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Hong Kong: Police must exercise restraint in handling protesters

Amnesty International today urged the Hong Kong authorities to exercise restraint and ensure that minimum force is used to control the current protests on the right of abode. Although the organization cannot take a position on the right to abode issue, it is concerned about reports of the use of excessive force in the recent clearing of protesters from Chater Garden on Hong Kong Island.

It was reported that about 300 police officers and over 50 immigration officers sealed all the exits and charged into the gardens to clear 100 - 200 protesters. The protesters had been peacefully staging rallies there since 10 January 2001 against the Court of Final Appeal ruling that the majority of the 5,114 abode seekers did not have right of stay in Hong Kong and should return to the Chinese mainland.

Some reports have suggested that the police treated roughly some of those they removed, including a journalist and a cameraman covering the incident who were taken away in handcuffs. Three people suspected of overstaying their right of residency in Hong Kong were arrested.

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Public Document

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