Dear readers and supporters,

Over the past year, the HKFP newsroom underwent a transformation – we expanded, professionalised, moving to a new, larger, private office. We doubled our freelance budget, hired three new staff, won a SOPA award, and produced almost 150 fully-fledged original features. Our team covered the first “patriots only” election, Covid-19, the national security law, and we exceeded our Funding Drive target, bringing 1,000 monthly Patrons online.

But 2021 was also a brutal year for the media industry in Hong Kong, with newsrooms raided, editors arrested and outlets disbanding in fear. In all, over 60 civil society groups disappeared last year, all whilst the authorities said press freedom was intact, deeming foreign criticism of journalist arrests a violation of international law.

Yet we are continuing our work. HKFP was founded seven years ago as a response to press freedom concerns, but – aside from our 2020 work visa denial – our newsroom has never been directly troubled by the authorities. This is likely owing to our impartial stance, transparent funding, and balanced coverage guided by an Ethics Code and Corrections Policy. Press freedom is guaranteed by the Basic Law, Bill of Rights and security law – it is in our name, and it is on this basis that we operate.

For these reasons, HKFP staff are united in our commitment to continue our on-the-ground award-winning reporting. Nonetheless, we cannot be naïve when it comes to ensuring staff safety and security, protecting sources, and trying our best to navigate unclear legal realities whilst test cases go through court. We are a Hong Kong news outlet, we love this city, and we have not entertained the idea of reporting on it from elsewhere. Besides, it is only by being on-the-ground that we can maintain nuance and accuracy though attending events, press conferences, court cases and speaking directly with Hongkongers.

But because of the current uncertainties facing journalists, we may make some precautionary changes this year upon legal advice. Above all though, we will always be guided by the journalistic tradition, our ethics code, and the day-to-day mission of ensuring accuracy and fairness. And despite recent events, we do not believe there are any Hong Kong stories we would have to avoid reporting.

I am happy to present our Annual Report, as we round-up our best coverage, achievements, and our accounts from the past 12 months. During this coming year, we look forward to covering the city’s leadership race, the 25th anniversary of the Handover, the pandemic and court cases. And with your support and readership, the HKFP team will continue to hold the line and press on!

Tom Grundy,  
Editor-In-Chief/Co-founder,  
Hong Kong Free Press.
Founded in 2015, **Hong Kong Free Press** is an impartial, non-profit, award-winning English-language newspaper. Run by journalists, backed by readers and completely independent, HKFP is governed by a public code of ethics.

# Our Mission & Impact

- **13.9 million** Pageviews in 2021
- **430+** Writers since 2015
- **97 million** Total pageviews since 2015
- **20,800** Stories published
- **HK$4.3m** Raised in 2021 [predicted]
- **1,080** Monthly HKFP donors

#2 on social media among all local English-language news outlets.

- **382,048** Twitter followers - 📈 up 34% in 2021.
- **346,358** Facebook followers - 📈 up 29% in 2021.
- **23,173** YouTube subscribers - 📈 up 15% in 2021.
- **11,463** newsletter subscribers - 📈 up 20% in 2021.
- **357,754** Instagram fans - 📈 up 62% in 2021.
- **2,581** Telegram followers - 📉 down 7.5% in 2021.
- **1,690** LinkedIn fans - 📈 up 18% in 2021.

**Other 2021 statistics:**
- 85% of HKFP readers use English as a first language.
- 26% are aged between 25-34; 20% are aged 18-24.
- 38% are Hong Kong-based, 18% are US-based.

*Male 65%  Female 35%*

- **65%** Mobile
- **24.4%** Desktop
- **2.5%** Tablet

### 2016-2021 Income & Spending

### 2016-2021 Age Distribution

### 2016-2021 Gender Distribution
**Original features:** Our features in 2021 documented Hong Kong’s transformation under the shadow of the Beijing-enacted security law. We delved into how counsellors and psychologists grappled with the fear of creeping self-censorship in their practice, how booksellers were reported to the national security police during the Hong Kong Book Fair for selling politically sensitive titles, and how one of the city’s last remaining independent bookstores shuttered, citing the political environment.

We also looked at how the city’s filmmakers, publishers and street artists navigated the shifting red lines, and how some Hongkongers are inking messages resistance onto their own skin.

The city’s media landscape forever changed last year with the closure of pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily. HKFP was at its newsrooms and printing presses on its last day of operations. We also explored how the city’s Beijing-backed press are gaining more influence.

The year also saw the mass resignations of pro-democracy district councillors after new oath requirements were introduced. We documented the final days of one local councillor in office and explored how the exodus of district representatives also left community newspapers struggling.

As protest-related and national security cases piled up in the city’s courts, we spoke with lawyers compiling a protest case database to preserve the city’s rule of law, the activists writing letters to detained protesters, and the international lawyers who launched an advice website to inform Hongkongers of their legal rights. We also spoke with a refugee from Vietnam who was stuck behind bars for almost three decades after being convicted of murder as a teenager, and eventually decided to abandon his fight against deportation.

Amid the changes of 2021, a wave of Hongkongers left for the UK. HKFP was at the airport when long queues formed as people bid farewell to loved ones. In the UK, we reported on the people helping newly-arrived Hongkongers settle in, as well the pro-China groups pressuring them.

Hong Kong also saw the implementation of a sweeping overhaul of the city’s electoral system. HKFP gave extensive coverage on the day of the city’s first “patriots-only” legislative election - candidates made urgent appeal to voters while Hong Kong saw the lowest turnout rate ever.

Following a 48-hour purge of Tiananmen Massacre monuments from university campuses over Christmas, we also spoke with students, academics, as well as artists behind the statues about what the removals meant for Hong Kong’s efforts to commemorate those who died in the military crackdown of student-led demonstrations over 32 years ago.
Our team visited local businesses at risk of forced closure after government-led redevelopments in Fo Tan and Kwun Tong. Elsewhere, we spoke with the owners of Hong Kong's remaining iconic Dai Pai Dongs facing eviction from their community, and the elderly villager fighting to save his home from developers in the New Territories. We also reported on the opening of the newly-revamped historic Central Market and the long-awaited M+ museum.

Covid-19 restrictions continued to disrupt Hongkongers’ daily lives last year. We examined government statistics to question whether the city's severe quarantine measures were really necessary, how even vaccinated people were forced into quarantine centres, how foreign domestic workers faced more challenging working conditions during the pandemic, and the rise in discrimination against South-East Asians. We also delved into the trend of “vaccine selfies,” how pandemic-related pressure on airlines led some pilots to accuse companies of age discrimination, and the plight of those left stranded in the UK during Hong Kong’s months-long flight suspensions.

Our pandemic coverage also tackled how the coronavirus made life even more difficult in the city's sub-divided flats, the refugees excluded from the city's vaccination programme, how local mask manufacturers survived in an inundated market, and how local businesses responded to the government-mandated tracing app.

Beyond politics, we delved into the world of polyamory to explore how some Hongkongers navigate romantic ties beyond traditional partnerships, explored the little-known history of siu mai, met the bus fanatics turning Hong Kong bus seats into office chairs, and published a probe into one of the city's oldest sporting associations. We also looked at how a Muslim headscarf sparked a discrimination row at a school and how volunteers helped to restore Hong Kong's Hindu cemetery.

2021 was also a big year for Hong Kong sports. We spoke to local athletes during the Tokyo games to learn about daily life at the Olympic village, as well as to the city's Paralympians about their dreams of sporting glory.

We continued to cover environmental and animal stories last year, including the threat to rare porpoises posed by a development off Lantau, and the task force fighting against dog poisonings.

Last year, we produced 144 fully-fledged features, over 35 interviews, 256 opinion pieces and 276 stories on the 'patriots only' elections. We have also published over 1,000 stories on the national security law, and over 1,000 on Covid-19. HKFP Venture also relaunched with over a dozen guides to outdoor adventures.
We expanded our coverage from across the Taiwan Strait, profiling the people fighting for dual citizenship, Hong Kong artists in self-exile, the Hongkongers seeking to contribute to Taiwanese society, the launch of an ambitious new English-language news platform, and the Hongkongers who have joined the local movement to revive the use of Taiwanese in daily life. We also spoke with the Taiwanese maths teacher posting educational videos on Pornhub, cautiously asking: why?

Over the border in mainland China, we reported on a Hongkonger with a history of mental illness who was executed for drug trafficking despite pleas from family and rights groups. And further afield, we reported on the Hongkongers fighting for democracy in Myanmar after the military coup.

**Explanatory Reporting:** HKFP continued its monthly explainer series on how the city has changed under the Beijing-enacted security law, and we continued our “shifting narratives” series on how the city’s leaders’ attitude towards the Tiananmen Massacre and the traditional mass pro-democracy marches on July 1 evolved over recent years.

We wrote explainers on major political developments, including how Beijing overhauled the city’s electoral system, how authorities moved to erase the memory of Tiananmen, and how the largest teachers’ union was forced to dissolve. We also explained how Hongkongers still found ways to resist despite the national security clampdown.

HKFP also examined trends in leader Carrie Lam’s past policy addresses after she delivered the last one of her current term, analysing what it all meant for the city’s future.

We broke down how Beijing’s overhaul of the city’s electoral process ensured that almost every candidate for the new Election Committee was guaranteed a seat. We looked at where Beijing’s national security crackdown has left the city’s pro-democracy camp, and who the approved candidates were in the city’s first legislative poll following the sweeping overhaul.

Our team also wrote practical guides informing our readers how to sign up for the government’s electronic stimulus vouchers, how to enter lucky draws for the fully vaccinated, how to get vaccinated against Covid-19, and how to write letters to prisoners.

**Interviews:** Last year, we touched in again with Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei about what he saw as the future of art in the city. We also spoke with Democratic Party leader Lo Kin-hei about the party’s future in the shifting political climate, and political scientist Ma Ngok on what Beijing’s electoral overhaul means for democracy in Hong Kong.

At the other end of the political spectrum, we spoke to the founder of the new pro-Beijing Bauhinia Party Charles Wong, and pro-establishment lawmaker Michael Tien on the future of Hong Kong politics. We also sat down with pro-Beijing figure Adrian Ho about running one of the city’s largest pro-establishment online communities.
We spoke with a number of activists before they were put behind bars, including democrat and labour activist Raphael Wong ahead of his sentencing for an unauthorised assembly, and student activist Wong Yat-chin before he was arrested and denied bail under the security law.

We also spoke to other dissidents, including former student leader Owen Au about what he saw as the future of protest in the city and investigative journalist Bao Choy after her conviction over accessing public records for a documentary on alleged police collusion with triads.

We interviewed dissidents elsewhere in the region, including Singaporean activist Jolovan Wham about his arrest after a one-man protest. And during the Tokyo Olympics, we were the first newspaper to catch up with Hong Kong's only gold medal winner, fencer Edgar Cheung, about how he kept calm under pressure.

**Arts:** We also sat down with the city's creatives, including the director of the protest documentary “Revolution of our Times” Kiwi Chow about why he is staying put in the city, musician Cehryl on the impact of Covid on live music, artist Sampson Wong on finding beauty in Hong Kong, and Yim Chiu-tong, the Plumber King, whose advertisements became part of a street art exhibition.

In Taiwan, our reporter interviewed the island's only weed lawyer, a politician defending democracy on Matsu island 17 km from mainland China, and dissident Wu'er Kaixi ahead of the 32nd anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre. And we also spoke with Taipei-based singer Kimberley Chen about shrugging off China's censors.

**Authors:** We spoke with journalist and author Joanna Chiu about her new book detailing China's web of influence abroad and Western complicity in China's rise, and veteran journalist Stephen Vines about his last book on Hong Kong before he fled back to the UK.

**‘Patriots poll:** Ahead of the city’s first “patriots-only” legislative race, we spoke to three candidates from across the political spectrum including self-proclaimed non-pro-establishment Adrian Lau, Vincent Diu, an electrician who declared as independent, and Nixie Lam, who was seen by her pro-establishment supporters as their international spokesperson. After the race, we also sat down with Tik Chi-yuen, the only lawmaker-elect who claimed to be non-pro-establishment.

**Scoops:** We broke the story of how mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Wikipedia users were fighting over the narrative of the Hong Kong protests on the site, and the ensuing safety concerns for Hong Kong users. As a result of our report on the Wikipedia wars, the site banned seven mainland Chinese users for “infiltration and exploitation.”

We found Hong Kong public libraries had removed almost a fifth of titles relating to the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre from their shelves since 2009, and that the Bar Association had launched probes into legal icons Martin Lee and Margaret Ng after their convictions for unauthorised assembly.

We also broke the story of how city authorities spent millions of taxpayer dollars to lobby Washington against the passing of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act.
2021 Achievements

NewsStream project progress: In 2019, HKFP won a US$78,400 (HK$615,440) Google News Initiative grant to create an open-source funding platform for small newsrooms focused on nurturing reader membership. The funds went to third-party developers to help create NewsStream - a fundraising micro-site to reduce barriers and costs for independent news start-ups. Our new support.hongkongfp.com site finally launched in 2021, allowing readers to begin, pause and cancel memberships.

Redesign & promotion: The launch also included a design refresh across social media and new HKFP Patron promotions by szs.io.

2021 Funding Drive: With an accompanying video, HKFP beat its target of 1,000 monthly Patrons during our #PressingOn Funding Drive.

TapNGo: As part of our drive to make it as easy as possible to contribute, we brought TapNGo online, as a new payment method.

2021 expansion: HKFP hired three new staff at the end of 2021 and moved to a larger, private office at The Hive K-Town.

Prizes: HKFP won an honorable mention in the 2021 prestigious SOPA awards for Excellence in Opinion Writing: "Hong Kong's protest movement in perspective" by Steve Vines bagged the prize. Meanwhile, our newsroom was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Fundraising: We raised over HK$100,000 selling books by columnist Steve Vines and ethical, organic #PressFreedom t-shirts.

Football team: The Fall River Marksmen Football Club promoted HKFP with their new kit design - they raised HK$10,000 for our newsroom selling the kits online.
HKFP Placement & Ethics

NewsGuard

An Ethics Code, fact-checking procedures and a corrections policy govern HKFP’s impartial, 100% independent reporting. We scored full marks in NewsGuard’s credibility assessment, meeting all 9 criteria.

- No false content.
- Avoids deceptive headlines.
- Clearly labels advertising.
- Differentiates news & opinion.
- Discloses ownership & financing.
- Regularly corrects or clarifies errors.
- Gathers/presents information responsibly.
- Provides the names, bios, contacts of writers.
- Reveals who’s in charge; declares any conflicts.

Wide impact: HKFP’s reporting was cited by numerous int’l outlets.

BBC Daily Mail  Business Insider  BuzzFeed  STRAITs TIMES
Independent  Bloomberg  Reuters  Al Jazeera  VICE  The Guardian  Vox

No paywall: We will always ensure our news remains accessible & free of charge.

HKFP Apps: Social media & distribution:

RSS  facebook  Telegram  Flipboard
LinkedIn  YouTube  Apple News  Twitter  Instagram

Syndication:

LexisNexis  PSIFON  msm  nordal  Dow Jones  Factiva

HKFP Placement & Impact

Hong Kong’s 2022 media landscape:

Independent English-language news:

HKFP

English-language traditional news (digital/print):

ATHK  CHINA DAILY  eJinsight

The Standard  South China Morning Post

Outlets closed in 2021-22:

Chinese-language news (digital):

FactWire  Bastille Post  TMHK

Chinese-language traditional news (print):

Metro  hket  Epoch Times

东网  明报  成報  大紀元時報

文匯報  大公報  星島日報

立場報報  852郵報  852日報
Hong Kong Free Press is structured as a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, with no shareholders. HKFP does not answer to any business tycoon, mainland Chinese conglomerate or media mogul. We are run by journalists, and are answerable only to ourselves and our readers.

**Editor-in-Chief Tom Grundy** is a British multimedia journalist based in Hong Kong for 15 years. He has a BA in Communications & New Media from Leeds University and an MA in Journalism from the University of Hong Kong. He has contributed to BBC World TV/radio, Quartz, Al-Jazeera, DW-TV and others.

**Associate Editor Mercedes Hutton** is a British journalist who has lived in Hong Kong since 2012. She has a BA in English and Film from the University of Sussex and is interested in social and environmental issues. She previously worked at the South China Morning Post and has written for the BBC.

**Reporter Kelly Ho** has an interest in local politics, education and sports. She formerly worked at South China Morning Post Young Post, where she specialised in reporting on issues related to Hong Kong youth. She has a bachelor’s degree in Journalism from the University of Hong Kong, with a second major in Politics and Public Administration.

**Reporter Candice Chau** previously worked as a researcher at a local think tank. She has a BSocSc in Politics and International Relations from the University of Manchester and an MSc in International Political Economy from London School of Economics.

**Reporter Selina Cheng** previously worked with HK01, Quartz and AFP Beijing. She also covered the Umbrella Movement for AP and reported for a newspaper in France. Selina has studied investigative reporting at the Columbia Journalism School.

**Reporter Hillary Leung** has an interest in social issues and politics. Previously, she reported on Asia broadly - including on Hong Kong’s 2019 protests - for TIME Magazine and covered local news at Coconuts Hong Kong.

**Reporter Peter Lee** was previously a freelance journalist at Initium, covering political and court news. He holds a Global Communication bachelor degree from CUHK.

**Guest Editor Tim Hamlett** has been HKFP’s weekly guest editor since 2015 and writes a weekly column. He came to Hong Kong in 1980 to work for the Hong Kong Standard and has contributed to, or worked for, most of Hong Kong’s English-language media outlets.

**Hong Kong Free Press** would be impossible without the support and assistance of our countless tech, editorial, accounting, freelance staff and volunteers, and The Hive.
As Hong Kong’s most transparent news outlet, and as a non-profit company, HKFP is externally audited annually. Our finalised, audited income during 2020, and our predicted income for 2021:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reader contributors</td>
<td>HK$4,164,565</td>
<td>HK$6,357,972**</td>
<td>HK$6,056,859**</td>
<td>HK$2,463,408</td>
<td>HK$1,769,760</td>
<td>HK$1,063,125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ads &amp; content sales</td>
<td>HK$198,983</td>
<td>HK$110,247</td>
<td>HK$271,066</td>
<td>HK$136,084</td>
<td>HK$328,759</td>
<td>HK$92,276</td>
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<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
<td>HK$263,361</td>
<td>HK$24,390</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
<td>HK$8,352</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank interest</td>
<td>HK$25</td>
<td>HK$10</td>
<td>HK$226</td>
<td>HK$21</td>
<td>HK$1</td>
<td>HK$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov’t Covid subsidy</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
<td>HK$216,000</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>HK$4,340,489†</td>
<td>HK$6,697,010</td>
<td>HK$6,591,512</td>
<td>HK$2,623,903</td>
<td>HK$2,098,520</td>
<td>HK$1,163,765</td>
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*Predicted, not yet audited. **Includes total of HK$610,431 for Google NewsStream grant (assigned to 3rd party developers; cannot be spent on HKFP costs). †HK$23,084 subtracted as insurance refunds.

Our current revenue streams:

Reader contributions: includes one-off & monthly Patron contributions by cheque/transfer, cash, PayPal & card, as well as merch sales profit & shopping referral links.

Ads & content sales: includes ad income from display ads; Apple News & Facebook ads, Google/YouTube ads, directly purchased rate card ads & content sales [from media outlets, institutions and syndication partners LexisNexis, Dow Jones Factiva & Nordot.]

Direct support...the best way of ensuring our press freedom & independence.

- All donations
- Ad/content sales

Surplus carried forward:

- 2015 total surplus: HK$91,654
- 2016 total deficit: -HK$45,569
- 2017 total surplus: HK$445,796
- 2018 total surplus: HK$574,042
- 2019 total surplus: HK$3,698,358
- 2020 confirmed surplus: HK$3,245,356
- 2021 predicted surplus: HK$522,223

- **Surplus recycled**: As a non-profit, with no shareholders or investors, HKFP’s surplus was recycled back into the company for use in 2021. As of 2021, HKFP is retaining a HK$1.5m legal defence fund in light of new threats to press freedom.

- **Efficiency**: HKFP is run as efficiently and prudently as possible, in order to maximise the impact of our donors’ generosity. We make savings by partnering with other media outlets, using free software and making full use of teamwork and automation to save on costs.

- **Staffing**: During 2020, we employed 5-6 full-time staff members and expanded our pool of freelancers. We spent 72% of our income on paying our hard-working staff and freelancers.

Advertising partners since 2015:
HKFP Patrons in 2021: HKFP relies on a membership model. Small amounts of income from a large pool of Patrons helps support our team, sustain our operations with more security, and guarantee our independence. Our monthly income as of January 2022:

- The number of HKFP Patrons rose by 20.4% in 2021, whilst income from Patrons rose almost 16% to HK$204,063. Most Patrons are from Hong Kong, though we also have backers in the US, UK, Australia and China.
- In addition to the above, we receive at least HK$10,000 per month from offline donors who contribute via cheque, transfer/FPS or by coin donation via CoinDragon.
- Patrons are given priority and/or free entry to HKFP events, merch and our Annual Report.

Finalised expenditure for our latest audited year, 2020, & our predicted 2021 spending:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time staff payroll</td>
<td>HK$1,952,852</td>
<td>HK$1.599m</td>
<td>HK$1.606m</td>
<td>HK$1.499m</td>
<td>HK$1.340m</td>
<td>HK$1.035m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mandatory Provident Fund (pensions)</td>
<td>HK$76,442</td>
<td>HK$72,221</td>
<td>HK$68,123</td>
<td>HK$69,234</td>
<td>HK$66,180</td>
<td>HK$50,942</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web &amp; software, newswire, commission</td>
<td>HK$140,992</td>
<td>HK$132,269</td>
<td>HK$80,038</td>
<td>HK$129,543</td>
<td>HK$58,693</td>
<td>HK$33,083</td>
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<td>Office, sundry, recruitment/training, telecom</td>
<td>HK$198,116</td>
<td>HK$109,289</td>
<td>HK$164,256</td>
<td>HK$110,414</td>
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<td>Meals/drinks for volunteers/staff/sources</td>
<td>HK$18,554</td>
<td>HK$18,324</td>
<td>HK$29,686</td>
<td>HK$14,028</td>
<td>HK$17,106</td>
<td>HK$25,531</td>
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<td>Legal, professional, registration, audit</td>
<td>HK$35,422</td>
<td>HK$96,505</td>
<td>HK$12,340</td>
<td>HK$7,385</td>
<td>HK$45,231</td>
<td>HK$10,845</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; insurance</td>
<td>HK$4,069</td>
<td>HK$37,391</td>
<td>HK$29,686</td>
<td>HK$14,028</td>
<td>HK$17,106</td>
<td>HK$25,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery, merch, postage, printing</td>
<td>HK$201,534</td>
<td>HK$208,544</td>
<td>HK$42,311</td>
<td>HK$11,827</td>
<td>HK$686</td>
<td>HK$17,124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank charges, penalties &amp; exchange losses</td>
<td>HK$3,335</td>
<td>HK$13,752</td>
<td>HK$4,240</td>
<td>HK$1,705</td>
<td>HK$1,170</td>
<td>HK$2,218</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freelancer payments &amp; gear</td>
<td>HK$934,621</td>
<td>HK$595,693</td>
<td>HK$289,387</td>
<td>HK$64,400</td>
<td>HK$34,090</td>
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<td>Tax</td>
<td>HK$52,304</td>
<td>HK$408,496</td>
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<td>Advertising</td>
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<td>HK$36,597</td>
<td>HK$34,371</td>
<td>HK$10,261</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership, research/polls, repairs &amp; other</td>
<td>HK$25,070</td>
<td>HK$118,800</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>HK$3.79m*</td>
<td>HK$3.04m*</td>
<td>HK$2.89m*</td>
<td>HK$2.04m*</td>
<td>HK$1.65m*</td>
<td>HK$1.20m*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Predicted, not yet audited. **As part of its 2019 & 2020 expenditure, HKFP contributed 30% of the cost of its NewsStream Google project, totalling HK$130,204. †Excludes tax.
January

• The Hong Kong government backtracked a decision to move Covid-19 press briefings online, following criticism from a Hong Kong journalism watchdog.
• Police demanded pro-democracy tabloid Apple Daily hand over the information on journalists who searched for public vehicle licence plate records.
• Police visited the newsrooms of Apple Daily, InMedia and StandNews with search warrants demanding documents relating to the primary election for LegCo in July 2020.
• The head of public broadcaster RTHK, Leung Ka-wing, advised staff not to interview the 55 democrats arrested under the national security law.
• Three people convicted of rioting and assaulting a mainland journalist at the airport during anti-government protests in 2019 were jailed for up to 5 1/2 years.
• Hong Kong journalist Bao Choy pleaded not guilty to making false statements after she obtained vehicle registration information for a film about the 2019 Yuen Long mob attacks.
• The head of the city’s largest police union slammed RTHK for allegedly biased reporting of a weekend lockdown to combat Covid-19.
• The staff union at RTHK staged a silent protest to support fellow journalist Nabela Qoser, who was known for her vigorous questioning of officials, after she was told to accept a new short-term contract or face dismissal.
• The Communications Authority ruled that three episodes of RTHK’s satirical programme Headliner insulted and denigrated the police force.
• Three parliamentarians from the Norwegian Liberal Party nominated Hong Kong Free Press for a Nobel Peace Prize.

February

• RTHK suspended BBC World News after a ban in China over its Xinjiang reporting.
• Security officers at the West Kowloon Magistrates’ Courts barred at least two reporters from attending a trial hearing, to protect the identity of a police officer who had provided a witness statement anonymously.
• The High Court refused to grant bail to media mogul Jimmy Lai again over national security law charges.
• Director of Broadcasting Leung Ka-wing resigned from his post at RTHK six months before the end of his term.
• A government report found “deficiencies” in the editorial management of RTHK.
• Funding for RTHK was cut by 4.6 per cent in the 2021-22 budget.

March

• A top Beijing official said the principle of “patriots governing Hong Kong” extends to the judiciary, the education sector and the media.
• A leading civil servant with no broadcasting experience took over as head of RTHK, where three senior employees quit in the space of two weeks.
• Hong Kong’s national security police arrested a former top executive of Next Digital, the publisher of Apple Daily, over alleged fraud.
• RTHK made a last-minute decision to cancel a programme featuring a panel discussion of Beijing’s plans for a drastic election overhaul.
• The Ombudsman said that it would investigate the Immigration Department for refusing a work visa to Hong Kong Free Press for its incoming editor in 2020.
• Bao Choy went on trial for allegedly violating the Road Traffic Ordinance in seeking to obtain vehicle licence plate information for a documentary.
• RTHK axed another episode of a current affairs programme at short notice, the ninth such cancellation since the new Director of Broadcasting Patrick Li took office.
• The government announced plans to restrict public and media access to currently available information on company directors listed in the Companies’ Registry.
• RTHK sought to withdraw its entries from journalism awards.

April

• RTHK said that the government has the power to surcharge its employees for the cost of axed programmes.
• Amnesty International Hong Kong said the state of human rights and freedoms in Hong Kong had deteriorated under the national security law in 2020.
• The public perception of the independence and credibility of Hong Kong’s news media dropped to a record low, according to an opinion poll.
• Chief Executive Carrie Lam said the government is the “biggest victim of fake news,” after pledging to submit a bill to tackle “doxxing” within the current legislative term.
• RTHK dropped veteran journalist Steve Vines as a regular current affairs commentator on its Morning Brew programme after more than ten years.
• The Epoch Times’s printing presses were ransacked by a gang of men wielding sledgehammers.
Hong Kong journalist Yvonne Tong, who famously posed a “grave threat” to journalists in Bao Choy Assets belonging to media tycoon Jimmy Lai The Foreign Correspondents’ Club (FCC) Hundreds of police officers The Hong Kong Press Freedom Index Reporters without Borders Police chief Chris Tang said media outlets that endanger the security of Hong Kong by publishing “fake news” will be investigated. State-owned newspaper Ta Kung Pao in a full-page cover story accused Apple Daily and other pro-democracy “yellow media” of “constantly creating fake news.” Reporters without Borders warned that the national security law posed a “grave threat” to the city’s journalists as Hong Kong remained 80th out of 180 regions in the 2021 world press freedom index. RTHK rejected a media award for a TV documentary about the police handling of the Yuen Long mob attack in 2019. The government criticised a Reporters Without Borders report which warned that the national security law poses a “grave threat” to journalists in the city. Bao Choy was found guilty and fined HK$6,000 for knowingly making false statements to obtain vehicle ownership records for an RTHK programme. Police confirmed that a journalist from Ta Kung Pao was arrested in February for making false statements to obtain public vehicle records. The Foreign Correspondents’ Club (FCC) urged the police chief to clarify his recent comments about “foreign forces” attempting to stir hatred and conflict in the city using disinformation. Beijing accused the FCC of being an external force interfering with China’s internal affairs and undermining the city’s rule of law. A fifth senior staffer resigned from RTHK. RTHK signed up Chief Executive Carrie Lam to host her own daily show on Beijing’s electoral overhaul for the city. RTHK axed another episode of a TV documentary series about online media financed by public donations.

May
- RTHK began removing shows from its YouTube channel and Facebook page a year after they air. It deleted its archive of content over a year old. The Hong Kong Press Freedom Index hit a record low where close to 99 per cent of respondents said the national security law harmed the city’s free press. RTHK refused to extend an employment contract for journalist Nabela Qoser following an extended probation period. Bao Choy filed an appeal against a magistrate’s decision to convict her after she accessed public records to investigate police behaviour.
- An executive producer who led Hong Kong’s longest running TV documentary programme Hong Kong Connection resigned from RTHK.
- Epoch Times reporter Leung Zhen was attacked by a man wielding a baseball bat from a passing vehicle. Assets belonging to media tycoon Jimmy Lai were frozen by the authorities.
- Trading in shares of Next Digital, the parent company of Apple Daily, were suspended at the company’s request. Security chief John Lee denied that the freezing of the assets of media tycoon Jimmy Lai represented a crackdown on press freedom.
- RTHK denied replacing an episode of Hong Kong Connection about the proposed shake-up of the city’s electoral system following local media reports that it had been axed.
- RTHK axed a story about the annual Tiananmen Massacre anniversary long-distance run from its news show “LegCo review”.

June
- RTHK axed another current affairs programme, “Letter to Hong Kong”.
- It is announced that media tycoon Jimmy Lai is to stand trial on national security charges in the High Court.
- A Hong Kong court ruled that a local female reporter was guilty of resisting a police officer in the execution of their duties while covering a protest in Mong Kok in 2020. The Department of Justice dropped a charge of improperly accessing public records against a reporter for Beijing-owned newspaper Ta Kung Pao.
- Hundreds of police officers raided Apple Daily and arrested five senior executives on suspicion of violating the national security law. Security chief John Lee accused Apple Daily of using journalism as a tool to endanger national security.
- Two senior executives from Apple Daily were charged under the national security law.
- RTHK fired pro-democracy radio host Tsang Chi-ho.
- Next Digital CEO Cheung Kim-hung and Apple Daily Editor-in-Chief Ryan Law facing national security charges were denied bail. Apple Daily warned it was unable to pay staff and was at imminent risk of closure after the government froze company assets.
Apple Daily's finance section, its English edition, police arrested an Apple Daily editorial writer under the national security law. Apple Daily decided to halt all operations in the city and published its last edition of the newspaper on June 24. Two Apple Daily executives arrested on suspicion of endangering national security sought a court order for Hong Kong police to return journalistic and privileged legal material seized during their arrest and in a raid on the newspaper. Hong Kong national security police arrested a former editorial writer for Apple Daily at the airport as he was about to fly to Britain. Independent digital outlet Stand News announced it will remove opinion articles and columns it published before May and stop accepting donations in order to reduce risks under the national security law. Human Rights Watch released a report saying that basic rights and freedoms in Hong Kong were being "erased" under the security law. RTHK sacked veteran journalist Allan Au from hosting a phone-in radio programme. Veteran Hong Kong journalist and commentator Steve Vines announced his departure from RTHK.

July

RTHK axed the current affairs programme The Pulse, hosted by veteran journalist Steve Vines. NGO Reporters Without Borders released a report accusing Chief Executive Carrie Lam of trampling on the city's press freedom. Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) published its annual report saying that the city's press freedom was "in tatters." Local media reported that a senior executive at Now News resigned citing "turbulent times" for Hong Kong's media. Staff at RTHK were ordered to refer to Taiwan as part of China. A sexual assault complaint against a Hong Kong police officer who allegedly touched the breast of a female journalist was dropped after the force failed to identify the officer. Three former Apple Daily journalists had their bail revoked by national security police. Secretary for Home Affairs Caspar Tsui told lawmakers that the government was mulling plans to implement a "fake news" law. Four former Apple Daily journalists charged under the national security law were denied bail in court. Hong Kong national security police confiscated the travel documents of a reporter who filmed a knife attack against an officer. Two former editors of Apple Daily charged under the national security law withdrew their bail review applications.

The Hong Kong government appointed a special fraud investigator to scrutinise Apple Daily's parent company Next Digital.

August

Digital Hong Kong news outlet Initium became the first media organisation to quit the city following the implementation of the national security law, as the outlet moved to Singapore. HKFP columnist and ex-RTHK broadcaster Steve Vines left Hong Kong for the UK citing the security law crackdown. RTHK deleted all of its English-language Twitter archive and prevented readers from "replying" to its tweets citing resource constraints. Chief Executive Carrie Lam announced that RTHK will partner with China Media Group – the holding group for CCTV and China National Radio – to air more programmes. Beijing-controlled Wen Wei Po called for the HKJA to be regulated.

September

All remaining directors of Next Digital resigned and called for the company's liquidation, citing a "climate of fear" created by the national security law. RTHK said it is committed to promoting public debate following reports that it axed another current affairs programme, the 41-year-old City Forum. HKJA hit back at criticism from the Secretary for Security, who accused it of infiltrating campuses to "rope in" student journalists as members. The head of the HKJA said that the security chief's suggestion that the group could make public its members' information may be in violation of the Privacy Ordinance. A Hong Kong cartoonist apologised to police for a satirical comic strip which linked the Junior Police Call organisation to a controversy over the HKJA. RTHK refused to comment on the whereabouts of its English-language radio presenter Hugh Chiverton after he disappeared from the airwaves without explanation. The Financial Secretary asked a court to wind up Next Digital Limited in the "public interest." RTHK told its staff to avoid contact with foreign governments or political organisations under new editorial guidelines, as it vowed to prevent acts that endanger national security.
October

- Two Hong Kong news organisations were barred from attending a reception organised by the local media sector in celebration of the upcoming Chinese National Day.
- RTHK refused to say why it deleted a story from its website about proposals for a new law criminalising insults against public officers.
- HKJA apologised for the alleged theft of its members’ personal information, after a Beijing-backed newspaper published shredded documents taken from the office trash.
- Police rejected 26 out of 27 complaints submitted by the HKJA as “not pursuable.”
- The Independent Police Complaints Council accused the HKJA of airing misinformation over misconduct investigations.
- Two registries announced new rules tightening public access to government records to step up the protection of personal data privacy.
- Hong Kong democrat Alan Leong was dropped by Ming Pao as a writer for the newspaper’s legal column, ending an 18-year term.

November

- The Consumer Council cancelled an annual consumer reporting awards contest co-organised with the HKJA.
- An anonymous survey conducted by the FCC found that close to half of the respondents considered leaving Hong Kong.
- The Chinese Foreign Ministry expressed “strong disapproval” of the member survey conducted by the FCC.
- Digital media outlet DB Channel announced plans to shut down operations in Hong Kong after the channel’s co-founder Frankie Fung was denied bail pending trial under the national security law.
- The police closed an investigation into a baseball bat attack on an Epoch Times reporter, with no one facing charges.
- Stand News was nominated for the Reporters Without Borders 2021 Press Freedom Prize for Independence.
- The Economist said that the Hong Kong authorities refused to renew a work visa for their correspondent Sue-Lin Wong, without providing an explanation.
- Chief Executive Carrie Lam vowed to “proactively plug loopholes” in the city’s internet regulation to ensure “fake news” circulating online does not “harm society.”
- The High Court partially upheld a decision made by the Communication Authority against RTHK, which stated that it presented factual inaccuracies and denigrated the police force in a now-axed satirical show.

December

- RTHK “paused” the social media pages of a dozen programmes.
- Media tycoon Jimmy Lai and the staff of Apple Daily won the Golden Pen of Freedom award.
- Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Erick Tsang threatened the Wall Street Journal over an editorial it published about the city’s first “patriots-only” legislative race.
- Reporters Without Borders said press freedom in Hong Kong was in “free fall” in its latest report on China.
- The High Court ordered that Next Digital Limited must be wound up.
- RTHK broadcasters outside of the news department were ordered not to discuss the University of Hong Kong’s removal of a Tiananmen Massacre statue.
- Over 200 national security police officers were deployed to raid the offices of Stand News, seven people linked to the outlet were arrested.
- Stand News announced its decision to shut following a newsroom raid and seven arrests. Its website and social media pages were deleted.
- Two former chief editors of Stand News were denied bail by a court after they were accused of publishing seditious materials.
- Justice Secretary Teresa Cheng said that criticism from foreign politicians and organisations over the arrest of figures connected to Stand News were “baseless” and “in blatant violation of international law.”

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