

HKSAR Government strongly opposes US Secretary of State's report

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (October 15) voiced strong opposition to a report released by the United States (US) Secretary of State on October 14 (US time) under the so-called "Hong Kong Autonomy Act".

A Government spokesman said, "The US has been increasingly blatant in its interference in Hong Kong's affairs in recent months, including passing successive laws, pronouncing an executive order and imposing 'sanctions' against our officials under the pretext of human rights, democracy and autonomy. We strongly reprimand the US authorities for publishing a report that contains totally groundless and irresponsible accusations against the HKSAR."

The HKSAR Government has on numerous occasions stated its firm position against the US' interference, including through press releases on [July 15](#) and [August 8](#).

"We take great exception to the comments in the report that smear and demonise The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (National Security Law). Safeguarding national security through legislation is in line with international practice. National security has always been a matter that falls under the purview of the Central Authorities. As the highest organ of state power, the National People's Congress (NPC) has authorised the Standing Committee of the NPC (NPCSC) to formulate relevant laws on establishing the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security. The enactment of the National Security Law on June 30 by the NPCSC is lawful and constitutional. It is both timely and necessary to uphold the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems' in Hong Kong," the spokesman said.

"Contrary to the report's claims that Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and freedoms have been undermined, since the implementation of the National Security Law, stability has been restored to society while national security has been safeguarded in Hong Kong, and our people can continue to enjoy their basic rights and freedoms in accordance with the law. This is a fact that the US authorities should not turn a blind eye to."

The spokesman also dismissed comments in the report that question, without grounds, law enforcement by Hong Kong authorities.

"Hong Kong is governed by the rule of law and law enforcement agencies are duty-bound to take action against unlawful acts. Any person who is arrested has the right to a fair trial by our independent courts, and the burden is on the prosecution to prove that the accused committed a crime beyond reasonable doubt before there can be a conviction."

Regarding the US' threat to impose "sanctions" on financial institutions and HKSAR Government officials, the spokesman said it is another example of US hegemony.

"The US' 'sanctions' will not create an obligation for financial institutions under Hong Kong law. Our financial institutions and our financial system as a whole are robust and resilient. They will continue to operate normally and smoothly despite any undue pressure from the US. We, however, urge the US to act responsibly by refraining from taking measures that may undermine the interests of the international financial system," the spokesman said.

"The Chief Executive and other officials who are being targeted by the US have made it clear that they will not be intimidated. They will continue to discharge the duty to safeguard national security in Hong Kong in accordance with the law without fear or anxiety.

"We will fully support and facilitate any countermeasure taken by our nation against the US. We will also defend Hong Kong's interests against the US' unilateral actions through various means."

The HKSAR Government formally took issue in September with the US Government over the latter's new requirement in respect of the origin marking of Hong Kong products. If the US refuses to withdraw the requirement and bilateral discussions fail to reach satisfactory outcomes, the HKSAR Government will take action against the US in accordance with the World Trade Organization (WTO) Dispute Settlement Mechanism. In this connection, the HKSAR's permanent representative to the WTO made clear Hong Kong's [position](#) at a meeting of the General Council of the WTO on October 13 (Geneva time).

In response to media enquiries about the US Secretary of State's recent remarks about the 12 Hong Kong residents who were arrested in the Mainland, the spokesman said that the Secretary has blatantly ignored basic facts.

"Those 12 individuals are all wanted persons suspected of committing serious crimes in Hong Kong. Instead of facing legal liability in Hong Kong, they have chosen to flee through illegal means to evade legal responsibility. We were shocked to hear the US Secretary say that they had committed no crimes," the spokesman said.

Among those 12 fugitives, 10 were charged by the Police with serious offences including making or possession of explosive, arson, conspiracy to wound, riot, assault on police officer, possession of offensive weapons and possession of instrument fit for unlawful purpose. They were released on court bail pending trial, with the condition of not being allowed to leave Hong Kong. Another person was arrested by the Police for suspected violation of the National Security Law in relation to collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security, as well as offences under the Crimes Ordinance and possession of ammunition without licence. The person concerned was released on Police bail subsequently on the conditions of handing over the travel document, not being allowed to leave Hong Kong and reporting to the Police. The other person is wanted by the Police for

suspected making or possession of explosive. These 12 wanted persons were arrested by the Mainland authorities according to their laws for illegal entry to the Mainland.

The spokesman said, "In Hong Kong, no one is above the law and everyone has to be responsible for his or her actions. The HKSAR Government will not interfere with the law enforcement actions of other jurisdictions. By the same token, we once again urge the US to stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs, which are internal matters of the People's Republic of China."