

HKSAR Government's response to 2024 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index

In response to media enquiries on 2024 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index (Index), a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government spokesman made the following reply today (October 23):

Hong Kong's ranking in the Index remains unchanged, continuing to rank the 6th in East Asia and the Pacific, and the 23rd out of 142 countries and jurisdictions globally. Hong Kong remains high in the overall ranking and continues to be ahead of some European and American countries which often unreasonably criticise the rule of law and human rights situation of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong climbs one place in the global rankings in respect of "Regulatory Enforcement" and "Civil Justice". In respect of "Open Government", Hong Kong continues to maintain last year's score and global ranking, which clearly demonstrates that Hong Kong has a comprehensive regulatory enforcement mechanism and civil justice system under "one country, two systems". The continuous improvements in these areas are conducive to the construction of the rule of law and the business environment, which consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's "eight centres" positioning under the National 14th Five-Year Plan.

Hong Kong's score in respect of "Absence of Corruption" is higher than last year and ranks the 10th globally. This shows that Hong Kong remains to be one of the most corruption-free places in the world and that the effectiveness of its anti-corruption efforts has been recognised internationally. The Government will continue to promote the exchange of anti-corruption experience among experts and scholars from Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas, thereby strengthening Hong Kong's international status in integrity building and further contributing to the national and global anti-corruption cause.

Hong Kong's scores and global rankings slightly drop in relation to "Constraints on Government Powers", "Fundamental Rights", "Order and Security" and "Criminal Justice". However, Hong Kong's rankings in East Asia and the Pacific remain almost unchanged, reflecting the successful implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle in Hong Kong, as well as the effectiveness of the Hong Kong National Security Law, the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance and other relevant laws of the HKSAR in safeguarding national security and maintaining long-term prosperity and stability in Hong Kong. The minor drop in the scores does not seem to fully reflect the institutional strengths of Hong Kong's rule of law. For example, in respect of "Criminal Justice", Hong Kong has a fair and comprehensive criminal justice system as well as a criminal legislative framework that

keeps up with the times, fully protecting the rights of the parties involved. Hong Kong's comprehensive, robust and well-funded legal aid system also plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the rule of law. In addition, Hong Kong residents enjoy fundamental rights to commence legal proceedings and seek judicial remedies before the courts, which are protected by the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance.

All in all, Hong Kong's overall score (0.72) is the same as the countries ranked the 22nd and the 24th globally. The scores in most of the aspects have only been slightly adjusted.

Hong Kong has maintained a trusted legal system under "one country, two systems", its rule of law is also widely recognised and respected by the community. The HKSAR Government will continue to be steadfast in safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, as well as fully and faithfully implementing the "one country, two systems" principle and upholding the rule of law in the HKSAR.