

[HKSARG strongly refutes irresponsible remarks contained in latest UK Six-monthly Report on Hong Kong](#)

Hong Kong is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Hong Kong affairs are internal matters of the PRC. By virtue of international law and convention, every country should refrain from interfering with the internal affairs of another country. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (November 24) urges the United Kingdom (the UK) Government to uphold and respect such international protocol; we strongly object to sweeping attacks and groundless accusations on several recent developments in the HKSAR contained in the UK Six-monthly Report on Hong Kong released on November 23.

“The "One Country, Two Systems" principle was put forward by Mr Deng Xiaoping. It guided China's negotiations with the UK that led to the successful resolution of the historical Hong Kong question. It is still the best institutional arrangement to ensure Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability. No one is more committed to "One Country, Two Systems" than the Central People's Government. In his Address made at the Celebrations of the 20th Anniversary of Hong Kong's Return to the Motherland and the Inauguration Ceremony of the Fifth-Term Government of the HKSAR, President Xi Jinping stressed that "the Central Government will unswervingly implement the policy of 'One Country, Two Systems' and make sure that it is fully applied in Hong Kong without being bent or distorted.”

“Events in the HKSAR in recent years posed challenges to the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, including calls for "Hong Kong independence" and "self-determination" imbued with anti-China sentiment. This had given rise to acts and activities undermining social order which endangered Hong Kong's stability, especially those we had seen in the latter part of 2019. Hong Kong, used to be one of the safest cities in the world, was besieged by escalating violence. At the same time, external forces had intensified their interference in Hong Kong's internal affairs and flagrantly glorified the illegal acts of radicals using the excuse of freedom and democracy. We condemned overseas politicians for turning a blind eye to such violence which was seriously jeopardising our nation's sovereignty, security and development interests, as well as the HKSAR's prosperity and stability.

“It was against the above background that the National People's Congress (NPC), the highest organ of state power, made a decision on May 28, 2020 that a national law on national security should be enacted to safeguard national security in Hong Kong. On June 30, the NPC Standing Committee adopted the "The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" (the National Security Law). It was hailed by some 2.9 million Hong Kong people as the turning point for Hong Kong to find a way out of the difficulties and to

restore order from chaos. Indeed, in the past few months since implementation of the National Security Law which was included in Annex III to the Basic Law for local promulgation, violence has significantly subsided and Hong Kong people could once again enjoy their basic rights and freedoms in accordance with the law.

National security is a matter within the purview of the Central Authorities. Whether it is a unitary or federal state, legislation on national security is invariably carried out by the central authorities rather than local governments. Contrary to what the UK Report alleged, the National Security Law does not conflict with Article 23 of the Basic Law; the HKSAR is still required to enact the national security legislation stipulated in the Basic Law at an early date.

Furthermore, out of respect for Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, except in limited, specified circumstances, the HKSAR has jurisdiction over cases concerning offences under the National Security Law – investigation and enforcement by the Hong Kong Police Force, prosecution by the Department of Justice, trial by Hong Kong's independent judiciary and execution of penalty by the relevant HKSAR agencies. We doubt such responsibilities would be delegated to a local government in the UK.

On the Report's criticism of the HKSAR Government's decision to postpone the Legislative Council (LegCo) Elections by one year, we could not help but mocked at the double standards adopted by the UK Government. On March 13, 2020, by invoking the emergency legislation – the UK Coronavirus Act, the UK Government postponed the local elections in England due to take place on May 7, 2020 for a year, as result of the then coronavirus outbreak. In Hong Kong, the decision was made against the then assessed public health risks arising from over three million voters coming out to cast their vote on a day involving over 600 polling stations. As a matter of fact, the decision of postponement was announced on July 31, when the daily number of confirmed cases hit a record high the day before, and up till now, still represents the peak of Hong Kong's epidemic.

On the Report's concern about the disqualification of LegCo candidates and incumbent members, again it has ignored the constitutional and legal requirement for people in public office, notably legislators, to uphold the oath they made in swearing allegiance to the HKSAR and upholding the Basic Law. We notice that swearing allegiance to the system of the country and upholding laws of the state is an international norm for public officers and any breach of the oath will not be tolerated. In the UK, Members of Parliament who refuse to take an oath of allegiance to the Crown cannot assume office. The disqualification done in accordance with the law has nothing to do with the right to freedom of speech or the democratic process.

The so-called "response" taken by the UK Government represents a breach of international obligations where it concerns extradition agreements to combat crimes and bilateral agreement with the PRC on the treatment of British National (Overseas). We also take great exception to the partial representation in the Report of the stance of the international community. At

the 44th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, over 70 countries expressed support for the enactment of the National Security Law by the NPC Standing Committee of the PRC."

â€œâ€œIt is time for the UK Government to respect law-abiding Hong Kong people's aspirations for stability and prosperity and appreciate her well-positioned status to flourish under "One Country, Two Systems" with the full and unreserved support of the Central People's Government.