

A free man demands freedom for all

Cardinal Zen issues anti-China rallying cry Retired Hong Kong cardinal speaks out strongly against Beijing.



Retired Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun of Hong Kong sharply criticized the Chinese authorities' recently released white paper that emphasized Beijing's total control of the special administrative region.

"You (the Chinese communists) can tie me up, can take me away, chop my head off, but not as a slave," said the cardinal in an online radio program yesterday evening. Hong Kong people should "not succumb to fate but maintain one's own dignity," the cardinal said, warning that "if we kneel down, everything will be finished."

China's State Council released the white paper on Tuesday that emphasized its total control over Hong Kong. The policy statement said "the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by Hong Kong is subject to the central government's authorization. There is no such thing called 'residual power' for the special administrative region."

The document sparked widespread discontent among Hong Kong residents as it appeared to break the promise of 50 years of autonomy given to Hong Kong after the former British colony was returned to China in 1997. The cardinal called on people to vote in a June 20-22 nonofficial referendum on universal suffrage for the election of governor in 2017 and to show their aspiration for full democracy.

The referendum was proposed by organizers of Occupy Central, who vow to bring the city's financial hub to a standstill if the government fails to produce a plan for democratic rule in Hong Kong. "There is no space for compromise. Our bottom line is to use a nonviolent approach," said the cardinal. Cardinal Zen, 82, will begin on Saturday an 84-hour march for democracy around the territory to encourage people to participate in the upcoming referendum.

More than 50 Catholics are expected to walk with him each day until June 20. "He walked on the

frontline to fight for a better life for the next generation. Shouldn't we fight for ourselves for a life that we want to live?" said a young woman who gave her name as Esther on why she will walk alongside the cardinal.

Read more at: <http://www.ucanews.com/news/cardinal-zen-issues-anti-china-rallying-cry/71159>

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