

HKSAR Government strongly disapproves of and firmly rejects so-called resolution related to Hong Kong by US Senate

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (March 16) strongly disapproved of, and firmly rejected, the so-called resolution related to Hong Kong of the United States (US) Senate, which contains unfounded remarks and smears against the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) and the situation in the HKSAR covering rights and freedoms, the rule of law, etc.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government rebuked that the remarks in the so-called resolution of the US Senate about the implementation of the NSL in the HKSAR amount to fact twisting and political smearing. The spokesman said, "Since the implementation of the NSL in June 2020, the US politicians have been repeatedly exploiting different incidents and occasions, as well as creating excuses, to slander the NSL and attack the HKSAR in its dutiful, faithful and lawful implementation of the NSL. They neglect the fact that the implementation of the NSL has enabled the livelihood and economic activities of the Hong Kong community at large to resume as normal and the business environment to be restored. Hong Kong suffered from the widespread 'black-clad violence' in 2019. The US politicians did not say a word about those acts, which disregarded the law, breached peace and challenged the HKSAR's authority, with severe damage caused to Hong Kong's society, economy and business environment. Through the so-called resolution, the US politicians once again performed a despicable manoeuvre with politics prevailing over the law, exposing their hypocrisy with double standards. Their vile conspiracy of 'using Hong Kong to contain China' is doomed to fail."

The spokesman said, "The US politicians suggested in the so-called resolution that people, institutions and organisations with certain backgrounds should be immune from legal sanctions for their illegal acts and activities. This is tantamount to granting privileges to them to break the law, and is totally contrary to the spirit of the rule of law. Hong Kong is a society underpinned by the rule of law and has always adhered to the principle that laws must be obeyed and lawbreakers held accountable. Hong Kong's judicial system has always been highly regarded by international communities. The NSL clearly stipulates four categories of offences that endanger national security. So long as people, institutions or organisations strictly observe the laws in Hong Kong, they will not unwittingly violate the law."

"All law enforcement actions taken by Hong Kong law enforcement agencies under the NSL, or any local legislation, are based on evidence, strictly according to the law and for the acts of the people, institutions and organisations concerned, and have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation. The Department of Justice is in charge of criminal prosecutions, free from any interference by virtue of Article 63 of the Basic Law. All prosecution decisions are based on an objective analysis of all admissible evidence and applicable laws. The Judiciary exercises judicial power independently in accordance with the law, and all those facing criminal charges have the right to a fair trial.

"Any attempt by any country, organisation, or individual to interfere with the judicial proceedings in Hong Kong by means of political power, in order to procure a defendant's evasion of the criminal justice process, is a blatant act undermining the rule of law of Hong Kong. Making a statement with the intent to interfere with or obstruct the course of justice, or engaging in conduct with the same intent, is very likely to constitute the offence of criminal contempt of court or the offence of perverting the course of justice."

The spokesman said, "The HKSAR Government steadfastly safeguards the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people as protected under the law. Since Hong Kong's return to the motherland, human rights in the city have always been robustly guaranteed constitutionally by both the Constitution and the Basic Law. The NSL clearly stipulates that human rights shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, and that the rights and freedoms, including the freedoms of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration, that Hong Kong residents enjoy under the Basic Law and the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong shall be protected in accordance with the law. Nonetheless, such rights and freedoms are not absolute. The ICCPR also expressly states that some of them may be subject to restrictions as prescribed by law that are necessary for protection of national security, public safety, public order or the rights and freedoms of others, etc.

"Since the return of Hong Kong to the motherland, the HKSAR Government has been fully, faithfully and resolutely implementing the principles of 'one country, two systems', 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy in accordance with the Constitution and the Basic Law to ensure the long-

term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. Hong Kong has also embarked on a new journey of advancement from stability to prosperity. Under the 'one country, two systems' principle, Hong Kong has the distinctive advantage of enjoying strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world. With the unparalleled connectivity to the Mainland and the rest of the world, the prospects of Hong Kong's development are promising. As the centre of economic gravity in the world is shifting eastward, the Mainland, along with other fast-growing economies in the region, will be a major engine of global economic growth and a source of ample economic opportunities. Hong Kong will continue to play its unique role as a gateway and intermediary, with a view to reaping the enormous benefits of this trend and seizing the abundant development opportunities ahead. With the motherland's strong support, and the wide room for development brought about by national strategies including the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development and the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative, Hong Kong embraces boundless business opportunities. The HKSAR Government will continue to create strong impetus for growth at full steam, forge a better integration of a capable government and an efficient market, and proactively compete for enterprises and talent to strengthen the city's competitiveness, with a view to taking the city's economic development to new heights."

The spokesman reiterated, "The HKSAR Government steadfastly safeguards national sovereignty, security and development interests, and upholds the authority of the NSL. It resolutely carries out its duties and obligations to safeguard national security in accordance with the law, and upholds the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people as protected under the law, so as to ensure the steadfast and successful implementation of 'one country, two systems'. Any person's attempt to undermine the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong by slandering the situation in the city will only expose his own weakness and faulty arguments and be doomed to fail. The HKSAR Government strongly urges the US politicians to immediately stop acting against the international law and basic norms of international relations and interfering in Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs at large."

Ends/Thursday, March 16, 2023