



The Monitoring Group

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A statement from The Monitoring Group (30/11/21)

For further information, contact Suresh Grover – office@tmg-uk.org

London Chinatown Rally Saturday 27 November 2021

Over the last two days, images of a single incident of violence at our rally have been promoted in UK, China and globally. These images are accompanied by inaccurate information. Sadly, it does not end there, social media is now being used to intimidate and smear three individuals – Mr Bobby Chan, Dr Ping Hua and Dr Peng Wang who were involved in either organising or speaking at the peaceful rally. Their images are being shared globally inviting threats. The focus on Dr Wang is very troubling as he has been a victim of a brutal hate crime earlier this year.

For us an incident of violence at a rally organised by us is one incident too much.

Our rally titled 'Time to Act: Stop Racism - Stop Anti-Asian Hate and No to a New cold war' was planned professionally and with public safety in mind. Given the space we occupied in a crowded street on a busy Saturday afternoon our aim was to mobilise around 150 people. We achieved that aim.

There was counter picket of about 20 people.

We were acutely aware that most of our events are attended by our clients, some of whom have suffered racial & domestic violence or are asylum seekers having suffered trauma due to war, torture or displacement. Their safety and welfare will always be of paramount importance for us.

We did everything to ensure the event was peaceful.

A few days before the rally, when it became obvious that our event was likely to be disrupted with violence, we immediately contacted the Metropolitan Police. We asked the police to be present at the rally to ensure there would be no breach of peace. They requested further information and intelligence supporting our concerns. This was provided to them within minutes of their request.

The intelligence contained an unsigned flyer opposing our rally and inviting conflict on the day. It was promoted on Facebook, the translation of the key sentences reads as follows:

<https://www.facebook.com/BritonsHK/photos/a.122023509163424/634782034554233>



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("LUNCH

27 November is organised by people as propaganda by the Chinese Communist Party...

Have lunch to oppose their activity (this is an invitation for a 'punch-up).

No one organisation is taking responsibility for organising this

You need to decide yourself if there is conflict, be safe")

The final email from Metropolitan Police's W - Central West OCU working with MO6 - Public Order Command, was received by us on 26/11, it stated,

"Thank you for your email. I have passed the event to an Inspector, who has reviewed the information and intelligence. There will not be a dedicated police presence at the event, but the local policing team for the West End and Chinatown are aware".

On the same day we received messages from people who knew some of the individuals from the opposing group who were worried about the threat of violence.

To doubly ensure an orderly and peaceful rally, we organised the presence of professional stewards who were clearly identifiable by wearing yellow vests.

A police van was in the area from 11am onwards on the day of the rally. I personally spoke to the officer in charge at 12.45pm, about half an hour before the rally started. I urged the Asian police officer to ensure police presence for the duration of the rally. He said he and his officers were too busy but would ensure patrol of the street.

During our rally, the jeering and abuse from the opposing group was directed at all the speakers but especially reserved against Chinese contributors or those viewed as Chinese because of their appearance. There is significant evidence of racism and hate speech being used by the opposing group including those wearing balaclavas. For instance, when Mr Edmund Yeo spoke on behalf of the Chinese Information & Advice Centre, an organisation based in Chinatown, they were chanting of "Go Back Home" from the opposing group because they assumed he was from China. Mr Yeo is a British Citizen of Malaysian origin and a member of British Conservative Party. These chants are reminiscent of far-right groups advocating deportation of any person who is not seen as White British. As appallingly, when Dr Peng Wang spoke of the brutal racist assault suffered by him in Southampton in February this year (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-56209881>) he was continually booed with cries of "shame on you". This is the first occasion when a victim of hate crime has been abused by people belonging to an ethnic minority at our rally. We offer our sympathy to Dr Wang – he shouldn't have suffered further hate abuse and commend him for his speech, dignity and resilience.



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The incident of violence took place after the rally was concluded.

None of our members who attended the event were involved in any violence or threats.

No one from our supporters network has been arrested or held in custody.

I saw the clash as it was happening. Some of our stewards tried to intervene to stop the clash. I was told it was possibly a fight between people opposing our rally but nobody was sure. I saw a couple of people fall on the floor and then get up. The whole incident was quick and over in a flash - it lasted about 2 minutes. Most of our organisers were at the scene for over an hour afterwards and did not leave Chinatown until 5.30 pm, there was no incident apart from this clash.

Some of the video images that we have viewed shows men running and a couple of people holding on to each other or in a scruffle.

There is a video showing a group of men and women punching each other. We can identify some of our stewards attempting to stop the fighting.

Despite the false claims, there is no evidence of any weapons used.

Neither is there any evidence of any person running from our side towards the opposing side.

The truth is that the images distributed by the counter protestors show exactly the opposite of what they claim. But these images are captioned with inflammatory allegations in desperate attempt to sow harm to individuals and groups associated with us. One of the captions includes the use the derogatory and racist term used by the Japanese army historically to degrade Chinese people as sub-human.

The central coordinators of the rally were The Monitoring Group, Min Quan Legal Centre (MQLC) and the Federation of UK Fujian Chinese and it was supported by many groups including those embedded in London's Chinatown who provide direct services either to their members as well as peace and justice associations. We sought their support because they are concerned about the growth of racism in the UK and allay their fears that our rally would cause minimum disruption for business, workers and customers in the heart of Chinatown.

The Monitoring Group recruits volunteers from a rich mix of diverse backgrounds. They include individuals who identify themselves as people of Chinese dissent, they include people born in China including in Hong Kong as well Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and USA.



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To allege that we are pro-Beijing is ludicrous.

The Monitoring Group is a community oriented anti-racist charity, Min Quan LC is a Community Interest Company specialising in providing immigration advice. Over 80% of its clients are people from China seeking asylum or immigration advice in the UK.

The current Min Quan Legal Centre is a separate entity from us.

The original Min Quan (MQ) was established by the Monitoring Group in 2000 after the Lawrence Inquiry - at that time we were overwhelmed with race and policing cases, including from London's Chinatown and other town in the UK. We founded MQ to create an independent Chinese-led Monitoring Group that could root itself in UK's Chinese population.

Neither The Monitoring Group nor Min Quan LC are political organisations.

We are not linked to any political party either in the UK or abroad, including in China.

Our objectives relate to challenging state discriminatory practices in the UK through advice, advocacy and educational activities.

We do not organise events outside our objectives. The event on the 27th was therefore a direct result of the spike in hate crimes against the Chinese, East & South East communities since the lockdown. The Monitoring Group has seen a visible increase of over 500% in anti-Chinese hate crimes. According to official sources, and not just us, the driver of these hate crimes and incidents is the anti- China statements by political leaders including the Cold War rhetoric. Last year, the UN warned of the 'tsunami of hate and xenophobia fanned by global leaders by employing anti-Chinese rhetoric.' However, we remain deeply concerned about the safety and mental well-being of three individuals who are being targeted.

Mr Bobby Chan, for instance, has been deliberately 'maligned' as someone using and directing violence at this rally and previously (please see letter dated 28 June 21 to HK Free Press attached) and for being a member of the Chinese Communist Party. Both these allegations and accusations are completely false.

The fact is that Mr Chan has worked selflessly in Chinatown offering advice and assistance on immigration matters for over 40 years His record of fighting against racism and supporting Chinese workers and asylum seekers is unparalleled. He has been an active trade unionist - in NALGO now UNISON - since 1980 and was one of the founders of the Camden Black Workers Group and one of three coordinators of the Black Delegation during the Miners' Strike. In July 1990, he was expelled and



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deported by the Chinese Government during a NALGO led delegation on Human Rights. He has been one of the key individuals of the three shutdowns in Chinatown over the last decade as protests against the Home Office fishing raids and practices.

Dr Ping Hua is one of few and first woman leaders of a Chinese organisation in the UK who has supported victims of hate crimes and domestic violence for decades.

Despite the attempts to sabotage our rally, the fact is that our rally was a great success – we brought different sections of the British Society and different social currents – peace activists, anti-racists, community organisers, academics and politicians - together to oppose racism and prospect of global war. We heard inspiring speeches and witnessed at first hand the true meaning of solidarity.

One again, we make it clear, as we did continuously during the event, we oppose violence against peaceful protests regardless of who initiates it. We believe in the fundamental right to protest and the right to assembly. Not only do we oppose the curtailment of human and civil rights across the globe, we believe that these should be enhanced and extended in different arenas of human existence such as the right to be free from hunger and the right to peace.

We will continue to highlight and challenge racism in all its forms against racialised communities. In doing so we will continue to use every peaceful means at our disposal to ensure that our campaign for equality gathers momentum and brings change.

ENDS

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<Attached letter dated 28 June 21 to Hong Kong Free Press>

For the attention of :

The Editor, HONK KONG FREE PRESS

By Email

Dated: 28 June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing in response to an on-line article on the 7th June 2021 by one of your reporters, Stuart Heaven, in which claims are made that 'Hongkongers' in the UK face so called hate-crimes by Chinese organisations that are purportedly pro-China in their political outlook. It wrongly alleges that one of our trustees is involved in these incidents. These are dangerous and false allegations that should be corrected. We hope once you read our explanation, you would have the courtesy of offering us a formal public apology printed in your paper as the article is a clear breach of your own code of ethics. We would also be willing to write an accurate piece on hate crimes suffered by people of Chinese and East Asian origin in the UK providing you offer us the same column length afforded to the original piece.

For easy reference, the link to the article is:

<https://hongkongfp.com/2021/06/07/it-can-happen-anywhere-and-anytime-hongkongers-in-the-uk-face-hate-crimes-as-pro-china-groups-accused-of-stirring-up-hostility/>

The article bases its assertions by quoting an ex-employee of ours, a Mr Jabez Lam. Worryingly, the article is extremely thin on facts. It provides misleading information purely based on one person's assertions, that are actually vindictive. These unconfirmed assertions in the current climate of global sickness coupled with the 'blame game' will only increase community disharmony in our society with adverse consequences for the Chinese and East Asian communities residing in the UK.

Our primary concern is about the malicious and false allegations made against us and one of our trustees Mr Bobby Chan in the article. We know we are deploying emotional words, but we use them objectively and wisely to indicate their seriousness. Moreover, Mr Chan has worked tirelessly over 40 years on meagre wages to provide casework and advocacy assistance on daily basis to UK's Chinese communities. He has also initiated or been involved in all the major campaigns developed within that community. These include support work around the 'Dover 58', 'Foot & Mouth', 'Diamond 4', 'Mi Gao Chen', the current COVID 19 fallout and many more. He has public credibility and his selflessness is highly valued by a significant number of individuals and organisations in the UK as well as Hong Kong, where he was born.

The article references "Min Quan-The Monitoring Group" and two video footages. First, the phrase "Min Quan-The Monitoring Group" is incorrect and does not bear any reality. There is no such organisation or ever has been. We helped create a Chinese led project called Min-Quan. However



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over four years ago the project became an independent entity and officially registered itself as Min Quan Legal Centre – a simple and cursory check in the Companies House would have given your reporter this information in less than five minutes.

The substantive issue concerns the two-video footages. The first relates a protest outside a Denise Ho concert in London in October 2019; the second shows some footage of another demonstration in November 2019 in London's Chinatown. Both these are based on selected and partial material submitted by Mr Lam. Even then his allegations do not stand up to scrutiny.

The article goes on to state that they appear to show certain claims which we are aware of and know to be baseless. Interestingly, Mr Lam has never directly presented these allegations to us or contacted us to seek our response. Instead, he presented the same information to our funding bodies and the Charities Commission in Summer last year, 2020, suggesting interpretations that are essentially the same as presented in the article. You may not be aware, but a thorough investigation was carried out into Mr Lam's claims. The conclusions were that his allegations were false.

As stated earlier, all the investigations dealt with serious allegations against one of our Trustees, Mr Chan. The remit of the investigation was to determine whether Mr Chan had:

- used either abusive language or threaten or use actual violence; or/and
- had been contacted by British police as alleged by Mr Lam

From the material presented (including access to translations of the video footage and formal interviews of people at events), the investigation panel concluded that there was no evidence to support any of the above allegations made. Therefore, the interpretations that are repeated in the article are also incorrect.

Our funders and the Charities Commission were satisfied with the process and outcome of the investigation. They formally relayed their findings to Mr Lam, the complainant, but this hasn't stopped him to persist with his false allegations. To reinforce his false claims, he is now using the cover of political unrest in Honk Kong to imply that we are somehow involved in the perpetrating hate crimes in the UK. These are serious accusations made in a newspaper; therefore, leaving us with no choice but to respond publicly.

What do the videos footage actually show?

We were aware of the political context in which these incidents had occurred. The investigation simply characterised the two sides as SUPPORTING or OPPOSING the Hong Kong Government at that time in 2019. As part of our full investigation, we took great care to scrutinise the videos, provided by Mr Lam, including the spoken words that were uttered by all the participants and these were fully translated.



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As we said earlier, one incident took place outside a concert, in Smith Square, given by Denise Ho and the other involved a demonstration in London's Chinatown.

The video footage, supplied by Mr Lam, of the first incident shows two parties protesting on different sides of the road and the camera focuses primarily on those SUPPORTING and shows little of those OPPOSING. The camera shows Mr Chan and others taking pictures of the other side. At the midpoint of the video, Mr Lam walks over to the side of those SUPPORTING and there follows a brief and slightly animated discussion; the camera also shows broken eggs on the floor. There is no evidence to indicate violence or inappropriate behaviour from either party.

The second video footage, again supplied by Mr Lam, involves an incident where Mr Lam and his supporters wanting to march into Chinatown and to target restaurant owners who he viewed as SUPPORTERS. Over that period, we were contacted by a number of restaurant owners worried about damage to their property. We are aware that the police decided that OPPOSERS march could not take place because it threatened breach of peace as well as criminal damage to property. The substantive issue here is the fracas involving the Chinese flag. It is evident that there is no involvement of Mr Chan whatsoever with flag or any inappropriate conduct. Our understanding of the event is that early on Mr Lam had snatched the flag from one of the SUPPORTERS and Mrs Lam (Mr Jabez Lam's wife) was helping Mr Lam, the video shows an attempt by the SUPPORTERS to retake the flag from Mrs Lam's possession - none of this involves Mr Chan. It does, however, involve Mr Lam and Mrs Lam and others from both sides.

Relating to the video material in the first incident, it is worth noting that: Those SUPPORTING the regime had said "We are Chinese..."; "China is ours" those OPPOSING the Hong Kong regime with Mr Lam had responded "**you like China so much give up your British passport and go back to China.**" They ashamedly go onto say "**You Chinese people eat shit! Shame on you**". We have highlighted these statements associated with Mr Lam because they could constitute hate crime/s.

All this begs an important question. Did your reporter actually study the evidence before printing the article? It seems not. We implore you to examine the material yourself.

In relation to hate incidents, over the last year – from March 2020, to March 2021, we have had over 1700 referrals of race hate crimes from via the CATCH project and the Metropolitan Police. About 15% of our total referrals involve victims of Chinese and East Asian origin. We have not been made aware of a single incident involving a pro-China Chinese supporter initiating hate crimes against a person born in Hong Kong or a 'Hongkonger' or vice versa. The only incident that exists in the public domain is the one alleged by Mr Lam in which he himself is directly involved and his claims are not only false but malicious.

Moreover, if these incidents were to happen, we would condemn them unreservedly. We are acutely aware of the pain that could be inflicted on victims due to 'communal violence'. Many of us have parents or grandparents who suffered from communal violence and destruction in their home countries and we would not allow the same seeds of hatred to grow in our communities. We think Mr



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Lam's conduct is vindictive. He views people that disagree with him as the enemy. We say this because we have witnessed his behaviour at close quarters for many decades. Indeed, he and Mr Chan were once close and inseparable friends.

Mr Jabez Lam's dismissal from The Monitoring Group and his subsequent campaign of harassment

We bring to your attention a notable incident when Mr Lam was warned for his conduct during the murder trial of Mr Mi Gao Chen, by ignoring the trial judge's instructions. On page 7 of the seminal report (2009) mentioned below, we wrote the following sentence in 2009, "At one point, our lack of judgment led the trial judge to reprimand the then Min Quan project co-ordinator. Although this action had no impact on the evidence or the final result, it caused an unnecessary distraction during a critical period in the public campaign and weakened support for the case". Our lack of judgement was putting our trust in the project coordinator who was Mr Lam.

We are not sure if you are aware, but Mr Lam was dismissed from The Monitoring Group for gross misconduct for bullying of mainland Chinese employees during his tenure as a part time coordinator of the Min Quan project. The case against him included the witness testament of a Chinese woman employee who felt his conduct was abusive and intimidating. He has the sole distinction of being the only employee ever to be dismissed from the Monitoring Group in our 40-year history.

Immediately after his dismissal, Mr Lam conducted a sustained campaign of harassment against Mr Chan and other members of The Monitoring Group. These included 'stalking' Mr Chan and others to meetings and restaurants, using threats and aggression and sending a daily dose of enraged and obsessive emails.

None of his aggressive behaviour worked in the past nor will it bear any fruit in the future. Additionally, the current pandemic has not allowed us to confront his behaviour and though he has seized every possible opportunity (online meetings, public events and in press) to attack and tarnish our reputation. In circles of people that are unaware of our history, Mr Lam is taking advantage of our silence.

Sadly, he is now even going further and beginning to take credit for work that was either done collectively by Min Quan staff and volunteers or initiated by Mr Chan with others. These include his false claims that he was the leader of the 'Foot & Mouth' Campaign, or that he is 'the founder of Min Quan', or that he was involved in the publishing of our seminal reports.

We are not an organisation that wishes to be diverted from our daily work. The health and welfare of our clients is paramount. However, given Mr Lam's current conduct, we cannot allow this to go unchallenged. As a consequence, we will now make information available to Chinese and East Asian communities as well as our stakeholders.

We have decided to take legal advice to protect our trustees, staff, volunteers and clients from further harassment and false allegations.



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The Monitoring Group is a charity with 40 years of experience in dealing with racism and hate crimes. Indeed, a large number of our cases involve victims of Chinese and East Asian origin residing in the UK and sometimes this hatred is driven by the anti-China narrative where individuals perceived to hold Chinese identity and appearance are held collectively responsible for the growth of current COVID-19 pandemic. We have worked with different Chinese and East Asian communities for decades and we are one of the very few organisations in the UK that involve members of diverse communities – people of African, Asian (including Chinese), Arab, Latin American and European origin – in the core areas of our work. We are perhaps the only anti-racist group that has consistently worked with UK's Chinese communities nationally – in Greater London, Hampshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire. In 2009, we produced, together with acclaimed academics, a seminal report titled Hidden from Public View showing the experience of racism suffered by UK Chinese population:

(https://shura.shu.ac.uk/10529/1/Cole_Hidden_From_Public_View_-_English.pdf)

Moreover, we are the oldest community-based antiracist organisation in the UK. Our work is acknowledged officially, and we have been involved in numerous Public Inquiries that have resulted in positive changes to legislation, policies, and practice. Please visit our website for further information.

We think you will agree that printing material that cannot be substantiated does not adhere to good journalistic practice. We therefore once again implore you to offer us a public apology in your paper.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

We look forward to hearing from you in the next 14 days from the date of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

Professor Jawed Siddiqi, Trustee

Dr Ping Hua, Trustee

Suresh Grover, Co-Executive Director

On Behalf of The Monitoring Group Limited