the city.
- Hong Kong's top court [allowed journalist Bao Choy to appeal](#) her conviction over accessing car licence information for an investigative documentary about a mob attack in Yuen Long in July 2019.
- The government watchdog [rejected a complaint filed by HKFP](#) related to the authorities' refusal to disclose its media invite list for Chief Executive John Lee's inauguration last July 1.
- Chen Zhiming, chief editor of Hong Kong magazine Exclusive Character, was [reportedly missing in mainland China](#) for over four months.
- A Hong Kong reporter who was allegedly shot at with a police projectile during a protest in 2019 [expressed disappointment that his complaint was rejected](#).
- The sedition trial against two ex-chief editors of defunct outlet Stand News continued, as the court heard testimony from one of the defendants, former editor-in-chief Chung Pui-kuen.

February 2023

- Monitoring the authorities is the duty of the media, [pro-establishment newspaper Oriental Daily said in an editorial](#) after it was criticised by the police for a video commentary on the force's performance.
- Hong Kong journalist Bao Choy [vowed to "monitor the rich and powerful" and "seek truth"](#) with her newly launched media outlet The Collective HK.
- Pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai [asked the High Court to prevent Beijing's recent interpretation](#) of the national security law from affecting an earlier ruling that allowed him to be represented by a UK lawyer at his upcoming trial.
- Chinese activists – including dissident artist Badiucao – [were approached by social media users falsely claiming to be journalists from Reuters](#), the news agency reported on Tuesday.
- The trial against two former Stand News top editors charged under the colonial-era sedition law continued as the prosecution carried on the cross-examination of Chung Pui-kuen, ex-editor-in-chief.
- The government [submitted a proposal to introduce legislative amendments](#) which would require local courts to obtain a certificate from the city's leader before considering whether to allow foreign counsels to act in national security cases.

March 2023

- Coconuts [wound down its local news site](#), citing commercial and journalistic challenges. The announcement came days after a new general manager took over the publishing group.
- The founder of an independent news publication and two others [pleaded guilty to selling a "seditious" book](#).
- The HKJA [called on the police to "maintain professionalism"](#) while on duty, after a journalist was reportedly pushed by an officer while filming outside a courthouse.
- The HKJA [condemned the harassment and surveillance of local journalists](#), after an HKFP court reporter was followed from her home to her workplace for over an hour by two men with earpieces.
- HKJA said it [received several recent reports of journalists being tailed](#), as police slammed the group over "unverified speculations" that those following journalists were suspected of being members of law enforcement.

April 2023

- Hong Kong's security chief [criticised Ming Pao over a "misleading" comic strip](#) about the government's plan to spend HK\$5.2 billion on a new communications system.
- Chung Pui-kuen, former top Stand News editor, [completed his testimony in his sedition trial](#) as the case was adjourned to June for closing arguments.
- Chief Executive John Lee [refused to comment on reports](#) received by the HKJA that reporters had been followed by unknown men.
- Hong Kong journalists who have emigrated [faced a number of difficulties](#) when trying to start their careers in media overseas, according to a report published by an overseas journalists' body.
- Social media platform Twitter slapped Hong Kong's government-backed broadcaster RTHK [with a "state-affiliated media" label](#).
- RTHK said it [will "follow up" with Twitter](#), after the social media platform added a "state-affiliated media" label to the outlet's official account.
- Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai [filed a legal bid against the government decision](#) to reject any further work visa applications from an overseas counsel he had hired for his national security case.
- Hong Kong's pensions fund authority [demanded that American newspaper The Wall Street Journal retract "misinformation"](#) in an op-ed about holders of British National Overseas passports' access to their pensions.
- The Hong Kong government [barred several government-registered media outlets](#) from covering a National Security Education Day event, ignoring emails and evading questions by phone when challenged as to why.
- The son and overseas lawyers of Jimmy Lai [urged the United Nations to condemn the prosecution](#) on "trumped-up" charges of the pro-democracy media tycoon, sparking criticism of them from the Hong Kong government.
- "The media landscape in Hong Kong has been as vibrant as ever" following the implementation of the national security law, the government [said in a criticism of a UK all-party parliamentary group report](#).
- Blocking pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai's overseas counsel from representing him in his national security trial is ["persecution not prosecution,"](#) his lawyer said in an application to halt the trial.
- Chief Executive John Lee told a reporter that the pro-democracy demonstrations and unrest of 2019 [should be referred to as the "black violence," not "protests."](#)
- Hong Kong [ranked 140th among the 180 regions](#) at the Reporters Without Borders press freedom ranking released on World Press Freedom Day.
- Hong Kong journalist Bao Choy [appealed to the city's top court against her conviction](#) linked to checking vehicle registration records for a documentary about the Yuen Long attacks in 2019.
- Hong Kong transport news site Transit Jam [ceased operations](#), its owner announced, making it the latest outlet to disappear in the wake of the security law. The closure came days after its founder was targeted in the state-run press.
- After 40 years, Hong Kong's most prominent political cartoonist Zunzi [had his comic strip suspended after a satirical post](#) was criticised by government bodies.
- Hong Kong's security minister [hit back at the journalists' association](#) after it said the suspension of a long-standing political cartoon strip following repeated government complaints showed that the city "could not tolerate critical voices."
- Books by satirical cartoonist Zunzi [disappeared from Hong Kong public library listings](#), after his comic strip was axed by newspaper Ming Pao on Wednesday following criticism from an official.
- The defence [questioned](#) whether an exchange between the head of Hong Kong's largest journalists' group Ronson Chan and a plainclothes police officer could have happened as described, as the trial against Chan began.
- Over 100 international media leaders around the world [expressed support for detained Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai](#) in Hong Kong in a joint statement on Tuesday organised by Reporters Without Borders.
- The head of Hong Kong's largest journalists' group said [he feared a privacy breach when he was asked to show his identity card](#) by a plainclothes officer, a court heard.

May 2023

- The government watchdog [agreed to investigate HKFP's complaint against the Information Services Department](#) over their handling of a press event which saw several government-registered outlets barred from attendance without explanation.

- Hong Kong's Court of First Instance [rejected attempts by pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai](#) to challenge a decision made by Hong Kong's national security committee relating to the admission of an overseas lawyer for his trial.
- A lifestyle editor who was not from a traditional news correspondent background [was elected as president of the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents' Club](#), after he ran unopposed in the leadership race.
- Hong Kong's Foreign Correspondents' Club [raised concerns after the government inexplicably barred several media outlets](#) from a National Security Education Day event on April 15. It was their first press freedom statement of 2023.
- Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai's bid to halt the national security trial against him [was rejected by the city's Court of First Instance](#).
- Hong Kong's Foreign Correspondents' Club devised a set of [guidelines for releasing statements on press freedom issues](#), which includes seeking legal advice and contacting government departments ahead of publishing.
- Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai [is expected to face an 83-day national security trial](#), a court heard.
- The District Court heard [closing arguments in the trial](#) against two former editors of now-defunct news outlet Stand News. The [verdict will be handed down in October](#).
- The Court of Appeal [blocked media tycoon Jimmy Lai's bid](#) to challenge a national security search warrant of his phones, which he said contained protected journalistic materials, at the city's top court.
- The journalists' association says it is [looking to intervene in a legal bid by the government](#) to ban all forms of the protest song *Glory to Hong Kong*, in the hopes of gaining an exemption for media reporting. A statement said the press group wants to "protect the work of journalists."
- Citizens' Radio, a pro-democracy pirate radio station, [ceased operating on June 30](#) after its founder said the station's bank account had been frozen.
- A prominent Chinese financial journalist who compared the country's economic problems to the Great Depression [was banned from social media](#).
- Hong Kong [may drop plans for a "fake news" law](#), Chief Executive John Lee suggested, saying the problem can be tackled by other means.

June 2023

- A Hong Kong press group [urged the city's police to provide an explanation](#) after its former chairperson was led away by officers while she was reporting on the 34th anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown.
- The Hong Kong government [condemned US politicians' calls for a joint effort](#) with the UK to prioritise the release of pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai by sanctioning Hong Kong officials, prosecutors, and judges involved in national security law detentions.
- Pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai [filed an appeal against the High Court's rejection of his attempt](#) to challenge a national security committee decision which effectively barred a foreign lawyer from representing him.
- Journalist Bao Choy's conviction for making false statements to access vehicle records [was quashed after five judges ruled unanimously](#) in favour of her appeal at the city's top court. Her sentence was also set aside.
- Authorities [will review the top court's judgement that saw journalist Bao Choy's conviction quashed](#) to "improve" procedures related to accessing vehicle records, Chief Executive John Lee said.

July 2023

- Government-funded broadcaster RTHK [suspended an LGBTQ-related radio programme](#) after 17 years, the host of the programme said on its official Facebook page.
- The West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts received [written closing statements in the trial](#) against journalist Ronson Chan, who stands accused of obstructing a police officer.
- A court ruled that [journalists will be allowed to report on matters related to 2019 protest anthem Glory to Hong Kong](#), should the government's bid to ban unlawful acts relating to the song be successful.
- Authorities proposed that [programmes about national education, national identity, and those which promote a "correct understanding" of the national security law could be exempt](#) from an impartiality clause requiring "even-handedness" when opposing points of view are presented.
- The government watchdog [rejected HKFP's complaint against the Information Services Department](#) over their handling of an unexplained media ban at press event, finding no evidence of maladministration.

- The HKJA said [Hong Kong's press freedom index dipped further](#), largely due to journalists being hesitant to criticise the central government.
- A survey conducted by the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents' Club (FCC) [found that almost 70 per cent of journalists in Hong Kong say they have self-censored](#) in their own writing.
- Chief Secretary for Administration Eric Chan claimed [there was no conflict between the media's journalistic work](#) and the Beijing-imposed national security law.
- Japanese journalist Yoshiaki Ogawa, [known for his coverage of Hong Kong's protests, was barred from entering Hong Kong](#) days before the 26th anniversary of its Handover to China.
- China's representative [intervened at the UN in an unsuccessful effort to stop the son](#) of detained media tycoon Jimmy Lai from testifying.

August 2023

- US photojournalist Matthew Connors, [who covered the 2019 protests and unrest, said that he was denied entry](#) to Hong Kong when he tried to visit for tourism purposes.
- Press freedom NGO Reporters Without Borders [criticised the Hong Kong authorities after Swiss photojournalist Marc Progin was faced with HK\\$500,000](#) in legal costs despite being cleared of a public disorder charge.
- The national security trial of pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai [was delayed again to December, 2023](#) to ensure that one of the handpicked judges will have finished presiding over another landmark national security case involving 47 democrats.
- The HKJA said it [will offer assistance to employees of local newspaper Sky Post](#), which will soon publish its final print edition.

September 2023

- The Communications Authority rejected complaints [against a now-deleted RTHK documentary](#) that examined the 2019 Yuen Long mob attacks.
- Sebastien Lai, the son of detained media mogul Jimmy Lai, [spoke at an UN event on media freedom](#), as the government slammed the occasion as "political manipulation."
- Ronson Chan, the head of the HKJA, [was found guilty of obstructing a police officer](#) while reporting last September and was sentenced to five days in prison before being granted bail pending appeal.

- The Court of Appeal heard [the HKJA and the RTHK Staff Union's joint appeal](#) against the city's communications regulator's decision to issue a warning over RTHK's satirical programme *Headliner*.

October 2023

- A judge called for an investigation after prosecutors claimed that video footage linked to a rioting case during the 2019 Yuen Long mob attacks [had been released by an online media outlet](#) ahead of the trial.
- Net satisfaction with press freedom in Hong Kong [stood at negative 8 per cent](#), while 13 per cent of people believed the local news media had given full play to the freedom of speech, according to a PORI survey.
- Google received a request from the Hong Kong Police Force to [remove 5 videos featuring "The Hong Konger"](#), a documentary about pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai from YouTube, a report read.

November 2023

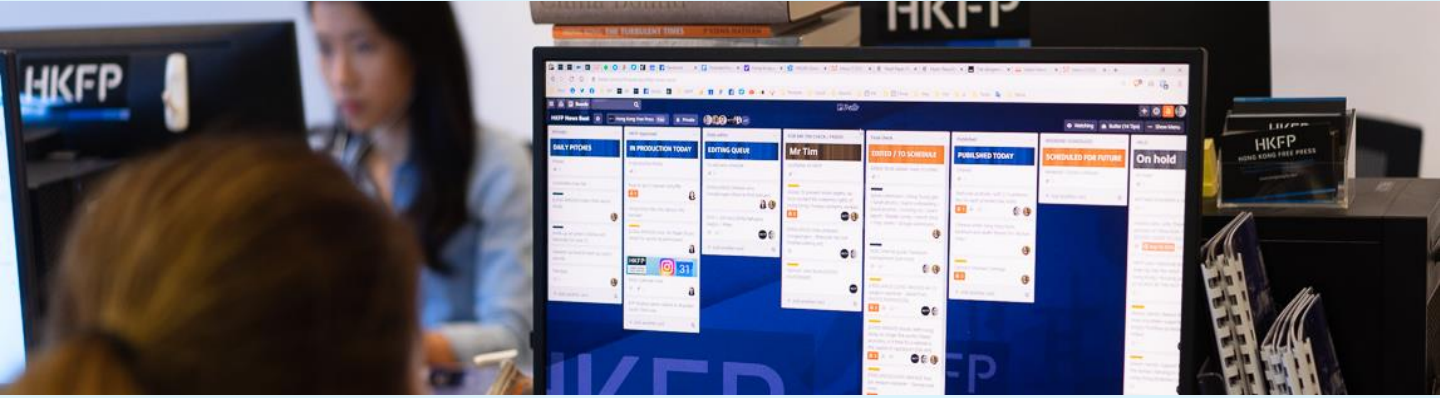
- The verdict in the trial against two former editors of now-defunct news outlet Stand News [was postponed again](#) pending a higher court's ruling, expected in 2024.
- The HKJA [expressed "deep regret" that reporters were not allowed](#) to interview attendees at an international finance summit organised by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority.

December 2023

- The HKJA raised concern following media reports about South China Morning Post (SCMP) reporter Minnie Chan going [missing after a work trip to China](#). Responding to an enquiry from HKFP, SCMP claimed Chan was on personal leave [concerning a private matter](#) and also threatened legal action.
- The SCMP [withdrew an opinion piece](#) after being unable to verify the writer's credentials.



Not-for-profit, run by journalists and 100% independent, the HKFP team relies on readers to keep us going and to help safeguard press freedom.



Contribute online via card or PayPal

One-off or monthly donations can be made with your Visa, Mastercard, or Apple Pay/Google Pay via Stripe on our website: support.hongkongfp.com.



Mastercard, Visa, American Express, Maestro, UnionPay are accepted via Stripe or PayPal.

Contribute by cheque

HK\$ cheques may be made payable to Hong Kong Free Press Limited and posted – along with your name and address to: HKFP, The Hive Kennedy Town, 6/F, Cheung Hing Industrial Building, 12P Smithfield Road, Kennedy Town, Hong Kong.



Please note: Contributions are confidential – a paper-trail is required for our internal accountancy records.

Make a transfer to our HSBC account, directly or via FPS.

Faster Payment Service: business@hongkongfp.com or Tel: 9447-3443.

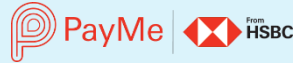


Our HSBC account details:

- Account name: Hong Kong Free Press Limited. Account number: 817887532-838.
- Bank name: HSBC Hong Kong. Bank address: 1 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong.
- Bank code: 004. Branch number: 817. SWIFT address: HSBCHKHCHKH

Please note: For all FPS, one-off or regular bank transfers, please email a screenshot or phone photo of the receipt/form to donations@hongkongfp.com after you have made arrangements so we may show a paper-trail for our internal accountancy records. We cannot, otherwise, accept your contribution.

Our contribution limit is HK\$50K/year – if you wish to support HKFP with a larger sum, please contact business@hongkongfp.com so we may discuss Know Your Client checks.



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← Scan our QR code to make an HSBC PayMe digital payment. Please include your full name and email in the “comment” field in order that we may accept your contribution.



Contribute spare coins

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Contribute by Tap & Go

Scan our QR code to contribute via Tap & Go. →



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We welcome contributions of new computer or audio-visual equipment. We also welcome sponsorship of our ongoing operational costs (such as web hosting, office rent or news wire services) – please get in touch if you can support us.



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Support us and promote your business or cause at the same time. Request our rate card and consider our affordable range of digital marketing options: business@hongkongfp.com

The no.2 English newspaper on Hong Kong social media:
Reach a affluent, engaged audience across multiple platforms.

Platform	Followers	Engagement
Facebook	422,977	193,274 (likes) / 12,741 (comments)
Twitter	372,325	2,655 (retweets) / 11,419 (likes)
Instagram	25,173	1,118 (likes) / 104 (comments)

84% of HKFP readers use English as a first language.

Founded in 2015, Hong Kong Free Press is an impartial, non-partisan award-winning English-language newspaper.

Run by journalists, backed by readers and 100% independent, HKFP is governed by a public code of ethics.

HKFP has an exceptional track record of funding and business success led by an ethics-led online community.

We welcome advertising enquiries over social media or by email. We are a non-profit and we are now seeking to diversify our revenue through monthly contributions from readers.