

# HKSAR Government strongly disapproves of and rejects biased and misleading remarks on Hong Kong matters made overseas

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (November 17) strongly disapproved of and rejected the recent biased and misleading remarks made by some foreign governments, politicians, officials and the media, etc, on HKSAR's work in safeguarding national security and Lai Chee-ying's case.

A HKSAR Government spokesman said, "Any attempt to interfere with the judicial proceedings in the HKSAR by means of political power, in order to procure a defendant's evasion of the criminal justice process, is a blatant act undermining the rule of law of Hong Kong. We urge that foreign individuals and entities should respect the judicial system of Hong Kong and should not interfere with the trials in Hong Kong. The suggestion that any persons or organisations with certain backgrounds should be immune from legal sanctions for their illegal acts and activities is tantamount to granting such persons privileges to break the law and is totally contrary to the spirit of the rule of law."

The spokesman continued, "Hong Kong's rule of law and independent judicial power are guaranteed under the Basic Law, which specifically provides that the judicial power, including that of final adjudication, vested with the HKSAR, is to be exercised by the Judiciary independently, free from any interference. All cases are handled strictly on the basis of evidence and in accordance with the law. All defendants will receive a fair trial strictly in accordance with laws applicable to Hong Kong and as protected by the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights."

The HKSAR Government spokesman stressed, "National security is the top priority of any country and it is an international practice to enact legislation to safeguard national security. Western countries including the UK and the US are no exception.

"The Hong Kong National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance clearly stipulate that human rights shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, and that 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 freedom of speech and of the press, shall be protected in accordance with the law."

The HKSAR Government pointed out that Hong Kong has always welcomed normal business exchanges, economic activities and people-to-people exchanges

with different economies. On economic and trade co-operation in particular, the HKSAR Government spokesman said, "As one of the most open economies in the world, Hong Kong firmly supports free and open trade, and a multilateral trading system. We hope to develop fair and free trade relations and promote mutually beneficial outcomes based on the principle of mutual respect. At the same time, we will strive to protect the legitimate rights and interests of Hong Kong businesses."

The spokesman stressed, "The HKSAR Government will continue to exchange views with representatives of different governments and organisations on issues of mutual concern under the principles of mutual respect and equality, facilitate co-operation, exchanges and communication among different parties, and promote Hong Kong's distinctive advantage of enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world under 'one country, two systems'."