

# Statement by Chief Executive on US Secretary of State's Statement on National Security Law

Further to the Government press release issued this morning (July 17) in response to the "business advisory" released by the US Department of State, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of the Treasury to US businesses and individuals operating in Hong Kong, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Mrs Carrie Lam, made the following statement commenting on the US Secretary of State's Statement on the National Security Law:

We are alarmed by the sweeping and totally unsubstantiated remarks contained in Secretary Blinken's statement which represent blatant interventions into the internal affairs of the People's Republic of China of which the HKSAR is an inalienable part, utter trampling on the rule of law which is a commonly held core value and once again, double standards of the US Administration. We cannot allow such misguided remarks to go unchallenged.

First, the National Security Law clearly stipulates that human rights and individual freedoms shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR. However, the Secretary must be aware that under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as the constitutions of most countries around the world, it is clearly stated that certain basic rights and freedoms of individuals can be restricted through legislation for the purpose of safeguarding national security. Under the US jurisdiction, we have seen numerous decisions and actions affecting other countries, businesses and individuals justified on grounds of safeguarding the national security of the US. We cannot help wondering how such obvious double standards could go unnoticed.

Secondly, the international community has indeed spoken up against the US' interference into the internal affairs of the People's Republic of China. We noticed that at the recently concluded session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, over 90 countries expressed support for China in its efforts in restoring stability in the HKSAR. These countries clearly stood by the principle of non-intervention under international law as well as the principle of sovereign equality which expressly sets out that the territorial integrity and political independence of the State are inviolable.

Thirdly, the great majority of Hong Kong people are patriotic and fully embrace the principle of "One Country, Two Systems". They aspire for peace, stability and personal safety but prior to the enactment of the National Security Law, all these had been put at risk by rioters associated with or incited by external forces to subvert State power, very often under the guise of promoting democracy. The Hong Kong authorities are taking actions, including the arrests of suspects, in strict accordance with the law.

Prosecution decisions are taken by the Department of Justice of the HKSAR Government without any interference and trials are conducted by an independent judiciary. It is this robust legal system that we are extremely proud of, and one enshrined in the Basic Law and also embedded in the National Security Law. No other government could or should fetter with these legal proceedings.

Fourthly, it is simply wrong for the Secretary to allege that Hong Kong's business environment has deteriorated in the past year. Hong Kong remains an open and free economy, underpinned by the rule of law and a robust regulatory regime. As fully demonstrated by the relevant statistics, Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre has not changed and business confidence has not been shaken.

We urge the US authorities to view Hong Kong matters in an honest and fair manner and instead of intimidating US businesses and individuals with the "business advisory", consider ways to further the rewarding experiences of US businesses and individuals in Hong Kong.