

Transcript of remarks by SJ at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at a media session after attending a radio programme this morning (April 1):

Reporter: Mr Lam, are you worried that this will give foreign lawyers a conception that Hong Kong is not welcoming them? Are you worried also that there won't be any foreign lawyers coming due to the complicated procedures, because you said you hope to strike a balance?

Secretary for Justice: I am not worried at all. To begin with, we have a system which is not shared by most other common law jurisdictions. In principle, we still retain the system to allow overseas lawyers to come to Hong Kong on an ad hoc basis.

In the past, it was not a permission that will be granted by the court as a matter of course. The court will consider whether to allow the overseas lawyer to come to Hong Kong is in the public interest. What we intend to do is to introduce a mechanism for the purpose of safeguarding national security. But even then, we do not intend to impose a complete ban.

We introduce the system under which the circumstances of each case will be assessed individually. So there is still a real chance for overseas lawyers to come to Hong Kong, even if to allow him to come to Hong Kong to appear in that particular case may involve national security. So our system, even under our proposed amendments, is very liberal.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Ends/Saturday, April 1, 2023