

Task Force on Basic Law Article 23 Legislation awarded new round of Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance (with video)

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government announced today (June 18) that the Task Force on Basic Law Article 23 Legislation comprising the Department of Justice (DoJ), the Security Bureau (SB), and the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) was awarded a new round of the Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance.

The Safeguarding National Security Ordinance was unanimously passed by the Legislative Council (LegCo) on March 19 this year and took effect on March 23. The HKSAR accomplished the legislation for Article 23 of the Basic Law, fulfilling the constitutional responsibility and historic mission that Hong Kong had been waiting for 26 years, eight months and 19 days.

The Task Force did a significant amount of preparatory work for drawing up the legislative proposals, including in-depth studies and analyses of the laws on safeguarding national security of the country and overseas countries, the implementation experience and court verdicts of the National Security Law and other legislation on safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, etc. After that, the Task Force held nearly 30 consultation sessions to provide detailed briefings to various sectors of the community during the one-month public consultation period. After the end of the consultation period, the Task Force took less than a week to conduct a comprehensive analysis on over 13 000 submissions received, and introduced the finalised Chinese and English versions of the Bill to the LegCo for scrutiny nine days after the conclusion of the consultation period. During the scrutiny of the Bills Committee, the Task Force gave detailed replies to more than 1 000 questions raised by LegCo Members, and proposed 91 amendments after listening to and studying their views. In addition, in the face of malicious attacks and smears on Basic Law Article 23 legislation by external forces, the Task Force was capable of delivering prompt and cogent refutation every time to prevent the public from being misled by unfounded remarks.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, said, "The exemplary performance of the Task Force in legislating for Article 23 of the Basic Law is highly commendable. From public consultation and drafting legislative proposals, to explaining and assisting the LegCo in scrutinising the Bill, and rebutting unfounded, smearing and fact-twisting remarks and stating clearly the Government's stance, the Task Force has worked tirelessly to accomplish the glorious historic mission for Hong Kong. The efficiency, professionalism and determination of this cross-departmental Task Force provided important contributions to a glorious chapter in Hong Kong history. The Task Force demonstrates an outstanding example for the civil service and truly deserves the award."

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, extended heartfelt congratulations to the Task Force for being awarded the Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance. She said, "The Task Force's relentless hard work and concerted efforts in completing the historic mission of legislating for Article 23 of the Basic Law in a highly efficient and expeditious manner demonstrates the civil service's unwavering courage and determination to safeguard national security without fear of challenges, and that the Task Force is an outstanding example worthy of emulation by civil service colleagues."

The representative of the Task Force and the then Deputy Secretary for Security, Mrs Apollonia Liu, expressed her deep honour and gratitude for the new round of Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance to the Task Force. She said, "The DoJ, the SB and the HKPF have all along been co-operating well in their respective roles and responsibilities in safeguarding national security. The DoJ is responsible for handling the related legal work, drafting the Bill and providing legal advice; the SB is the policy bureau responsible for laws on safeguarding national security; and the HKPF is the principal law enforcement agency for laws on safeguarding national security. The smooth completion of legislating for Article 23 by the team hinged on the leadership of the Chief Executive and the support of the Central Authorities, the high quality and very efficient scrutiny by the LegCo, the full co-operation of relevant government departments and the support from various sectors of the community and members of the public who love the country and Hong Kong. Their support is the greatest recognition of our work."

The current-term Government launched the Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance Scheme in 2023 to give recognition to meritorious and exemplary teams or individuals in the civil service, with a view to encouraging civil servants to continuously strive for excellence. It also aims to allow the public to have a better understanding of the Government's work and the excellence of the civil service.

The nomination exercise for the new round of the Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance commenced in April this year. The Civil Service Bureau invited bureaux to nominate outstanding teams or colleagues for the honour. The response was very positive and bureaux had actively nominated outstanding teams in recognition of their outstanding performance in different areas.

The selection process was meticulous. After being made by the respective Directors of Bureaux, the nominations were considered by a selection committee chaired by the Secretary for the Civil Service and with members comprising two Permanent Secretaries and a representative from the Chief Executive's Office. The committee carefully considered each nomination and put forward its recommendations to the Chief Executive. After considering the committee's recommendations, the Chief Executive made his decision on the teams or individuals to be awarded.

A video about the Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance featuring interview remarks by the Chief Executive and sharing by the

representative of the awarded team will be uploaded to the Chief Executive's Facebook page and Weibo. Members of the public are welcome to view the video.