

# Rioters Urge UK's Meddling in Hong Kong Unrest



An anti-government protester throws back a tear gas canister at the police during a demonstration near Central Government Complex in Hong Kong, China, September 15, 2019.

HONG KONG (Dispatches) -- **Protesters here on Sunday staged a rally outside the British consulate in the Chinese city, calling for support from the territory's former colonial ruler.**

They demanded that London meddle in the crisis that has crippled the international hub over the past months.

Waving Union Jack flags and chanting "God Save the Queen," the protesters claimed that China was not honoring the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration and that the "one country, two systems" policy did not work anymore.

"We ask UK to take immediate action on China not honoring the Sino-British Joint Declaration and acknowledge one country, two systems is not functioning," the rally organizers said.

Beijing, however, rejected the accusations and said it was fully committed to the joint declaration, which ensures special freedoms for the city after its return to China in 1997.

Earlier this month, the protesters marched on the U.S. consulate, calling on Washington to intervene in the ongoing political standoff.

The protests initially began in June over a bill, which would have allowed

criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China.

The bill was suspended later that month, but the agitation has expanded into a broader unrest amid calls for the city's pro-China leader to step down.

China has said foreign countries, mainly the United States and Britain, have been provoking the unrest by issuing statements of support. Beijing has asked the two countries to stop meddling in Hong Kong's domestic affairs.

Chinese media has called the protests a "color revolution" aimed at overturning the government in Hong Kong, which has seen masked people attack police officers and occupy airports and rail terminals, crippling the city.

Beijing has warned that it would not sit idly by as officials have warned of violence pushing Hong Kong to the precipice of "a very dangerous situation".

Violent protests are taking a big toll on the leading commercial hub, scaring off tourists and biting into retail sales and investment.

Hong Kong has been governed under a "one-country, two-system" model since the city — a former British colony — was returned to China in 1997.

The unrest comes amid a brewing trade war which U.S. President Donald Trump has made one of the major undertakings of his administration in order to arrest China's economic rise.

# Russia's Floating Nuclear Plant Arrives at Arctic Base



In this August 23, 2019 picture, Russia's floating nuclear power plant Akademik Lomonosov leaves the service base of Rosatomflot company for a journey along the Northern Sea Route to Chukotka from Murmansk, Russia.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -- **The world's first floating nuclear plant made by Russia has arrived at its permanent base in the northeastern region of the country as melting ice from global warming opens way for rivalry over the Arctic's untapped mineral resources.**

Russian state nuclear energy company Rosatom announced that the floating nuclear plant named Akademik Lomonosov made its 5,000 km journey from Murmansk in the northwest through the Russian Arctic to Chukotka in the northeast.

The 21-tonne, 144-meter-long and 30-meter-wide power station has two 35-megawatt reactors and is de-

signed to meet the energy needs for around 100,000 people and also power oil platforms.

Rosatom said the floating nuclear power station will be operational by the year-end. The power plant can operate non-stop without the need for refueling for 3-5 years.

The plant will replace a coal-fired power plant and an aging nuclear power plant supplying more than 50,000 people with electricity in Chukotka.

"It is perhaps a small step toward sustainable development in the Arctic — but it's a giant step toward decarbonization of remote, off-grid zones and a turning point in the global development of small modular nuclear plants," Ro-

satom head Alexei Likhachev said in a statement.

Proponents of small modular nuclear plants say they are cheaper and greener than conventional power plants using fossil-fuel, insisting that there should be one near each major city with a port.

Opponents of the floating nuclear power plant have named it the "floating Chernobyl" and say such plants pose a danger to the environment.

The launch of the floating reactor is part of a wider ambition of Russian President Vladimir Putin to develop the Northern Arctic region.

The objective has become more practical in recent years amid global warming and a growing emergence of melting ice caps, making some Arctic areas more accessible.

The development comes as Russia, the U.S. and several other nations have long used nuclear reactors to power sea vessels, including ice breakers and submarines.

Russia claims there could be as much as \$35 trillion worth of untapped oil and natural gas in its Arctic region.

The Russian military has deployed anti-ship missiles to the Arctic to protect its claims to the resource-rich region if needed. Other countries have claimed territory in the Arctic as well.

The five countries having claims in the Arctic so far are Russia, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Finland, China and the United States, who all pursue a greater portion of the rich mineral, oil and gas resources in the region.

# Protesters Tell Carmakers: 'The Party Is Over'

FRANKFURT (Reuters) -- **Thousands of protesters marched in front of Frankfurt's IAA car show to demand a swift end to combustion engines and a shift to environmentally friendly vehicles as Chancellor Angela Merkel's government prepares to unveil climate protection measures.**

Police in Frankfurt said some 15,000, including many cyclists, took part in the march. Organizers put the number at 25,000 and said that around 18,000 cyclists had descended on the city.

Protesters took aim at SUVs, seen by environmentalists as a highly polluting status symbol that has no place in cities.

"STOP SUV," "SUV not cool," and "We can't replace our lungs" read some of the signs held by protesters.

Merkel's conservatives and their Social Democrat (SPD) coalition partners held talks on Friday about a package of measures expected to expedite Germany's ambition to double the share of its power from renewable sources to 65% by 2030.

The government is expected to unveil the costly measures on Sept. 20.

"Enough to policies that prioritize cars in our cities," said Ernst-Christoph Stolper, deputy head of Friends of the Earth

Germany. "Pedestrians and cyclists need to conquer the urban spaces that belong to us."

The protests have urged German carmakers to speed up a transition to electric and hydrogen vehicles, after the 2015 diesel scandal in which Volkswagen admitted to cheating emissions tests.

Germany's big three, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz maker Daimler and BMW, assume that in 10 years about half of their cars will be emissions-free.

Carmakers are expected to invest some 40 billion euros (\$44 billion) on alternative drive terrains in the next three years, highlighting the urgency to fix the image of an industry tarnished by the diesel scandal and avoid bans on diesel cars in cities.

The death of four pedestrians, including a three-year-old boy, on a Berlin street this month after the driver of a Porsche SUV apparently lost control has sparked a debate about whether cities should ban the large vehicles from their streets.

German car executives responded, saying the tragedy could have happened with any car.

"Car industry, the party is over," said Christoph Bautz of the Compact organization, which advocates for progressive politics.

# African Leaders Unveil Urgent Plan to Fight Takfiris



West African leaders meet in the capital of Burkina Faso on September 14, 2019 for a summit expected to lead to an overhaul of the flailing attempt to roll back Takfiri terrorism in the Sahel region on 14 September, 2019.

OUAGADOUGOU (Dispatches) -- **The leaders of West African countries have announced a one-billion-dollar plan to combat the growing threat of Takfiri terrorism and violence in the region.**

The plan was unveiled at a summit of the heads of state and government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Burkina Faso's capital.

ECOWAS Commission President Jean-Claude Kassi Brou said the 15-member West African bloc had decided to "contribute financially and urgently to joint efforts in the fight against terrorism" by pledging \$1 billion.

Full details of the plan, to be funded from 2020 to 2024, would be presented to the next ECOWAS summit in December.

In his remarks, the president of the ECOWAS commission pointed to the mounting human, economic and political toll of terrorist attacks perpetrated by Takfiri groups in the region.

"2,200 attacks in the last four years, 11,500 dead, thousands wounded... millions displaced and economic activity has been greatly affected," Brou said.

In a speech following the closed meeting, Brou called on the United Nations

to strengthen its peacekeeping mission, which has been based in Mali since 2013.

Takfiri terrorist groups tied to Daesh and Al-Qaeda have strengthened their foothold across the arid Sahel region this year, making large swathes of territory ungovernable and stoking local ethnic violence, especially in Mali and Burkina Faso.

The UN declared in July that the spread of terrorist attacks was so fast in West Africa that the region had to consider bolstering its response beyond current military efforts.

In 2017, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Mali and Mauritania launched the G5 Sahel task force to counter militancy in the region.

The 5,000-strong force was to receive more than 400 million euros (494 million dollars) to be able to meet its declared objectives but a lack of finance, training and equipment limited their effectiveness and their numbers plunged to 4,000 troops.

Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has warned that the military approach alone would not be effective and called for greater efforts to relieve the roots of the conflict in the region, namely poverty, poor governance, and climate hazards.

# Tunisians Vote in Election Amid Economic Woes



A man reads his ballot paper at a polling station during presidential election in Tunis, Tunisia, September 15, 2019.

TUNIS (Dispatches) -- **Tunisians lined up to choose from a diverse field of candidates on Sunday, in an unpredictable election for a new president at a time of economic pain.**

With no overwhelming frontrunner among the 26 candidates whose names appear on the ballot, the difference between losing and making a second-round runoff between the two with most votes could prove narrow.

Tunisia threw off autocratic rule eight years ago in a revolution that inspired "Arab Spring" revolts in Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain and Libya.

However, a perceived decline in living standards since the 2011 uprising, with higher unemployment and inflation, has frustrated many voters and turnout for local elections last year was only 34%.

Heavily indebted, Tunisia's next government, like its last, will have to navigate popular demands to relax public purse strings while foreign lenders push for spending cuts.

Many voters are disillusioned. In the poor Ettadamen district, Mouaz Chneifiya, a 42-year-old unemployed man, was sitting in a cafe and said he would not vote.

"Since the election we've been getting promises and nothing is done on the ground, so why vote? The elec-

tions will end and the promises will be dropped as soon as they get into office like in past elections," he told Reuters.

While foreign attention, especially in Arab countries, is focused on the moderate Ennahda party, Tunisians have been engrossed by the fate of media mogul Nabil Karoui, running from behind bars.

A court on Friday ruled he must stay in detention after his arrest last month on suspicion of money laundering and tax evasion, which he denies. His supporters say he has been silenced.

Prime Minister Youssef Chahed, as well as two former prime ministers, a former president and the defense minister are also standing. Two of the 26 candidates have withdrawn in recent days to support a rival, though their names still appear on the ballots.

With so many in the race, Sunday's vote could produce a very close outcome, with few votes separating the two candidates who make the second-round run-off, due by Oct. 13, from the others.

The election was brought forward after the death in July of the incumbent Beji Caid Essebsi.

Analysts have warned that a close outcome, with several candidates near the cut-off point to make the second round, could make appeals likely.

# News in Brief

LONDON (Reuters) -- **British Prime Minister Boris Johnson likened himself to the comic book character The Incredible Hulk in a newspaper interview where he stressed his determination to take Britain out of the European Union on Oct. 31.**The Mail on Sunday newspaper reported that Johnson said he would find a way to circumvent a recent parliament vote ordering him to delay Brexit rather than take Britain out of the EU without a transition deal. "The madder Hulk gets, the stronger Hulk gets," Johnson was quoted as saying. "Hulk always escaped, no matter how tightly bound in he seemed to be - and that is the case for this country. We will come out on October 31." Britain's parliament has repeatedly rejected the exit deal Johnson's predecessor Theresa May negotiated with the EU, and this month rejected leaving without a deal - angering many Britons who voted to leave the bloc more than three years ago. Johnson wants to harness that anger to win a majority in an early national election, but his efforts to call one have so far been thwarted by opposition parties who want to first ensure Britain cannot leave the EU without a deal on Oct. 31.

PARIS (Reuters) -- **Former U.S. spy agency contractor Edward Snowden hopes France will grant him asylum, according to a France Inter radio interview to be broadcast on Monday.**In excerpts made available on the French radio station's Twitter account, Snowden says he would "love to see" French President Emmanuel Macron make a gesture enabling him to live in the country. It was not immediately clear when or where the interview took place. Snowden has been living in Russia since 2013 after he revealed details of secret surveillance programs by U.S. intelligence agencies. Many civil rights activists see him as a hero, but at home in the United States authorities want him to stand trial for espionage.

NASSAU (Reuters) -- **Tropical Storm Humberto lashed already devastated parts of the Bahamas with heavy rain and strong winds before crawling northwest, and forecasters said it was likely to become a hurricane before the end of the weekend.** The storm, packing maximum sustained winds of 50 miles per hour (85 km per hour), is expected to move well offshore of the east coast of Florida and into the Atlantic Ocean through early next week, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. Forecasters said the storm could drop up to six inches (15.24 cm) of rain in some areas of the Bahamas through Monday, but it did not produce a dangerous storm surge in the northwestern islands, which were hammered earlier this month by Hurricane Dorian. Humberto could, however, complicate relief efforts in the area where thousands of structures were flattened and 70,000 people were left needing shelter, food and water and medical aid.

LONDON (Reuters) -- **Burglars have stolen a fully-functional 18-carat gold toilet from Britain's Blenheim Palace, where it had been installed as an art exhibit, police said.** The toilet, valued at more than \$5 million, was part of an exhibition of work by Italian conceptual artist Maurizio Cattelan which opened two days ago at the stately home 60 miles west of London, a major tourist attraction. The toilet, named "America", was previously on display in a cubicle at New York's Guggenheim Museum, where more than 100,000 visitors were able to use it. Thieves with at least two vehicles broke into the palace, the birthplace of World War Two leader Winston Churchill, and removed the toilet some time before 5 a.m. (0400 GMT), Thames Valley Police said. "Due to the toilet being plumbed in to the building, this has caused significant damage and flooding," Detective Inspector Jess Milne added in a public statement. Police said they had arrested one 66-year-old man in connection with the theft, but had not recovered the artwork.

CHICAGO (Reuters) -- **More than 2,200 preserved fetal remains have been found on the Illinois property of a recently deceased doctor who performed abortions, the Will County sheriff's office said in a statement.** The family and attorney of Ulrich Klopfer, who died on Sept. 3, discovered 2,246 medically preserved fetal remains on Thursday while going through the deceased doctor's personal property and alerted the local coroner's office, the sheriff's office said. "The family is cooperating fully with this investigation. There is no evidence that any medical procedures were conducted at the property," the statement, issued on Friday, said.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) -- **Hamza bin Laden, a son of slain Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and himself a notable figure in the militant group, was killed in a U.S. counterterrorism operation, President Donald Trump said on Saturday.**In a statement issued by the White House, Trump said the operation took place in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, but he offered no further details. "The loss of Hamza bin Laden not only deprives Al-Qaeda of important leadership skills and the symbolic connection to his father, but undermines important operational activities of the group," Trump said, using an alternative spelling for the group that carried out the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. A U.S. official told Reuters Hamza had been killed months ago near the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Trump was briefed at the time on the operation.