

# HKSAR Government strongly disapproves of and firmly rejects so-called event on "media freedom in Hong Kong" by UK and other countries

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (September 28) strongly disapproved of and firmly rejected the baseless remarks, slanders and smears blatantly by the United Kingdom (UK) and other countries through the so-called event on "media freedom in Hong Kong" against the safeguarding of rights and freedoms, including media freedom, in the HKSAR.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "The HKSAR Government strongly disapproves of and firmly rejects the repeated attempt by the UK together with other countries to make skewed remarks against the situation of human rights in Hong Kong. Such remarks amount to political manipulation that disregards and even twists facts. The political manoeuvre of the countries concerned, with an ill intent to interfere with Hong Kong's law-based governance and undermine the city's rule of law as well as its prosperity and stability, is distinctly despicable and doomed to fail. The HKSAR Government strongly urges the countries concerned to discern facts from fallacies, respect the international law and basic norms governing international relations, and immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong matters, which are purely China's internal affairs."

The spokesman stressed, "In 2020, the Central Authorities decisively enacted the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) and the HKSAR Government soon afterwards promulgated it for implementation. Since then, national security has been effectively safeguarded. Order in society has been swiftly restored. People's rights and freedoms have been better protected. Hong Kong has overall achieved a major transition from chaos to governance. All the foregoing are indisputable facts. Since Hong Kong's return to the motherland, 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. Also, the NSL 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, including the freedoms of the press, of speech and of publication, shall be protected in accordance with the law.

"In fact, since the implementation of the NSL, the media landscape in Hong Kong has remained vibrant. As always, the media can exercise their freedom of the press in accordance with the law. Their freedom of commenting on and criticising government policies remains uninhibited as long as this is not in violation of the law."

The spokesman added, "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 be held accountable. Any suggestion that people, institutions and organisations from certain backgrounds or occupations be immune from legal sanctions for their illegal acts and activities is tantamount to granting privileges to them to break the law. It is totally contrary to the spirit of the rule of law and nonsensical."

The spokesman reiterated, "Currently at the stage of advancing from stability to prosperity, the HKSAR embraces great potential and boundless prospects. The HKSAR steadfastly safeguards national sovereignty, security and development interests, and fully and faithfully lives up to this top priority of the principle of 'one country, two systems'. The HKSAR Government shall resolutely, fully and faithfully implement the NSL and further strengthen the HKSAR's legal system and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding national security to prevent, suppress and punish in accordance with the law acts and activities that endanger national security. At the same time, it shall safeguard the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people in accordance with the law. Its overarching goal is to ensure the steadfast and successful implementation of 'one country, two systems'."