**Joint Statement on the Hong Kong Democracy Movement**

We, the leaders of the Churches’ Forum for Peace and Security in North East Asia, have been watching with deep concern the escalating protests on the anti-extradition bill in Hong Kong over the past few weeks. During this period, the Hong Kong citizens have protested not only at the center of government operations, but also expanded to different areas of Hong Kong to express their demands on the Hong Kong government.

First of all, we are very concerned with the escalating violence employed by the Hong Kong police to crack down on the protesters, using tear gas, rubber bullets and other unnecessary force. We were shocked too by the White Terror that had happened last week in Yuen-Long train station. A group in white-shirts wielding weapons attacked people at random on the concourse and the train platform. As a result, many citizens and journalists were injured.

We highly respect the people of Hong Kong who are upholding peaceful, rational and non-violent means during the protests, and we reaffirm our solidarity with them. Therefore, we urge the Hong Kong government to:

1. Withdraw completely the controversial extradition bill immediately
2. Ensure the freedom of speech and the right to assembly without any threat of violence
3. Investigate the excessive force used by the police to disperse the protesters
4. Release immediately the 44 citizens who were charged with rioting
5. Ensure a democratic path for electing the government representatives and leaders of Hong Kong

 We urge again the Hong Kong government to stop immediately the violent actions against the citizens. History has witnessed the tragic results that when power violently suppresses a people’s movement for justice and human rights, it leads more suffering for everyone involved.

As a Christian community, we believe that freedom, democracy and human dignity are inalienable and are all God-given values which must not be violated or degraded under any circumstances. We also affirm that a true democracy, including universal suffrage for the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council in Hong Kong, is the way forward to resolve the ongoing crisis.

We will stay in solidarity with the people of Hong Kong until Hong Kong and China respect people’s self-determining way of life for a peaceful coexistence, upholding the value of peace, freedom and dignity.

July 31, 2019

Rev. Lee Hong Jung, General Secretary, National Council of Churches in Korea

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Rev. Lyim Hong-Tiong, General Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

**Churches’ Forum for Peace and Security in North East Asia**