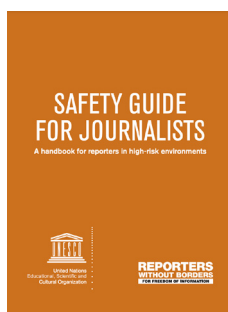


THE NEW RISKS OF REPORTING IN HONG KONG

Appendix to the RSF Safety Guide for Journalists

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First published in 1992 in partnership with UNESCO and regularly updated since, the [RSF Safety Guide for Journalists](#) offers practical advice to reporters going to high-risk areas, preparing them for a wide range of dangers including armed conflict, epidemics, natural disasters and street protests. In response to the varying needs of journalists reporting in different parts of the world.

INTRODUCTION

A quarter of a century after Hong Kong's handover to the People's Republic of China in 1997, press freedom, which on paper is guaranteed for 50 years by the [Basic Law](#), is more threatened than ever. Whether based in the territory or overseas, journalists covering Hong Kong are all confronted with the risk of intimidation or surveillance attempts, and in some cases prosecution and possible detention for alleged "sedition" or "national security crimes."

Within two decades, Hong Kong slipped down the ranks in the [RSF World Press Freedom Index](#) from 18th upon the index's creation in 2002 to 135th in 2024. At the time of this guide's publication, 11 journalists and press freedom defenders are detained in Hong Kong and another 114 in mainland China.

The purpose of this appendix is to address the concerns of journalists reporting on Hong Kong regarding physical safety, digital security, and the new legal threats they face. Developed with input from Hong Kong-based reporters and safety experts, it aims to support the free flow of information on the situation in Hong Kong.



1 HONG KONG PRESS FREEDOM IN FREE FALL

1.1. CHINA'S TIGHTENING GRIP ON THE MEDIA

| DIRECT OWNERSHIP AND INDIRECT PRESSURE

Over the past decade, the Beijing regime has steadily tightened its control over Hong Kong's media landscape. This has been achieved through direct ownership of Chinese-language media outlets and indirect pressure on others, using advertisers to enforce Beijing's authoritarian narrative. Hong Kong's English-language media, including those linked to Chinese-language outlets, face similar risks. [Apple Daily](#), one of Hong Kong's most prominent pro-democracy newspapers, was forcibly shut down in 2021, underscoring the risks to press freedom and independent journalism.

| INCREASED SELF-CENSORSHIP

This growing control has led to increased self-censorship among media outlets. Many journalists are now cautious about reporting topics that could be seen as critical of Beijing or the Hong Kong government, fearing legal repercussions under laws such as the National Security Law (NSL) in force from June 2020. This limits the public's access to uncensored information, aligning Hong Kong's media environment more closely with that of mainland China, where media is controlled by the authorities and restricted to government-approved content.

| HONG KONG DIASPORA MEDIA CENSORED

In October 2024, Hong Kong authorities ordered Automattic, the US-based firm behind WordPress, to [take down the website of Flow HK](#), a diaspora media outlet founded in 2021 by Hong Kong pro-democracy activists in exile. The request cited violations of national security laws, including charges of secession and sedition under the National Security Law (NSL) and newly implemented "Article 23." Despite Automattic's refusal to comply, access to the site has been blocked by several Hong Kong internet providers, marking a worrying precedent of internet censorship aimed at silencing dissenting voices in the territory.

1.2. THE LEGAL SYSTEM USED AGAINST CRITICAL VOICES

| THE NATIONAL SECURITY LAW (NSL)

The [National Security Law](#) (NSL) was imposed on Hong Kong by China's highest legislative body, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, in June 2020. The law uses vague and broad language to define acts deemed threats to national security. The NSL outlines four key offences, each carrying a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, giving the authorities extensive powers to suppress dissent.

The NSL's reach extends far beyond the territory of Hong Kong. Foreign journalists who previously wrote on sensitive China-related topics, no matter their nationality and their place of residence, should refrain from transiting through Hong Kong airport, or any other Chinese airport, as their past reports could be interpreted as "crimes against the state." Under the NSL, individuals may even be "extradited" to mainland China upon landing in Hong Kong, even before passing through immigration.

KEY OFFENCES UNDER THE NSL

COLLUSION WITH FOREIGN FORCES

Definition: engaging in “hostile activities” or provoking “hatred” towards China by “providing State secrets or intelligence,” “conspiring with a foreign country or an institution,” or “receiving instructions” from a foreign country or organisation.

Maximum penalty: life imprisonment.

Precedent in China: China has been portraying foreign media as agents of their governments. In 2020, at least 18 journalists from foreign media were expelled, and in 2021, three foreign journalists were detained on espionage charges. Cheng Lei, profile business news anchor working for state media group China Global Television (CGTN), was detained in August 2020 on charges of sharing state secrets and sentenced in a closed trial in 2022. She was released in October 2023 after three years in detention.

Enforcement in Hong Kong: in 2020, Jimmy Lai, founder of Apple Daily, was charged based on his social media activity and publications. Several Apple Daily employees have been facing similar charges since 2021.

SUBVERSION

Definition: “overthrowing or undermining” China’s “basic system” or “seriously interfering with, disrupting, or undermining” the functions of the central power in China or Hong Kong.

Maximum penalty: life imprisonment.

Precedent in China: at least 13 journalists have been detained for “subversion of state power” or “inciting subversion” at the time this report was published.

Enforcement in Hong Kong: press freedom defenders like Claudia Mo and Gwyneth Ho have been detained since 2021 for their pro-democracy stance and their participation in a primary election in 2020 that planned on vetoing a government budget proposal. The fact they communicated with foreign media was specifically mentioned in the case’s instruction.

SECESSION

Definition: “undermining national unification” and “separating Hong Kong” from China.

Maximum penalty: life imprisonment.

Precedent in China: the offence is often conflated with “separatism” targeting ethnic groups like Uyghurs and Tibetans.

Enforcement in Hong Kong: journalists covering Hong Kong’s cultural identity or pro-independence movements risk charges for inciting “separatism.” At the time of publication, no case had yet been brought before the courts.

TERRORIST ACTIVITIES

Definition: “causing or intending to cause grave harm to society” by committing “activities that seriously jeopardise public health, safety, or security.”

Maximum penalty: life imprisonment.

Precedent in China: at least 71 journalists are currently being detained under terrorism-related charges, particularly in Xinjiang.

Enforcement in Hong Kong: reporting on protests could be considered “participating” in terrorism, and foreign reporters risk arrest or expulsion for “supporting terrorism.” At the time of publication, no one had yet been convicted under “terrorism” charges. However, [student leaders were charged with advocating terrorism](#) after they commemorated a person who attacked a police officer in 2021, raising concerns on whether reporting could similarly be interpreted as “advocating for terrorism.”

THE SEDITION ORDINANCE

The [Sedition Ordinance](#) is a colonial-era law that was dormant for over 50 years until its revival in September 2020. It criminalises incitement to violence, disaffection, or any acts (spoken or published) that might “excite disaffection” against the judiciary, government departments, or territorial security apparatus. The vague wording allows the government to use it against individuals and groups that criticise the government or promote dissenting opinions.

KEY OFFENCES UNDER THE SEDITION ORDINANCE

SEDITIONOUS INTENTION

Definition: incitement to violence, disaffection, and any acts (spoken or published) that might “excite disaffection” against the judiciary or any government department or territorial security apparatus.

Maximum penalty: two years’ imprisonment.

Enforcement in Hong Kong’s colonial era: the law was used to prosecute pro-China press in the 1950s and 1960s for publishing seditious content.

Enforcement in contemporary Hong Kong: since the law’s revival, it has been invoked to arrest dozens of individuals for actions such as chanting slogans, clapping in courts, or publishing content critical of the government. Staff working for media outlets like Apple Daily and Stand News have been charged, leading to the closure of these media. Two Stand News editors-in-chief were [sentenced](#) between 11 to 21 months in September 2024.

SAFEGUARDING NATIONAL SECURITY ORDINANCE (“ARTICLE 23”)

The [Safeguarding National Security Ordinance](#), commonly known as [Article 23](#) for its reference to the Basic Law, was promulgated in March 2024. It introduces new offences, increases penalties for existing ones, and grants the government sweeping enforcement powers. Its broad definitions and extensive powers provide a legal framework that can easily be abused to silence dissenting voices. It poses serious risks to journalists, activists, and ordinary citizens engaging in activities deemed contrary to the state’s interpretation of national security. At the time this appendix was last updated, only [one arrest](#) had been conducted under this law for “offences in connection with seditious intention» in May 2024.

NEW OFFENCES UNDER ARTICLE 23

ESPIONAGE AND THEFT OF STATE SECRETS AND ESPIONAGE

Definition: the law defines “state secrets” broadly to include “major policy decisions,” “economic or social development,” and Hong Kong’s “external affairs.» Engaging in espionage includes colluding with an “external force” to publish false or misleading statements or disclose state secrets.

Maximum penalty: 20 years

SABOTAGE ENDANGERING NATIONAL SECURITY

Definition: this new offence targets individuals who allegedly endanger national security either intentionally or by «being reckless.» It includes criminalising digital actions, such as doxing police officers.

Maximum penalty: 20 years, life imprisonment if “colluding with an external force”

EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE ENDANGERING NATIONAL SECURITY

Definition: this offence criminalises acts of collaborating with «external forces» to influence local or national authorities. Examples include receiving financial support or direction from foreign governments, political organisations, or individuals.

Maximum penalty: 14 years

INSURRECTION

Definition: this offence targets acts such as assisting an armed force or its organisation in an armed conflict against China, citing the unrest during the 2019 pro-democracy protests as justification.

Maximum penalty: life imprisonment

TREASON AND MISPRISION OF TREASON

Definition: the law criminalises not only acts of treason, such as levying war against China, but also the failure to report treasonous acts.

Maximum penalty: life imprisonment

1.3. IMPACT ON JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA

| FACING VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION

Journalists in Hong Kong now tend to face a more hostile environment where violence and intimidation are commonly used by the government and law enforcement agencies to suppress critical reporting. Some journalists have also been [harassed or exposed by high-ranking officials](#) after publishing critical reports on the government regarding human rights or press freedom issues. Many journalists have been the victims of physical violence when covering protests in the city, in 2019 and 2020, despite wearing obvious “press identification. Under the NSL, reporting at the scene of protests or on sensitive topics can now be prosecuted as “advocating terrorism,” putting local and foreign journalists at risk of arrest or expulsion.

| SELF-CENSORSHIP AND EXILE

The severe penalties under the NSL, Article 23, and the Sedition Ordinance have forced many journalists to self-censor to avoid prosecution. Not knowing where the red lines are creates a chilling effect, deterring many from reporting on sensitive topics. The ongoing threat of legal action, harassment, or violence has also forced [hundreds of journalists to flee Hong Kong](#) to continue their work from abroad without the fear of immediate suppression.

| ADMINISTRATIVE PRESSURE ON FOREIGN MEDIA

Foreign media in Hong Kong face significant challenges under the current legal framework, which criminalises critical reporting. Journalists and outlets are at risk of arrest, expulsion, or visa denial for alleged “collusion with foreign forces.” These pressures, combined with tightened regulations and asset freezes, have led many foreign media outlets to [leave the territory](#), further limiting the diversity of news and independent journalism.

Case studies: three prominent media outlets targeted



Apple Daily: under the NSL, pro-democracy newspaper *Apple Daily*'s founder Jimmy Lai, along with several employees, were charged with “collusion with foreign forces” due to their publications and social media activities. The crackdown on *Apple Daily* led to the freezing of its assets, the arrest of top executives, and the newspaper's closure in 2021. This was a significant blow to press freedom in Hong Kong. The staff's trials are still ongoing and the defendants face lifetime in prison.



STANDNEWS

Stand News: in December 2021, independent newspaper *Stand News* was targeted under the revived Sedition Ordinance. Approximately 200 police officers raided its office, arresting senior editors Chung Pui-ken and Patrick Lam Shui-tung and freezing the organisation's assets. The charges included conspiracy to publish seditious material, citing interviews with individuals later charged with national security offences and investigative reporting on sensitive topics like Hong Kong's “Smart Prison” technology. This led to the outlet's closure, and in August 2024, Chung and Lam were [found guilty](#) of conspiracy to publish “seditious publications.”



Radio Free Asia: less than a week after Article 23 came into effect, US-funded broadcaster *Radio Free Asia (RFA)* announced it would [close its Hong Kong bureau](#) due to concerns about the safety of its staff under the new law. The appellation of RFA as a “foreign force” under Article 23 posed serious risks, making it untenable for them to continue operating.

2 | SAFETY TIPS FOR JOURNALISTS

2.1. TO PROTECT AGAINST SURVEILLANCE

TYPES OF SURVEILLANCE

- > **Digital surveillance:** authorities may monitor computer activity, data stored on devices, or communications over digital networks. Common tactics include phishing emails, hacking attempts that exploit outdated systems, or installing tracking apps that can log keystrokes or access cameras. Unencrypted communications are especially vulnerable to interception.
- > **Physical surveillance:** this involves being followed on foot or by vehicle, monitored via CCTV with facial recognition capabilities - of which thousands are planned to be installed in the territory, or subjected to random police checks. It can be overt to intimidate or covert to gather information without your knowledge, often carried out by individuals, state media, or intelligence agencies.

RECOGNISING SURVEILLANCE

- > **Be familiar with surroundings:** Journalists should stay alert to signs of both digital and physical surveillance by being familiar with their routines and environments.
- > **Observe around:** watch for repeated sightings of the same individuals or vehicles and suspicious behaviour such as people adjusting equipment (like earphones) or pretending to engage in unrelated activities.
- > **Behave unpredictably:** in crowded areas, tactics like making a “forced stop” or changing direction abruptly can help detect a tail.
- > **Monitor:** for digital surveillance, monitor your devices for unusual activity or tampering.

If you need help identifying signs of digital surveillance and strategies to protect against it, contact RSF’s Digital Security Lab [dsl\(a\)reporter-ohne-grenzen.de](mailto:dsl(a)reporter-ohne-grenzen.de).

RESPONDING TO SURVEILLANCE

- > **Change your route:** vary your routine and consider leading potential followers to neutral locations.
- > **Blend in:** use crowds or busy areas to lose physical surveillance.
- > **Strengthen digital security:** keep software updated, use encrypted communication tools, and consult experts to remove malicious software or apps.
- > **Stay connected:** maintain contact with colleagues or a trusted network at all times.
- > **Report incidents:** raise awareness and seek support by reporting suspected surveillance.

2.2. WHEN ENCOUNTERING LAW ENFORCEMENT

TYPES OF POLICE FORCES

- > **National Security Bureau:** the National Security Bureau's agents are granted arbitrary power by local Hong Kong laws and usually operate in plainclothes. They have extensive capabilities, including the ability to seize digital devices without a warrant. These officers act with minimal accountability and often target journalists and activists under the guise of national security enforcement. Some of them are reportedly embedded within regular police forces.
- > **Regular police:** while regular police are granted more restricted power, they still frequently conduct searches or detain journalists on insufficient grounds. In recent years, there have been reports of increased harassment of journalists, such as the confiscation of equipment and arbitrary arrests, particularly during protests or when reporting on politically sensitive issues.

SEARCH, ARREST AND DETENTION

- > **Random stop-and-search:** always carry personal and press identification, as you must produce ID upon request. The police have broad powers to search individuals with arbitrary reason. According to the Police General Order, a person subjected to stop-and-search, arrests, or seizure could request the police to provide an official reason or a reference order. Police officers, if asked, would usually be more vigilant about their use of power so you can politely ask for police identification, if the situation allows it. It is also recommended to cooperate to avoid escalating the situation. If police actions seem unwarranted, document the encounter by recording audio or taking notes if possible.
- > **Police warrants and searches:** if police present a warrant, ask to see it and, if possible, take a photo to share with a lawyer or trusted contact. Examine the search warrant carefully to make sure every information is correct. It is recommended to cooperate fully to avoid later legal complications. Remember that police officers can conduct warrantless search and seizure under the NSL, but they do not prescribe you to give up your devices' password, and you still hold the right to remain silent. Digital devices are often seized permanently, so consider using a clean burner phone and securely backing up sensitive data offsite.
- > **Being arrested or detained:** remain calm and exercise your right to remain silent. Do not answer questions without a lawyer present. You should memorise important contacts, as your phones will be confiscated. If arrested, you may experience delays in accessing legal representation, so avoid speaking to law enforcement without your lawyer. Under Article 23, a suspect can be detained up to 14 days without trial.
- > **Police home raids:** home raids typically occur early in the morning and can be aggressive. Be prepared for the police to seize digital devices and equipment, including those belonging to family members. Have a plan to notify a lawyer and a designated contact to manage communication and support.
- > **“Snitch hotlines” and community surveillance:** authorities have set up hotlines encouraging the public to report suspicious activity. These can be used to target journalists or those associated with them. Be cautious in your interactions and aware of potential informants in your community.

2.3. WHEN FACING LEGAL CHARGES

- > **Rights during arrest:** if arrested, remain calm and exercise your right to remain silent. Avoid speaking to law enforcement officers without legal representation. Confiscated devices and equipment will be treated as evidence and not returned, so be prepared to operate without them. Journalists should maintain a network of legal contacts and trusted colleagues who can provide immediate assistance.
- > **Handling digital devices and evidence:** if detained, police may seize digital devices, including phones, computers, and storage drives. Consider using encrypted communication apps and regularly back up your work to a secure location. Avoid carrying unnecessary data on your person that could be used against you. Carry a minimal, clean device to mitigate risk during encounters with authorities.
- > **Preparing for detention:** be ready for uncomfortable conditions in local police stations or detention centres. Dress in layers to adapt to temperatures, wear glasses with plastic frames, and avoid shoes with laces if there is a possibility of being transferred to a remand facility. Mental preparation is also crucial; stay calm, assert your rights, and follow procedures.
- > **Access to legal assistance:** if you do not have a lawyer, use the [free legal advice hotline 8200 8002](#). Freelancers should ensure they have a list of available lawyers from the police. Be aware that accessing legal support can be delayed, so preparation is essential.
- > **Steps for foreign journalists:** inform your Consulate if you face legal issues. Be noted that consular assistance has its own limitations. If you are a dual nationals (with Chinese citizenship), you may not receive the same consular support.

3 | DIGITAL SECURITY TIPS

3.1. SECURING YOUR DIGITAL DEVICES

- > **Use a burner device over a personal device:** this is especially recommended when covering sensitive trials or court proceedings. Burner devices provide an extra layer of security and reduce the risk of compromising sensitive information. Avoid connecting burner devices to government or public Wi-Fi networks. Make sure to regularly upload interview notes and other materials to secure cloud storage, then delete them from your devices to keep it as empty as possible.
- > **Secure your personal device:** if you must use a personal device, secure all communication with [end-to-end encryption](#) tools. Use applications like [Signal](#) for messaging, and install a [Virtual Private Network \(VPN\)](#) to secure your internet connection. Avoid using public or unsecured networks. For email encryption, consider using tools like [Thunderbird](#) with [Enigmail](#). Always protect your devices with [unique, strong passphrases](#).
- > **Always use a VPN:** even if the internet in Hong Kong is freer than in the mainland, installing a reliable [VPN](#) is crucial to bypass internet restrictions and maintain your privacy. Authorities may require [internet service providers \(ISP\)](#) to block websites deemed to “constitute the offence of endangering national security.” If coming from abroad, it is best to install a VPN before entering Hong Kong to ensure continuous secure access.
- > **Be ready to have your devices seized or monitored:** you should be prepared to have your devices inspected by the authorities: the courts in Hong Kong have ruled that National Security Law (NSL) warrants override the common law protection of journalistic materials. Therefore, you should always back up your data in other physical locations following the [3, 2, 1 Rule](#), and try to have your devices cleaned of sensitive information as much as possible. To protect against remote access or alteration, consider using a [Faraday bag or cage](#), which blocks signals to and from your devices.

3.2. MANAGING YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

- > **Posting critical content on social media:** journalists should be [cautious when posting on social media](#), as content can be used as evidence of “sedition” or “foreign influence.” Despite major platforms suspending data sharing with Hong Kong authorities, you should assume that all online content is monitored. Avoid posting opinions or criticisms that could be interpreted as anti-government or seditious.
- > **Publishing interviews and content:** when conducting interviews, particularly with pro-democracy figures, ensure interviewees are fully aware of the risks involved. Accommodate requests for voice alteration or other methods to ensure anonymity. Be mindful that interviews with prominent activists may be interpreted as attempts to tarnish Hong Kong’s image.
- > **Using pseudonyms and removing bylines:** consider using pseudonyms or removing bylines from articles that lie in the “grey zone” to protect sources and yourself. Remember that the NSL’s “long arm” can apply even to those writing from outside Hong Kong. This is particularly relevant for journalists with family in Hong Kong or mainland China, as relatives can be targeted by authorities as a form of retaliation.

3.3. PROTECTING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS WITH SOURCES ONLINE

- > **Use pseudonyms from the start:** journalists should use dedicated devices, dedicated phone numbers, and pseudonyms when they engage in long-term communication with their sources. This could reduce risk of surveillance and compromise from the journalists' end.
- > **Make sure the source understands all potential risks:** the source must be aware of all the risks they might be exposing themselves to. Train them on the basics of digital security and direct them to a lawyer if they face potential legal action.
- > **Encourage sources to use similar security protocols:** using encrypted communication platforms and VPNs is essential. Make sure their devices are not under surveillance by suggesting for instance that they get a new one, and make contact outside their homes and offices.
- > **Never trust workplace devices:** assume that all workplace devices used by your sources are compromised. Organisations, whether companies or government departments, may install software to monitor activity. Use private, secure devices for all communication.
- > **Use encrypted communication platforms:** always insist on using encrypted platforms like [Signal](#) or [ProtonMail](#), even if correspondence began on a non-encrypted platform. Avoid including key information in email addresses, subject lines, or other unencrypted metadata. Ensure that your source also uses encrypted communication.
- > **Verify identities on both ends:** have a reliable method to verify the source's identity. If switching communication platforms, use a code word or marker to confirm they are the same person. Before every conversation, verify the source is using the code word or a specific question.
- > **Provide secure ways to share documents:** ensure that the source has a secure platform for anonymous document sharing, such as [SecureDrop](#) or [GlobalLeaks](#). These platforms offer encrypted communication between journalists and sources. Be mindful of [metadata](#), which may reveal information about the document's origin.
- > **Verify information and consider bias:** verify the material based on its value to the public interest. Be critical of the source's biases and aware of any inaccuracies in the information provided.

4 | RSF RESOURCES

4.1. CAPACITY-BUILDING

- **Online training programme:** it aims to support media outlets and independent journalists in Hong Kong and mainland China by enhancing their capacity for physical and digital security and strengthening their professional and ethical knowledge. Topics also include legal knowledge, emerging technologies for journalism, and networking sessions to foster a collaborative community among journalists. Since its launch in late 2020, RSF's capacity-building programme has trained over 1,000 journalists, including more than 500 from Hong Kong.



To participate in this programme, contact [**training.rsf\(a\)proton.me**](mailto:training.rsf(a)proton.me)

- **New training course for exiled journalists:** in September 2024, RSF launched this free e-learning course in partnership with the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). It covers topics such as UK media law, public affairs, writing styles, and an introduction to the UK media industry, and aims to help journalists who had to flee Hong Kong and who have resettled in Britain.



If you wish to attend this course, contact [**fobrien\(a\)rsf.org**](mailto:fobrien(a)rsf.org)

4.2. RSF ASSISTANCE SERVICES

- **RSF Emergency Assistance Desk:** this custom service can provide financial and administrative support to professional and independent journalists facing reprisals due to their reporting. Depending on the case, RSF may provide: medical care for victims of violence connected with their reporting; legal fee assistance for wrongfully prosecuted journalists; support to help threatened journalists find a safe refuge if they decide to flee abroad; and aid for families of journalists impacted by reprisals. RSF also supports international protection or asylum applications. Some of the above-mentioned services may be provided in cooperation with other NGOs.



Contact RSF Assistance Desk: [**assistance2\(a\)rsf.org**](mailto:assistance2(a)rsf.org)

- **Emergency support to media:** RSF also assists local media outlets and press freedom organisations in restoring operational capacities during emergencies (e.g., ransacking, vandalism; and in building capacity by renewing materials, training staff, or supporting free speech activities. Requests related to vandalism or attacks are prioritised.



Media support requests: [**assistance\(a\)rsf.org**](mailto:assistance(a)rsf.org).



Organisational support requests: [**lchesseron\(a\)rsf.org**](mailto:lchesseron(a)rsf.org).



For newsroom security audits, contact [**training.rsf\(a\)proton.me**](mailto:training.rsf(a)proton.me).

- **RSF Digital Security Lab:** it provides assistance with digital security, such as investigating account takeovers, malware detection, and offering prevention recommendations. Services are free and available in your native language upon request.

➔ Contact RSF Digital Security Lab: [dsl\(a\)reporter-ohne-grenzen.de](mailto:dsl(a)reporter-ohne-grenzen.de)

4.3. RSF PUBLICATIONS

- **RSF Resource for Journalists' Safety:** it is a platform that provides journalists with essential and pragmatic information on physical safety, cybersecurity, legal aspects and mental health issues, empowering them to better handle online and offline security, protect sources, and uphold journalistic standards.
- **RSF's latest statements on Hong Kong:** RSF monitors Hong Kong's media environment and provides updates on press freedom in the territory. Visit the [Hong Kong fact page](#) for RSF's latest statements.
- **RSF's reports:** RSF has recently published two comprehensive reports on press freedom in mainland China and Hong Kong: "[The Great Leap Backwards of Journalism in China](#)" (2021), which reveals the extent of the Chinese regime's campaign of repression against the right to information; and "[China's Pursuit of a New World Media Order](#)" (2018), a report that delves into Beijing's strategy to control information beyond its borders.



5 | EXTERNAL RESOURCES

5.1. MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

In English

- [Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma](#)
- [Poynter Resources: Journalism and Trauma](#)
- [Positive Psychology: Acceptance & Commitment Therapy Worksheets](#)
- [Psychology Tools: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy](#)

In Mandarin

- [Life Origin HK: SERT Programmes](#) (生命原點 SERT 課程)
- [Psychological Trauma and Healing](#) (心理創傷與療癒)
- [Unfolding Hong Kong: Inner Family Systems Programme](#) (內在家庭系統課程)

5.2. INDEPENDENT MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS

English-language media

- [Agence France Presse \(AFP\) Fact Check](#): An international news agency with a bureau in Hong Kong, AFP provides comprehensive news coverage with a focus on factual accuracy and countering misinformation.
- [Hong Kong Baptist University \(HKBU\) Fact Check](#): HKBU offers independent fact-checking services, providing valuable resources to validate claims and counter false information circulating in Hong Kong.
- [Hong Kong Free Press \(HKFP\)](#): A non-profit news website providing breaking news, analysis, and features on Hong Kong, maintaining an independent editorial stance.

Chinese-language media

- [The Chaser](#): a UK-based media outlet funded by subscriptions, covering Hong Kong and global political news. It aims to deliver quality journalism without relying on advertising revenue.
- [The Collective HK](#): a platform in Cantonese created by experienced media professionals and aspiring young journalists. It showcases articles, in-depths reports, interviews and podcasts on current issues, arts, culture, and lifestyle in Hong Kong.
- [Commons](#): An independent media outlet based in Taiwan that reports on Hong Kong news, offering an external perspective on the region's socio-political developments.
- [Flow HK](#): a Taiwan-based media created by Hong Kong exiled journalists. It reflects on Hong Kong's current political climate under increasing mainland Chinese influence.
- [Green Bean](#): a video-based media created by Hong Kong journalists exiled in the UK and aimed at the Hong Kong diaspora, which reports on Hong Kong social, political and cultural issues.
- [Initium Media](#): a Singapore-based media that provides investigative reporting and in-depth analysis on Hong Kong, China, and other significant regional issues, positioning itself as a critical voice in the Chinese-language media landscape.

- [InmediaHK](#): A Cantonese-language independent news platform that promotes citizen journalism in Hong Kong. It offers grassroots perspectives and is committed to community issues often overlooked by mainstream media.
- [The Reporter](#): A non-profit outlet focused on investigative journalism and in-depth reporting on Hong Kong and Taiwan, providing comprehensive insights into socio-political issues affecting these regions.
- [The Witness](#): An independent media outlet focused on reporting court news, particularly related to protest cases. Its in-depth coverage provides insights into Hong Kong's judicial processes amidst political repression.
- [Circle 19 media recommendations](#): The group "Circle 19 for the Right to Information in China," composed of media practitioners and China specialists, provides a comprehensive list of independent media covering Hong Kong.

CHECKLIST: QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE REPORTING IN HONG KONG

Risk assessment

- Am I going to deal with sensitive issues? What are they?
- Will I meet people on the Hong Kong government's red list?
- Have I previously published pieces critical of China or the Hong Kong government?
- Am I holding a Hong Kong or Chinese passport that could increase my risk of detention?

How to stay in contact

- Have I established a procedure to stay in contact with my newsdesk and family?
- Do I have a lawyer's contact information memorised or physically accessible?
- For foreign correspondents, is it safe to travel alone or do I need a fixer or colleague?

Digital security

- Are my passwords complex, over 16 characters long, and using two-factor authentication whenever possible? (Consider using a password manager, such as [1Password](#) or [Bitwarden](#), to easily create and remember long, complex passwords.)
- Do I know about security-focused browsers and apps such as [Tor](#) or [Brave](#)?
- Are all sensitive communications on encrypted messaging platforms, such as [Signal](#) or [ProtonMail](#)? These encrypted forms of communication are only secure if both parties are using these secure applications.
- Am I confident that I know all contents that could put me or my sources at risk in my digital and storage devices or cloud drives?
- Have I backed up all sensitive content in safe places to ensure the devices I bring are clear of any sensitive material?
- Have I downloaded a VPN? (Two reliable options are [Mullvad](#) and [TunnelBear](#), for their protecting privacy and data collection policies)
- Have I secured data and phone services from my country of origin to be usable in Hong Kong in order to reduce risk of surveillance?
- Have I logged out of online accounts or bought new devices specifically for reporting?
- Have I used a [Faraday bag](#) to protect devices from being remotely altered or spied on? These bags block all signals from leaving and reaching devices inside them.
- Have I shut down all my electronic devices when landing in Hong Kong and crossing immigration check?



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