

Christmas cards collected for jailed Hong Kong protesters

By John Leicester
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — Protesters in Hong Kong wrote hundreds of Christmas cards for people jailed in the city’s pro-democracy movement, promising they won’t be forgotten as they face spending the festive season behind bars.

“Please know that u are not alone,” said one of the cards, a sentiment expressed by many. “We will NEVER forget u.”

Police have made more than 6,000 arrests during the six months of protests. The cards are destined for those who have been denied bail. Organizers said they will be delivered via defendants’ lawyers and lawmakers. Protesters said they believe dozens of people arrested during the movement could remain in jail during the holidays.

“We love you! We wait you! We support you!” said another of the cards.

Organizers said they handed out some 2,000 cards at a rally attended by hundreds of people marking the half-year mark for the protest movement that has convulsed the semi-autonomous city.

The protesters gathered amid the skyscrapers of central Hong Kong’s business district, some of them lit up in festive Christmas-season lighting. Those who filled out cards did so quietly, lost in their thoughts, and addressed detainees as “brothers and sisters in arms.”

“We are inseparable and we are like one body,” said one of the organizers. Like many protesters who are fearful of repercussions from their activism, she gave just a first name, Emma.

“Most people are writing: ‘We care about you and we would like to wait for you,’” she said.



Another organizer, Vivica, said: “It’s Christmas. Everybody is happy outside and we are enjoying freedom (but) freedom is not for granted. The price is being paid by someone else who is now in prison.”

Many of the demonstrators came from work to join the evening “United We Stand” protest. They chanted “Hong Kong people, revenge!” in anger at police use of

tear gas and widespread arrests during the mass demonstrations that erupted in June.

Office worker Judy Leung said she protests every week, in part because attending rallies sustains her morale for a long battle.

“Maybe our bodies are tired but our hearts are not,” she said. “We give power to

Australia, New Zealand confirm joint bid for 2023 Women’s World Cup

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Australia and New Zealand have joined forces in a bid to host the Women’s World Cup in 2023.

Football Federation Australia and New Zealand Football (NZF) announced the co-confederation bid in Melbourne, hours before the official bid book was to be submitted to soccer’s world governing body, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), in Zurich.

FIFA has plenty of contenders to host

the first 32-team Women’s World Cup.

Other bids are expected from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Japan, and South Korea, which could be a joint project with North Korea.

Australia’s star striker Sam Kerr said the women’s game in Asia and Oceania would get a significant boost from the investment and interest generated by hosting a World Cup.

“There is so much untapped potential, not just in Australia but right across Asia

ACTIVIST OUTREACH. Pro-democracy protesters hold placards and wave British flags during a rally outside the British Consulate in Hong Kong on December 11, 2019. Protesters in Hong Kong have written hundreds of Christmas cards for detainees jailed in the city’s pro-democracy movement. At a recent rally, protesters promised on the cards that detainees won’t be forgotten as they face spending the festive season behind bars. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)

each other so we can carry on.” As she spoke, another protester, a stranger, came up with a packet of cookies and asked if she wanted one.

“This is how society should be,” Leung said. “We share our love.”

The rally came before Hong Kong’s leader, Carrie Lam, travelled to Beijing to report to Communist Party leaders.

Protesters said they didn’t expect that trip to produce any concessions to their demands. They’re pushing for full elections, a probe of police actions, and amnesty for those who have been arrested.

“She just listens to what her Beijing bosses tell her to do,” protester Fergie Chan, a shipping industry worker, said of Lam. “I have a feeling that we might be in a very long fight. That’s why we’re still out after six months.”

and the Pacific region, that I really do believe we would offer something incredibly special,” said Kerr, who scored five goals in four games as Australia reached the knockout stage of the World Cup in France earlier this year. “I really believe that Australia and New Zealand would be incredible hosts to take the game forward.

“It is also fitting that New Zealand was the Matildas’ first full international

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