

Hong Kong Protests and Corporations: Navigating through Profit, Principles and Pressure

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Corporations could become entangled with the ongoing protests in Hong Kong in diverse ways. For example, corporations may supply crowd control weapons to Hong Kong police, share protestors' personal information with government authorities, allow their online platforms to disseminate protests-related messages, suspend public transport around protest sites, or may discourage, discipline or dismiss their employees for participating in protests. Moreover, some corporations might be responsible for creating socio-economic conditions (e.g., unaffordable housing) that have partly fuelled the discontent behind these protests. In recent times, some of these corporations have come under pressure from Chinese authorities to adopt a hard line against both protests and protesters.

In such a situation, should corporations blindly follow the Chinese authorities' directions to safeguard business interests, or should corporations also try to discharge their responsibility to respect human rights under applicable international norms? After explaining some of these international norms, this seminar will explore several strategies that corporations could adopt to not only make profit with principles but also guard against unreasonable pressure exerted by the Chinese authorities.



Surya Deva is an Associate Professor at the School of Law of City University of Hong Kong, and a member of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. Prof Deva's primary research interests lie in Business and Human Rights, India-China Constitutional Law, and Sustainable Development. He has published extensively in these areas, and has advised the UN bodies, governments, multinational corporations and civil society organisations on matters related to business and human rights. He is one of the founding Editors-in-Chief of the *Business and Human Rights Journal* (CUP), and sits on the Editorial/Advisory Board of the *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, the *Vienna Journal on International Constitutional Law* and the *Australian Journal of Human Rights*. Prof Deva is an elected member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Constitutional Law.

