

HKSAR Government strongly disapproves of and condemns false reports by Bloomberg on Basic Law Article 23 legislation

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (March 6) strongly disapproved of and condemned Bloomberg's news headlines "HK says Telegram should be prohibited in Article 23 proposal" and "HK says Signal should be prohibited in Article 23 proposal", and its report headlined "HK Security Law Public Consultation Lists Facebook, YouTube Ban", which falsely reported that the HKSAR Government would legislate to ban the operation of the mentioned platforms in Hong Kong, thereby generating misunderstanding and panic regarding the legislative proposals on Article 23 of the Basic Law.

The HKSAR Government solemnly stated that it has not proposed to ban the operation of any social media, video sharing or streaming platforms in Hong Kong.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "The annex to the relevant Legislative Council document covers a summary of written submissions received during the public consultation period by the HKSAR Government. The content of the annex spans 75 pages. However, the report in question only one-sidedly handpicked three entries of submissions received among all others and completed it with a biased headline, attempting to mislead the international community and members of the public in the HKSAR in believing that the HKSAR Government is going to accept such views or to prohibit the relevant platforms from operating in the HKSAR. Its intention is indeed suspicious. The fake news as published by Bloomberg has undermined its trustworthiness and credibility in the media sector. We request Bloomberg to ensure that future reports concerning the Basic Law Article 23 legislation would be fair and just to avoid any further misunderstanding by its readers.

"As repeatedly stressed by the HKSAR Government, the Basic Law, and the relevant provisions on safeguarding rights and freedoms of individuals in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including those on the freedom of speech, will also apply to the proposed local legislation on safeguarding national security. Article 4 of the Hong Kong National Security Law clearly stipulates that human rights shall be respected and protected while safeguarding national security in the HKSAR. During the legislation, the HKSAR Government will adhere to the relevant international standards in safeguarding human rights and freedoms. The HKSAR Government will make due reference to the views received during the public consultation and strive to finalise the Safeguarding National Security Bill soonest for introduction to the Legislative Council for scrutiny."