

HKSAR Government strongly disapproves of and firmly rejects issuing so-called "Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law" to Chow Hang-tung

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (December 13) expressed its strong disapproval of and firm opposition to the ministries of foreign affairs of France and Germany for issuing the so-called "Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law" to Chow Hang-tung, who was charged for suspicion of committing offences under the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL).

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "Chow Hang-tung is facing a criminal prosecution of 'incitement to subversion' and the case has been committed to the Court of First Instance of the High Court awaiting trial. The judicial proceedings of the case are still ongoing, but the ministries of foreign affairs of France and Germany have issued the so-called prize to Chow Hang-tung in the name of 'human rights' and the 'rule of law', which is obviously contrary to the spirit of respecting the rule of law. The HKSAR Government strongly urges these foreign countries to respect the spirit of the rule of law, abide by the international law and basic norms that govern international relations, and immediately stop interfering in the affairs of Hong Kong."

"Hong Kong is a society underpinned by the rule of law and has always adhered to the principle that laws must be obeyed and lawbreakers held accountable, and is well recognised by international communities. The HKSAR law enforcement agencies take law enforcement actions based on evidence and strictly in accordance with the law against those who endanger national security. The Department of Justice of the HKSAR is in charge of criminal prosecutions under Article 63 of the Basic Law, with all prosecution decisions made based on an objective analysis of all admissible evidence and applicable laws. The Judiciary of the HKSAR exercises judicial power independently in accordance with the law, and everyone charged with a criminal offence has the right to a fair hearing," the spokesman emphasised.

"Hong Kong residents have been enjoying the rights and freedoms under the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and other relevant laws. The NSL also clearly stipulates that human rights shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, and the rights and freedoms that Hong Kong residents enjoy under the Basic Law, and 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, shall be protected in accordance with the law.

"The HKSAR will continue to resolutely discharge the responsibility of

safeguarding national security, effectively prevent, suppress and punish acts and activities that endanger national security in accordance with the law, and safeguard the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people in accordance with the law at the same time," the spokesman reiterated.