

# HKSAR Government strongly condemns and opposes US politicians' slandering remarks and despicable threats against Basic Law Article 23 legislation and efforts of HKSAR in safeguarding national security

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (July 18) strongly condemned and opposed the United States (US) Congress' Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the US and the Chinese Communist Party and the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China for their letter to the US Government which made untruthful, slandering and smearing remarks against the legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law and the efforts of the HKSAR in safeguarding national security. The committee and commission also demanded that the US Government shall impose so-called "sanctions" on SAR government officials, judges, prosecutors and police officers, and made slandering remarks and despicable threats against the relevant personnel.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "The so-called 'sanctions' mentioned in the letter smack of despicable political manipulation to intimidate the HKSAR officials safeguarding national security. These grossly interfere in Hong Kong affairs which are China's internal affairs, and violate the international law and the basic norms governing international relations. The HKSAR despises such so-called 'sanctions' and is not intimidated by such a despicable behaviour. The HKSAR will resolutely continue to discharge the duty of safeguarding national security."

"Enacting local legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law and refining laws relevant to safeguarding national security are the constitutional responsibilities of the HKSAR. In accordance with international law and international practice based on the Charter of the United Nations, safeguarding national security is an inherent right of all sovereign states. As a matter of fact, it is each and every sovereign state's inherent right to enact laws safeguarding national security, and it is also an international practice. The US has at least 21 pieces of laws safeguarding national security. It is therefore in no position to point its finger at the HKSAR for legitimately legislating to safeguard national security. US politicians once again targeted the HKSAR Government's work on safeguarding national security and made slandering, smearing, misleading and erroneous remarks against the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO), showing their despicable political manoeuvre and hypocrisy with double standards."

"The SNSO clearly specifies that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law, as well as the provisions of the International Covenant on

Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong, are to be protected in accordance with the law. US politicians neglected the relevant provision and lashed out wantonly, fully exposing their malicious intentions."

"As regards the conspiracy to commit subversion case mentioned in the letter, the reasons for verdict delivered by the court clearly confirmed that the criminal acts in the case aimed at undermining, destroying or overthrowing the existing political system and structure of the HKSAR established under the Basic Law and the 'one country, two systems' principle. Such criminal acts endangering national security had nothing to do with the so-called fight for democracy and human rights. In the 318-page judgment, the court has clearly set out the reasons and consideration underlying the conviction, and confirmed the occurrence of the offence of conspiracy to commit subversion. A total of 47 persons were charged in the case. Apart from the two defendants, against whom the evidence was found insufficient for the court to be sure of their participation in the conspiracy offence, the remaining 45 defendants were convicted, showing the scale and the seriousness of the criminal scheme."

"The HKSAR law enforcement agencies have been taking law enforcement actions based on evidence and strictly in accordance with the law in respect of the acts of the persons or entities concerned, and have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation. The suggestion that certain individuals should be immune from legal consequences for their illegal acts, including those involving subversion, is no different from advocating a special pass to break the law, and this totally runs contrary to the spirit of the rule of law."

"As guaranteed by the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights, all defendants charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to a fair trial by the Judiciary exercising independent judicial power. The courts of the HKSAR shall exercise judicial power independently, free from any interference."

"The HKSAR Government will, as always, resolutely, fully and faithfully implement the National Security Law, the SNSO and other relevant laws safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, to effectively prevent, suppress and impose punishment for acts and activities endangering national security in accordance with the law. The HKSAR Government also strongly demands the US politicians to immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong matters which are purely China's internal affairs, and to stop smearing maliciously the laws safeguarding national security in the HKSAR as well as the law enforcement, prosecution and adjudication of the relevant cases."