



## [Hong Kong Elections a Rebuke to Beijing](#)

[After a summer of protests, the citizens of Hong Kong have delivered a stunning rebuke to China through the Hong Kong district council elections.](#) The district councils are seen as relatively toothless bodies with narrow powers and a limited budget. Because of



this district council elections traditionally see a low turnout, as citizens do not think of them as important. However, on Sunday (November 24, 2019) [the district council elections saw a turnout of over 70%](#), with pro-democracy candidates winning majorities in all 18 district councils and taking control of 17 district councils. This is a major public relations blow to Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam and the Communist Party in Beijing, who have so far justified their heavy handed response to pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong by claiming that they have the support of the city's silent majority. The Chinese government has already moved to discredit the elections, with state media claiming that the results were influenced by foreign actors.

## [Clashes between protestors and security forces leave hundreds dead in Iran](#)



[Over 100 protestors are believed to have been killed in clashes between protestors and security forces in Iran during a five-day Internet blackout.](#) The protests first started in Tehran on November 15th after the Iranian government announced a 50% increase in fuel prices. Traditionally

fuel prices in Iran are highly subsidised but Iran is currently facing a budget deficit of nearly two-thirds of its annual \$45 billion budget. [However, Iranian citizens were already experiencing prolonged economic hardships due to US sanctions.](#) The fuel price hike appears to have catalysed their anger and sparked demonstrations across the country. The government has so far reacted with repression through security forces, a five-day internet shutdown and blaming the protests on an external plot.

## [Investigation into assassination of Journalist ensnares Maltese government](#)

The Maltese Prime Minister's Chief of Staff has stepped down as the investigation into the [assassination of Journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia](#) rocked one of the world's [smallest countries.](#) Galizia was an investigative



reporter who was working on a story about corruption at the highest levels of the Maltese government when killed by a car bomb. Despite initial slowness in the investigation, international pressure from the EU has forced the Maltese government to take greater efforts. So far the investigation has resulted in the arrest of a prominent businessman and the resignation of two cabinet ministers. [The resignation of his Chief of Staff increases the pressure on Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat,](#) who was a target of several of Galizia's investigations, with increasing calls for his resignation.

