

HKSAR Government opposes accusations by US

In response to the press statement by the United States Department of State, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) made the following statement today (December 4):

The baseless allegation that there is "political persecution" in Hong Kong is totally unsubstantiated and clearly made with an ulterior motive to interfere with China's internal affairs. Judges in Hong Kong are chosen only for their judicial and professional qualities. Unlike other places, they are not subjected to any political vetting. Our courts only decide cases in accordance with the law and evidence. No one can "use" our courts to achieve any other purpose. Judicial independence is guaranteed under Article 85 of the Basic Law which is practised and respected internationally. Such baseless allegations made against our Judiciary are strongly refuted.

Human rights and freedoms in Hong Kong, including freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, are fully protected by the Basic Law and respected by the HKSAR Government. However, such freedoms are not absolute. Hong Kong's residents have been and will continue to be able to enjoy their legitimate rights and freedoms as guaranteed under the Basic Law.

The individuals named in the statement by the United States are currently involved in cases in which the legal proceedings have not yet been completed. Suffice it to note that in so far as three of the individuals named are concerned, they pleaded guilty to the charges that had been laid against them. The Department of Justice is not in a position to comment any further on these cases at this stage as the matter is subjudice.

The Judiciary will continue to exercise the judicial power including that of the final adjudication independently, free from any interference. Any statements made with an attempt to unduly influence the exercise of the judicial power in our legal system will be futile.