

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Pillar of Shame erected in Denmark in solidarity with Hong Kong's democracy movement**

**An eight-meter-high sculpture with distorted bodies will be raised on January 23rd in front of the Danish Parliament in solidarity with Hong Kong protesters**

The sculpture is made by the Danish artist Jens Galschiøt, and it is erected in collaboration between Galschiøt, the green political party The Alternative and Amnesty International Denmark.

A group of parties in the Danish Parliament supports the art manifestation: Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA), SF, Enhedslisten and Fremad.

“Hong Kong citizens only have a chance of preserving freedom of expression and the right of peaceful assembly if they are backed by us in the West. Also, if it is only moral support. I have talked to activists in the democracy movement and I know this kind of support is crucial to them,” says Jens Galschiøt.

Galschiøt's Pillar of Shame is a series of sculptures which mark grave abuses against humanity. The sculptures remind people of a shameful event which must never recur. The first sculpture was made to mark the Chinese authorities' bloody crackdown on peaceful protesters at Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989. Hundreds, if not thousands of unarmed student-protesters and civilians were killed.

“The sculpture was first erected in collaboration with Hong Kong's Democracy Movement 23 years ago in Hong Kong. It has become one of the important symbolic sculptures in the city. Since that time, I have worked with artists and political activists both inside and outside China,” explains Jens Galschiøt.

Three Pillars of Shame are permanently located in Hong Kong, Mexico and Brazil.

The Pillar of Shame, which will be erected in front of the Danish Parliament, is a modified version where Hong Kong activists are also portrayed.

The sculpture will stay outside the Danish Parliament for three months, where activists will organize various happenings.

### **Human rights are under pressure**

For the Danish party The Alternative it was natural to be co-organizing the art manifestation.

"We have for a long time focused on the disturbing and deeply critical situation in Hong Kong, both in the Danish Parliament and at a ministerial level. We have also had election observers at the last district council election in Hong Kong," says the party's political leader Uffe Elbæk.

"We are showing our support and commitment to the people of Hong Kong. We support this because the conflict in Hong Kong also tells a story about human rights being under pressure many places in the world today. Freedom of speech and the right of peaceful assembly is under attack and methods like facial recognition is being used in tyrannical ways, which we want to be unlawful in Denmark."

Amnesty International has documented how Hong Kong citizens' human rights have been curtailed. The organization has also documented police violence against the protesters and the use of unnecessary and excessive force.

"It is important for us to show solidarity with the people of Hong Kong who are fighting for freedom of speech and peaceful assembly. We will not accept peaceful protesters being beaten, imprisoned and prevented from expressing their opinions. Human rights apply everywhere - also in China," says Trine Christensen, Secretary General of Amnesty International Denmark.

The erection of the Hong Kong Pillar of Shame will be marked with speeches in front of the sculpture by Jens Galschiøt, the Alternative, Amnesty International Denmark and Hong Kong activists living in Denmark at 12 noon on the 23rd.

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