

Regional Flag and Regional Emblem (Amendment) Bill 2023 to be gazetted this Friday

The Government will arrange gazettal of the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem (Amendment) Bill 2023 this Friday (July 7), and has submitted the Legislative Council (LegCo) Brief on the Bill to the LegCo today (July 5).

In light of the amendments to the Law of the People's Republic of China on the National Flag and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the National Emblem as endorsed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in 2020, the Government amended the National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance (NFNEO) in 2021. The national flag, national emblem and national anthem are the symbols and signs of the country, representing the authority and dignity of the country. Similarly, as the symbols and signs of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the regional flag and regional emblem must be protected by the law and respected by the people. To this end, upon detailed examination of the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem Ordinance (RFREO), the Government decided to amend the Ordinance for aligning with the amended NFNEO and the National Anthem Ordinance (NAO) suitably, with a view to better preserving the dignity of and enhancing the protection for the regional flag and regional emblem.

The key content of the Bill can be generally divided into three facets:

First, to strengthen protection of the regional flag and regional emblem by clarifying the provisions relating to offences of desecration of the regional flag and regional emblem;

Second, to make clear the requirements on the proper use of the regional flag and regional emblem, with a view to enabling members of the public to know clearly the do's and don'ts in respect of the regional flag and regional emblem, for instance, the etiquette for attending a ceremony in which the regional flag is raised, the recovery and disposal mechanism of the regional flag and regional emblem, etc; and

Third, to provide for the education and promotion of the regional flag and regional emblem.

A Government spokesman said, "The Government consulted the Panel on Constitutional Affairs of the LegCo on the proposed direction and outline of the amendments to the RFREO in May this year. Members expressed support for the proposed direction. The Bill will be introduced into the LegCo for first reading and second reading on July 12."