

'HK part of China & no one can mess it up', Chinese FM says amid opposition gains at community-level election

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Beijing has said that the outcome of the municipal vote that saw opposition taking nearly 90% of the seats won't change Hong Kong status, while warning against any attempts to disrupt the situation.

Preliminary results of the election reported by local broadcaster RTHK suggest that about 390 seats out of 452 that were up for grabs in 18 district councils have been claimed by the anti-government candidates.

Asked to comment while the vote count was ongoing, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that regardless of the outcome, Hong Kong will remain an unalienable part of the Chinese state.

*"It's not the final result yet. Let's wait for the final result, OK? However, it is clear that no matter what happens, Hong Kong is a part of China and a special administrative region of China," he [said](#).*

***Any attempt to mess up Hong Kong, or even damage its prosperity and stability, will not succeed.***

Hong Kong administrator Carrie Lam, meanwhile, said that the semi-autonomous city's government would respect the results of the district poll.

*"The government will certainly listen humbly to citizens' opinions and reflect on them seriously," Lam [said](#), expressing hope that the peace and security would prevail, and the city won't plunge into chaos again.*

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The landslide victory by the opposition has been attributed to the record-high turnout of 71 percent (versus only 47 percent back in 2015) that saw many young voters taking to the polls for the first time. Speaking to the South China Morning Post, pro-Beijing lawmaker Michael Tien Puk-su, who lost his seat at the Tsuen Wan District Council, said that while he gained the same number of votes as in the previous elections, it was not enough this time – all because of the first-time voters, he suspected. *“If that’s true, it means young people are no longer insensitive to politics,”* he said, adding that he would “respect the electorate’s decision.”

Prior to the election, the pro-Beijing candidates held 292 seats in the district legislatures. Now, according to the local media reports, they won only 42 seats and likely lost control over all councils but one.

Largely symbolic

Hong Kong opposition, joined by a plethora of US lawmakers, have rejoiced at the result, with Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tn) going as far as calling it a *“monumental defeat of pro-Communist China.”*

While the opposition might have dealt a blow to the Carry Lam administration, the victory is largely symbolic. District councils lack any political leverage and deal mostly with communal issues, such as transport, utility services as well as oversee the distribution of funds to be spent on recreational and environment activities.

The only way the councils might influence politics is through voting for the next Hong Kong chief executive in 2022 as part of the 1,200 – member election committee. However, the councils send a maximum of 117 delegates to the panel, which is hardly enough to sway the vote, even taking into account that opposition already controls some 400 seats.

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