

HONG KONG FREE PRESS

Annual Report



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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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grundy".



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Our Mission & Impact

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.

13.9 million

Pageviews in 2021

430+

Writers since 2015

HK\$4.3m

Raised in 2021 [predicted]

97 million

Total pageviews since 2015

20,800

Stories published

1,080

Monthly HKFP donors

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



382,048 Twitter followers

- up 34% in 2021.



135,754 Instagram fans

- up 62% in 2021.



346,358 Facebook followers

- up 29% in 2021.



2,581 Telegram followers

- down 7.5% in 2021.



23,173 YouTube subscribers

- up 15% in 2021.



1,690 LinkedIn fans

- up 18% in 2021.



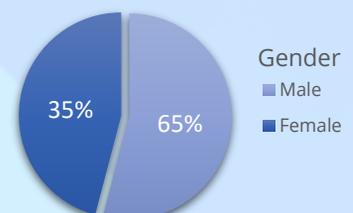
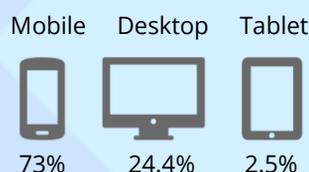
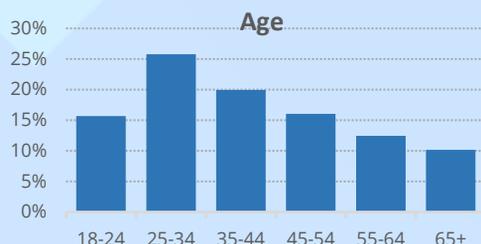
11,463 newsletter subscribers

- up 20% 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.



The Best of HKFP 2021

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.

The Best of HKFP 2021

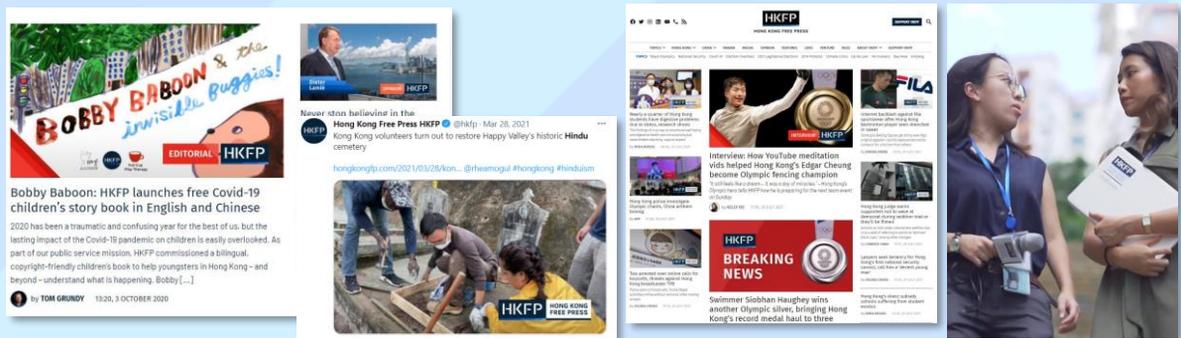
Our team visited [local businesses at risk of forced closure](#) after government-led redevelopments in Fo Tan and [Kwun Tong](#). Elsewhere, we spoke with [the owners of Hong Kong's remaining iconic Dai Pai Dongs](#) facing eviction from their community, and [the elderly villager fighting to save his 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.

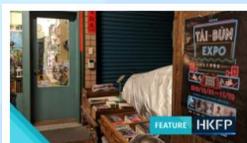
We continued to cover environmental and animal stories last year, including the [threat to rare porpoises](#) posed by a development off Lantau, and the [task force fighting against dog poisonings](#).



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.

The Best of HKFP 2021

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?*



'The loss of language is the loss of heritage,' the push to revive Taiwanese in Taiwan



Telling the story of Taiwan beyond the cross-strait tensions



'A breath of relief': Hong Kong exile artists find their feet, and a way forward, in Taiwan



Caught between politics and the pandemic, a few kilometres from China, Taiwan's Kinmen island rethinks its economy



Interview: The Taiwanese politician on the frontline of democracy, 17 km from mainland China

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.

The Best of HKFP 2021

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](#).



Exclusive: Wikipedia bans 7 mainland Chinese power users over 'infiltration and exploitation' in unprecedented clampdown

The move by the Wikimedia Foundation came after "long and deep investigations" into a group of mainland Chinese users. Two months after HKFP revealed that some of them allegedly threatened to report their Hong Kong peers to the city's national security police.

by SELINA CHENG 17:46, 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

2021 Achievements

Google News Initiative

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 focussed 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.

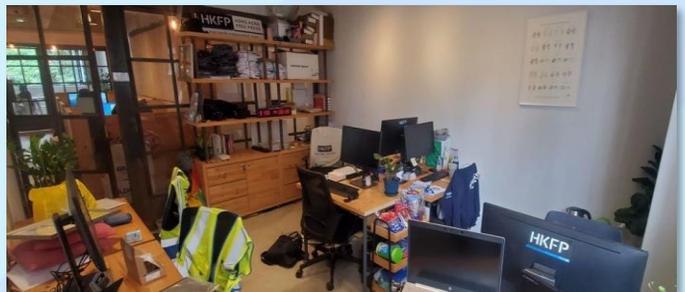
2021 Funding Drive: With an accompanying video, HKFP beat its target of 1,000 monthly Patrons during our #PressingOn Funding Drive.



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.

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.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. The New York Times QUARTZ The Telegraph The Washington Post
BBC Daily Mail BUSINESS INSIDER BuzzFeed STRAITS TIMES
 INDEPENDENT Bloomberg REUTERS ALJAZEERA VICE theguardian Vox



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

<p>HKFP Apps:</p>	<p>Social media & distribution:</p>	<p>Syndication:</p>
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Hong Kong's 2022 media landscape:

Independent English-language news:



English-language traditional news (digital/print):



Outlets closed in 2021-22:



Placement & Impact

Chinese-language news (digital):



Chinese-language traditional news (print):



The 2022 HKFP core team:

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 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 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 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.

Transparency Report

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:**

Income	2021*	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Reader contributors	HK\$4,164,565	HK\$6,357,972**	HK\$6,056,859**	HK\$2,463,408	HK\$1,769,760	HK\$1,063,125
Ads & content sales	HK\$198,983	HK\$110,247	HK\$271,066	HK\$136,084	HK\$328,759	HK\$92,276
Events	HK\$0	HK\$0	HK\$263,361	HK\$24,390	HK\$0	HK\$8,352
Bank interest	HK\$25	HK\$10	HK\$226	HK\$21	HK\$1	HK\$12
Gov't Covid subsidy	HK\$0	HK\$216,000	HK\$0	HK\$0	HK\$0	HK\$0
Total:	HK\$4,340,489†	HK\$6,697,010	HK\$6,591,512	HK\$2,623,903	HK\$2,098,520	HK\$1,163,765

*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.

Income:

HKFP is predicted to make a monthly loss of up to HK\$100K in 2022, but is able to reinvest its previous surplus.



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

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.]

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

Direct contributions:



Ads & content sales:



- **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:



Transparency Report

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:

HK\$204,063

Monthly income from Patrons after fees

1,050

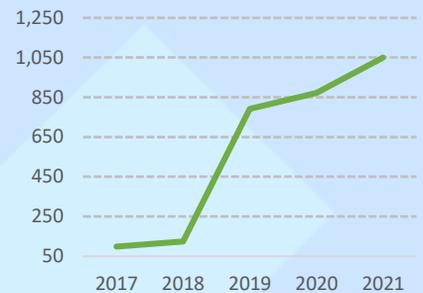
No. of monthly Patrons

HK\$194

Average monthly contribution

- 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.

20% rise in HKFP Patrons



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

Expenditure	2021*	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Full-time staff payroll	HK\$1,952,852	HK\$1.599m	HK\$1.606m	HK\$1.499m	HK\$1.340m	HK\$1.035m
Mandatory Provident Fund (pensions)	HK\$76,442	HK\$72,221	HK\$68,123	HK\$69,234	HK\$66,180	HK\$50,942
Web & software, newswire, commission	HK\$140,992	HK\$132,269	HK\$80,038	HK\$129,543	HK\$58,693	HK\$33,083
Office, sundry, recruitment/training, telecom	HK\$198,116	HK\$109,289	HK\$164,256	HK\$110,414	HK\$57,565	HK\$25,801
Meals/drinks for volunteers/staff/sources	HK\$18,554	HK\$18,324	HK\$29,686	HK\$14,028	HK\$17,106	HK\$25,531
Legal, professional, registration, audit	HK\$35,422	HK\$96,505	HK\$12,340	HK\$7,385	HK\$45,231	HK\$10,845
Travel & insurance	HK\$4,069	HK\$72,391	HK\$50,615	HK\$78,067	HK\$8,169	HK\$8,267
Stationery, merch, postage, printing	HK\$201,534	HK\$208,544	HK\$42,311	HK\$11,827	HK\$686	HK\$17,124
Bank charges, penalties & exchange losses	HK\$3,335	HK\$13,752	HK\$4,240	HK\$1,705	HK\$1,170	HK\$2,218
Freelancer payments & gear	HK\$934,621	HK\$595,693	HK\$289,387	HK\$64,400	HK\$34,090	HK\$0
Tax	HK\$52,304	HK\$408,496	HK\$509,211	HK\$29,816	HK\$13,343	HK\$0
Advertising	HK\$78,745	HK\$6,914	HK\$36,597	HK\$34,371	HK\$10,261	HK\$0
Membership, research/polls, repairs & other	HK\$25,070	HK\$118,800	-	-	-	-
Total:	HK\$3.79m†	HK\$3.04m*	HK\$2.89m*	HK\$2.04m	HK\$1.65m	HK\$1.20m

*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.

Expenditure



Hong Kong Press Freedom in 2021

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 "doxing" 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 Press Freedom in 2021

- Hong Kong journalist Yvonne Tong, who famously challenged a WHO official, [resigned from RTHK](#).
- Reporters Without Borders East Asia warned that silence from the authorities over an attack on the Epoch Times [is fostering a "climate of suspicion" against journalists and "encouraging" violent attacks on the media](#).
- 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](#).
- 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".
- WhatsApp chats democrat Claudia Mo sent to media outlets like the BBC and the New York Times outlining her fears for freedom of speech in the city [were deemed by the High Court to be sufficient grounds to deny her bail](#).

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.

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.

Hong Kong Press Freedom in 2021

- Apple Daily's finance section, its English edition, Twitter account and video department [ceased operations following an exodus of staff](#).
- 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](#).
- The Hong Kong government [appointed a special fraud investigator](#) to scrutinise Apple Daily's parent company Next Digital.

August

- Digital Hong Kong news outlet Inition [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.

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](#).

Hong Kong Press Freedom in 2021

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 [refused to explain why Sue-Lin Wong was denied a work visa renewal](#).
- The government is [conducting a legal study on the problem of "fake news,"](#) Chief Secretary John Lee said.
- RTHK [removed from its website a news report about Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai](#), who accused a former top Chinese official of sexual assault.

- 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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