

Chinese state media warns conflicts could hurt Hong Kong economy

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Supporters attend a rally to show their support for the police amid criticisms for its alleged mishandling of an anti-extradition protest, in Hong Kong, China June 30, 2019. (Source: REUTERS/Tyrone Siu)

Shanghai: Confrontations and outbreaks of lawlessness in Hong Kong could damage its reputation as an international business hub and seriously hurt its economy, China's Communist Party newspaper the People's Daily said in an editorial on Wednesday.

Hundreds of protesters in the former British colony besieged and broke into the legislature late on Monday after a demonstration marking the anniversary of its return to Chinese rule in 1997.

China called the violence an "undisguised challenge" to the "one country, two systems" model under which Hong Kong has been ruled for 22 years.

"It is not surprising there are some disagreements and even major disputes about certain issues, but if we fall into the whirlpool of 'overpoliticisation' and artificially create division and opposition, it will not only serve no purpose, but will also severely hinder economic and social development," The People's Daily said.

The turbulence in Hong Kong was triggered by an extradition bill opponents say will undermine Hong Kong's much-cherished rule of law and give Beijing powers to prosecute activists in mainland courts.

The People's Daily said the rule of law did not mean a small number of "extremists" should be allowed to conduct violent crimes that would damage Hong Kong's reputation as an international business city.

It warned that Hong Kong was already under pressure as a result of changes to the global economy and intensifying competition and "cannot bear turbulence and internal friction".

- Reuters