

HKSAR Government strongly disapproves of and rejects remarks related to Hong Kong in US' 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (June 29) strongly disapproved of and rejected the slandering remarks against the situation of human rights, etc. in the HKSAR in the so-called 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom of the United States (US) under the guise of religious freedom.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "The HKSAR Government strongly disapproves of and rejects the US' repeated attempts, through yet another so-called annual report, to slander the HKSAR under the guise of religious freedom by piling up false stories and fabricated narratives. As always, Hong Kong residents enjoy the rights and freedoms, including religious freedom and the freedom of speech, under the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and other relevant laws. 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. 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 spokesman stressed, "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. The law enforcement agencies of the HKSAR have been taking law enforcement actions based on evidence and strictly in accordance with the law in respect of the acts of the persons or entities concerned, and such actions have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation. The Department of Justice of the HKSAR, by virtue of the Basic Law, shall control criminal prosecutions and make independent prosecutorial decisions based on an objective assessment of all admissible evidence and applicable laws free from any interference. The Judiciary of the HKSAR exercises judicial power independently in accordance with the Basic Law and decides cases strictly in accordance with the evidence and all applicable laws. Cases will not be handled differently because of the background of the persons involved."

The spokesman reiterated, "The HKSAR Government is steadfast in safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, fully and faithfully upholding the highest principle of 'one country, two systems', while protecting the legal interests, rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents and other people in Hong Kong in accordance with the law. It will

resolutely safeguard the overall interest of the community and the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, ensuring the steadfast and successful implementation of 'one country, two systems'. The HKSAR Government strongly urges the US to immediately stop acting against the international law and basic norms of international relations and interfering in Hong Kong matters, which are purely China's internal affairs."