

Tiananmen Square Massacre Candlelight Vigil in Hong Kong 180,000-Strong
By Angela Wang
7 June 2012

Calls for democracy in China resounded at Hong Kong's Victoria Park as more than 180,000 attended the yearly candlelight vigil in memory of the 1989 massacre of student protesters on Tiananmen Square. In the crowd were survivors, politicians, students, and residents from both Hong Kong and mainland China.

Fang Zheng, a survivor whose legs were amputated after they were rolled over by a tank, attended the ceremony after traveling from the United States. Fang said that he was moved by the candles and that he understood that the people of Hong Kong had not forgotten what had happened on June 4, 1989. Fang was a student at the Beijing College of Physical Science, and became a champion at the 1992 All-China Disabled Athletic Games.

Another survivor, Mr. Huang, was expelled from school and jailed after the crackdown. In 2010, he was put behind bars again for his Christian faith.

"Since the first gunshot was fired on June 4, we have lost faith in the Communist regime that answers its people with guns and tanks. It was never possible for us to believe that the people's soldiers, armies and government would use guns to put off peaceful demonstrators and people," said Mr. Huang who added that the people of Hong Kong and mainland China should join forces in the name of democratizing China. "We should have the confidence and the hope. Every one of us should start from ourselves and do what we can to push further the process to democracy."

According to the organizer of the event, Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, this year's attendance reached a record high. Hong Kong Alliance's chairman Li Zhuoren spoke of the widespread resentment towards the Communist Party in China due to the fact that the 1989 student protests have not been justly redressed, alongside other human rights and social issues.

The crowd also paid a tribute to Zha Weili, father of a murdered student protester who committed suicide last week after years of struggling hopelessly following his son's death.

"This shows that Hong Kong is superior in terms of ruling systems," said Mr. Chen, who had traveled from mainland China to witness the event. "For all these years, Hong Kong has been a vanguard of democracy!"

Mr. Chen said that since the Bo Xilai scandal and corresponding Chinese Communist Party internal power struggle have come to light, there has been an increased interest among people in China to travel to Hong Kong to attend the annual June 4 memorial.

Mr. Lin, a resident of Hong Kong in his 80s, said that this year marks his fifteenth time attending the candlelight vigil. "I had close contact with Communist Party, and the June 4 incident has deep meanings for me. That's why I support the students."