

HKSAR Government condemns US' latest move under so-called "Hong Kong Autonomy Act"

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (March 17) condemned the latest move by the United States (US) Department of State under an update to the so-called "Hong Kong Autonomy Act", which continued to put 24 officials of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the HKSAR Government on a sanctions list.

A Government spokesman said, "We are extremely disappointed that the current US administration, instead of rectifying the blatant mistake made by its predecessor, has chosen to pursue the same wrongful path of disregarding international norms and interfering in HKSAR affairs, which are internal matters of the PRC. We deeply regret that the US administration has clearly not taken heed of the collective voice of some 70 countries which had spoken in support of the PRC in respect of two key decisions to uphold the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems' at the 46th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

"HKSAR's high degree of autonomy is guaranteed under 'One Country, Two Systems'; but foreign entities have repeatedly ignored this fundamental principle and the correct relationship between 'One Country' and 'Two Systems'. HKSAR is an inalienable part of the PRC and is directly accountable to the Central People's Government. National security and political structure are matters within the purview of the Central Authorities.

"As the highest organ of state power, the National People's Congress (NPC) has the constitutional authority to make the Decisions to improve the electoral system and safeguard national security in the HKSAR in March 2021 and May 2020 respectively. Taking into account the actual situation in Hong Kong, both Decisions are timely and necessary. In respect of the national security legislation, its positive effect, in restoring peace and stability and safeguarding individual rights and freedoms, has been felt throughout Hong Kong, by Hong Kong residents as well as expatriates living and working in Hong Kong.

"The NPC's recent Decision to improve the electoral system in the HKSAR is to ensure 'patriots administering Hong Kong'. No country would allow its governance power to be vested in people who are not patriotic and who will endanger the interests of the country. Events in the past years clearly revealed that there were people who had exploited existing loopholes in the electoral system to enter the political institutions and used that platform to advocate for 'Hong Kong independence', engage in acts of subversion, and even collude with external elements to endanger national security. They posed huge risks to Hong Kong's stability and prosperity, and called for decisive actions.

"To countries that consider national security to be of paramount importance on their own soil yet threaten officials of other countries for acting to defend their territory, the adoption of double standards is evident. Any claim that HKSAR's high degree of autonomy and freedoms have been undermined by the NPC's Decisions is also totally groundless.

"The US' 'sanctions' will not create an obligation for financial institutions under Hong Kong law. Our financial institutions and our financial system as a whole are robust and resilient. They will continue to operate normally and smoothly despite any undue pressure from the US.

"The Chief Executive and HKSAR Government officials who have been targeted by the US administration over the past year will not be intimidated by these hostile acts of hegemony. They will continue to discharge their duty to safeguard 'One Country, Two Systems' and national security in HKSAR in accordance with the law without fear or anxiety," said the Government spokesman.