

# HKSAR Government continues to be resolute and spare no effort in safeguarding national security

In response to biased and erroneous remarks or reports by governments, media and organisations of the United States and western countries on the arrest of the editor and the then directors of Stand News for allegedly committing the offence of conspiracy to publish seditious publication under the Crimes Ordinance, a Government spokesman today (December 30) said:

Acts and activities that endanger national security are very serious crimes, which we are determined to tackle in accordance with the law. The law enforcement actions taken by the Police against Stand News are strictly according to the law and based on evidence.

We must point out that freedom of speech and freedom of the press are protected under the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights. Article 4 of the Hong Kong National Security Law also stipulates that such rights and freedoms shall be protected in accordance with the law in safeguarding national security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

However, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are not absolute. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, such freedoms can be restricted for reasons including protection of national security. We reiterate that no one is above the law.

The actions taken by the Police on this occasion were targeting at illegal acts of those arrestees, and have nothing to do with freedom of the press and of publication. We express our deep regret regarding the governments, media and organisations of the United States and western countries in respect of their attempt to twist facts and slandering remarks on the enforcement actions taken in accordance with the law. Such acts constitute gross interference in the affairs of Hong Kong, and reflect their double standards.

In the past year, people's lives have resumed as normal, and the national security risk has subsided. These achievements are hard to come by. We will continue to guard against any acts endangering national security, and will bring any person or entity violating the law to justice regardless of background.