

The Executive Director of Human Rights Watch (HRW) was denied entry to Hong Kong on Sunday 12th January, where he was to launch the 2020 world report with a focus on China's "intensifying assault" on human rights, at the Foreign Correspondent Club on January 15th.

"Sadly this episode is just the latest evidence that the Chinese Government is doing everything it can to undermine the enforcement of international human rights standards," Mr Kenneth Roth said.

Deepening assault on human rights

"I had hoped to spotlight Beijing's deepening assault on international efforts to uphold human rights. The refusal to let me enter Hong Kong vividly illustrates the problem."

Mr Roth had visited Hong Kong numerous times in the past, the last being in April 2018.

On December 2, 2019, a Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs official threatened to impose unspecified "sanctions" against HRW and several US-based pro-democracy organisations but neither Beijing nor Hong Kong authorities have since provided further details, according to HRW.

Human Rights Watch Chief Denied Entry to Hong Kong

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The Hong Kong Government had no response to questions from Reuters about why Mr Roth was denied entry.

"This disappointing action is yet another sign that Beijing is tightening its oppressive grip on Hong Kong and further restricting the limited freedom Hong Kong people enjoy under 'one country, two systems'," Mr Roth said in the organisation's statement.

"My denial of entry pales in comparison to the harassment that Chinese activists routinely endure — jail, torture, and enforced disappearance simply for trying to secure basic rights for their fellow citizens. But China's efforts to interfere with the work of international groups like Human Rights Watch is a form of global censorship that governments should resist before it's too late."

HRW said in a statement that the report would be launched on January 14 at the United Nations in New York.