

Security Bureau strongly disapproves of and firmly rejects slanders on Safeguarding National Security Ordinance by UK Foreign Secretary

The Security Bureau today (March 20) strongly disapproved of and firmly rejected the untruthful and biased remarks made by the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom (UK), Mr David Cameron, about the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance which was passed unanimously by the Legislative Council (LegCo) yesterday (March 19).

The Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, said, "Mr Cameron once again made untruthful and unreasonable remarks about the Ordinance. They are sheer political smears and despicable political manoeuvres. As a matter of fact, during the public consultation of the Basic Law Article 23 legislation, 98.6 per cent of the submissions of opinions showed support and gave positive comments, reflecting a strong consensus in society for the legislation, and it is also the aspiration of the people. Furthermore, the relevant Bills Committee convened 25 meetings and used nearly 50 hours to scrutinise the Ordinance (representing 30 per cent longer than that of the lengthiest scrutiny by the bills committees in 2023), during which nearly 1 000 questions and comments were raised by the members, resulting in 91 amendments, with most of them being originated from comments by lawmakers. Some clauses were even deliberated for over an hour, reflecting that the Ordinance was thoroughly discussed at the LegCo and the scrutiny was completed in a conscientious and prudent manner. It was not 'rushed through the legislative process' as claimed groundlessly by Mr Cameron.

"The definition of offences in the Ordinance is clearer than those in the National Security Act 2023 of the UK. For example, the Ordinance clearly stipulates the seven categories of 'state secrets'. The relevant information will constitute a 'state secret' only if the condition that 'disclosure of the information without lawful authority would likely endanger national security' is met. On the contrary, the 'protected information' in relevant UK laws does not concern any specific fields. As long as the improper disclosure of information will likely prejudice the national security or interests of the UK, such information may likely be regarded as 'state secrets'. Disregarding the ambiguity in the laws of his own country, Mr Cameron made unreasonable criticisms against the Ordinance, showing his hypocrisy and double standards. His disregard for facts and gross interference in the matters of Hong Kong were seen very clearly by the general public. The people of Hong Kong will not be deceived.

"The Ordinance only targets an extremely small minority of people who endanger national security, with the aim to protect the lives, property, freedoms and rights of the people of Hong Kong. The Ordinance also stipulates that the rights and freedoms which HKSAR residents enjoy 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 HKSAR shall be protected in accordance with the law. Following the enactment of the legislation, the rights and freedoms enjoyed by members of the public will be better protected.

"As a matter of fact, after the Ordinance was passed by the LegCo unanimously, members of the public and various sectors of the community including the commercial sector and major chambers of commerce, the legal sector (including the Law Society of Hong Kong), real estate association, the youth sector, other professional sectors and political parties welcomed and voiced support for the legislation. All those raising opposing comments were external forces, as the legislation will increase their cost of and difficulty in endangering our national security. The Ordinance is a piece of legislation to defend against external forces that endanger our national security, acting like a sturdier door and a more effective door lock to defend our home. Only invaders who want to intrude into our home to plunder and loot will object to Hong Kong's legislation to safeguard the country. It is incumbent on us to tear off the mask of these external forces so that the public can see their true colours.

"The core essence of the Sino-British Joint Declaration is about China's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong. It did not authorise the UK to interfere in Hong Kong's affairs after its return to the motherland. The UK has no sovereignty, jurisdiction or right of supervision over Hong Kong after its return to the motherland. The UK should immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs which are internal affairs of China," Mr Tang reiterated.