

DoJ responds to criticism against judge

In response to the vandalism outside the High Court Building and criticism against a judge today (January 1), the Department of Justice issued the following statement:

Judicial independence is an essential element of the rule of law. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government respects the freedom of speech of individuals. Members of the public have the right to express their views on court decisions and related matters within the boundary permitted by the law. Personal attacks and insults against judges would severely undermine the authority of the courts and damage public confidence in the judicial system.

As pointed out by the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal at the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year last year, "... it is no part of a court's function or duty to adjudicate on political or social issues, nor economic ones, whether siding with one extreme or another, or finding some sort of middle ground to solve the community's political, social or economic concerns. Rather, at all times, the court is concerned with dealing with one aspect and one aspect only: a resolution of the legal issues arising in the dispute before it." Any person who is dissatisfied with court decisions may lodge appeals through the excising mechanism and should not criticise judges abusively or impute them of political bias, otherwise, the rule of law in Hong Kong would be undermined.