

# HKSAR Government strongly refutes views of JPAC to set record straight

The Japan Parliamentary Alliance on China (JPAC) incorrectly and inappropriately commented on various issues today (August 12), including the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (National Security Law) and the electoral arrangements for Hong Kong Legislative Council (LegCo). The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) expressed deep regret and strongly refuted such views in order to set the record straight.

A Government spokesman said, "The National Security Law was enacted to ensure the resolute, full and faithful implementation of 'One Country, Two Systems', 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy. The National Security Law only targets four types of acts and activities that endanger national security. The vast majority of Hong Kong residents who are law-abiding, including overseas investors, are not affected."

"The National Security Law clearly stipulates that the HKSAR shall protect the rights and freedoms enjoyed by residents 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 in accordance with the law. These include the rights and freedoms of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration. However, the enforcement agencies of the HKSAR Government will seriously handle, in accordance with the law, any illegal acts suspected of endangering national security," the spokesman said.

"The Basic Law clearly stipulates that the Department of Justice of the HKSAR shall control criminal prosecutions, free from any interference. The HKSAR shall be vested with independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. Since our return to the Motherland, Hong Kong's rule of law and judicial independence have been highly respected internationally," the spokesman stressed.

The HKSAR Government respects the rule of law. While it will not comment on details of specific cases, it should be pointed out that no one is above the law, and anybody who violates the law must face justice regardless of his/her status or background. Applications and operations by the Police in evidence collection are based on investigation need and in accordance with the relevant laws and procedures, which are both lawful and reasonable. Moreover, the Police always strive to protect the privacy and rights of detained persons, including the rights to seek legal assistance, communicate with a relative or friend, receive copies of written record under caution and medical treatment, etc.

Separately, the HKSAR Government has repeatedly stressed that amidst a new wave of the COVID-19 epidemic which has seen an alarming surge in confirmed cases and deaths, to protect health and the voting rights of all registered voters, Legislative Council General Election (LCGE) in 2020 had to be postponed. The Government keeps monitoring the development of the epidemic and announced the postponement of LCGE in 2020, a difficult but necessary decision, as close as possible to the election on July 31 (36 days before the election). According to the decision made by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on August 11, the current-term LegCo will continue to discharge its duties for no less than one year until the commencement of the seventh-term LegCo.

The HKSAR Government learned that JPAC was established on July 29 comprising 30 Diet Members of Japan on the pretext of the National Security Law. The HKSAR Government is very disappointed that some Japanese politicians have made biased remarks to interfere in China's internal affairs and HKSAR's affairs, without a full understanding of "One Country, Two Systems" or factual basis. Hong Kong and Japan have close ties in various areas such as commerce, tourism, and culture. The HKSAR Government urges JPAC members to handle the relationship between the two places in an objective and balanced manner.