

HKSAR Government strongly disapproves and condemns skewed remarks on Hong Kong matters by US Consul General to Hong Kong

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (July 31) strongly disapproved of and condemned the absurd and unfounded remarks on Hong Kong's situation, in areas such as safeguarding national security and protecting human rights, made by the Consul General of the United States of America (US) to Hong Kong, Mr Gregory May, in a media interview.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "Since the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) in June 2020, the US has ignored the large-scale and incessant riots that occurred in 2019 that devastated society, livelihoods and the economy of Hong Kong. Instead, it piled up false stories and fabricated narratives to maliciously slander laws relevant to safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, and blatantly attacked the HKSAR in safeguarding national security dutifully, faithfully and in accordance with the law. The US has also deliberately neglected the fact that the NSL has enabled the livelihood and economic activities of the Hong Kong community as well the business environment to return to normalcy, exposing its hypocrisy with double standards.

"The HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China. It is a local administrative region that enjoys a high degree of autonomy under 'one country, two systems' and comes directly under the Central People's Government. The legal basis for implementing 'one country, two systems' comprises the Constitution and the Basic Law, which provide a constitutional guarantee for fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to equality before the law, and is buttressed by the rule of law and independent judicial power," the spokesman stressed.

"Since Hong Kong's return to the motherland, human rights in the city have always been robustly guaranteed constitutionally by both the Constitution and the Basic Law. The legal framework in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR is in line with relevant international human rights standards. The NSL and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) clearly stipulate that human rights shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security. The rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents under the Basic Law and the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to the HKSAR are protected in accordance with the law. Nonetheless, just as the case with other places in the world, such rights and freedoms are not absolute. The ICCPR also expressly states that some of them may be subject to restrictions as

prescribed by law that are necessary for protection of national security, public safety, public order or the rights and freedoms of others, etc.

"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's legal system and enforcement mechanisms to safeguard national security."

The spokesman stressed, "The offences endangering national security stipulated by the NSL and the SNSO target acts endangering national security with precision, and define the elements and penalties of the offences with clarity. 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 concerned. Law-abiding persons will not unwittingly violate the law. The remarks made by the Consul General of the US to Hong Kong on the so-called 'chilling effect' are purely malicious smears on the NSL and the SNSO."

The spokesperson reiterated, "The HKSAR Government is steadfast in safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, fully and faithfully upholding this top priority of the 'one country, two systems' principle. The HKSAR Government will, as always, resolutely, fully and faithfully implement the NSL, 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. At the same time, it protects the legal interests, rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents and other people in Hong Kong in accordance with the law, ensuring the steadfast and successful implementation of 'one country, two systems'. The HKSAR Government strongly demands the Consul General of the US to immediately stop the malicious smears of and interference in Hong Kong matters which are purely China's internal affairs."