

HKSAR Government strongly rejects and condemns US for smearing HK through update travel advisory

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (November 28) strongly opposes and condemns the United States (US) for its so-called travel advisory, which once again confuses the public and maliciously smears the HKSAR.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "As a highly international city, Hong Kong has frequent exchanges and close liaison with other countries, regions and relevant international organisations. Such normal exchange activities are protected by the Basic Law and the laws of Hong Kong. What the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) and other relevant laws regulate is the use of Hong Kong by foreign countries or external elements to carry out acts and activities endangering national security, which is obviously different from normal exchange activities."

"The laws related to national security provide clear definition to the offences. No one, including tourists, will unwittingly breach the law. The US has manipulated its foreign travel advisory into a political instrument, creating the illusion that all tourists coming to Hong Kong will be regarded as culprits endangering national security, thereby affecting travel. Such action bears ulterior motives, and is extremely appalling and irresponsible," the spokesman said.

"In fact, Hong Kong remains an attractive destination for tourists. Following the resumption of normal cross-boundary travel starting from February 2023, Hong Kong's tourism industry began to recover at full speed with a steady growth in visitor arrivals. From January to October 2024, some 36.7 million arrivals were recorded, representing a year-on-year increase of about 37 per cent. In addition, the international business community continues to have confidence in Hong Kong. A survey by the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong earlier this year noted that nearly 80 per cent of its members have confidence in Hong Kong's rule of law. Close to 70 per cent of the respondents indicated that their operations had not been affected by the NSL. The US has substantial economic interest in Hong Kong. Over the past decade, it registered a trade surplus of about US\$270 billion with Hong Kong. Over 1 200 US companies operate in Hong Kong.

"Security and development work together like the two wings of a bird. Development requires a safe social environment. In March 2024, the HKSAR fulfilled the constitutional responsibility and historic mission of enacting local legislation for Article 23 of the Basic Law. The newly enacted Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) achieves convergence, compatibility and complementarity with the NSL. Together they form a comprehensive legal system and enforcement mechanism for safeguarding national security. Now that stability and security have been restored in Hong

Kong, Hong Kong people can regain the enjoyment of rights and freedoms which many of them were unable to enjoy during the period of serious violence and Hong Kong version of 'colour revolution' in 2019. The HKSAR Government solemnly urges the US to discern fact from fallacy, stop immediately their wanton slanders and smears against the HKSAR," the spokesman reiterated.