

To the Letters Editor, The Times

Dear Editor,

I refer to the letter from Joshua Wong which you published on 3 July: “China and the new Hong Kong security law” (www.thetimes.co.uk/article/times-letters-china-and-the-new-hong-kong-security-law-32f97tc9q).

Safeguarding national security and the rule of law in Hong Kong is essential to the maintenance of the “one country, two systems” principle and the long-term stability and safety of Hong Kong. It is the fundamental duty of every responsible government to have such laws. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is an inalienable part of the People’s Republic of China, and a local administrative region which enjoys a high degree of autonomy and reports directly to the Central People’s Government. In view of the increasing national security risks in Hong Kong, the enactment of such a law at the state level is both necessary and urgent in order to plug the legal loophole in Hong Kong.

The National Security law targets four activities that endanger national security: namely; secession; subversion of state power; terrorist activities; and collusion with external forces to endanger national security. It will therefore only target an extremely small minority of offenders who commit these four specific offences, while the life, property, basic rights and freedoms of the majority of Hong Kong residents, including overseas investors, will be protected.

The law stipulates very clearly that the various rights and freedoms, including the freedoms of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, and of demonstration, which the 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 Hong Kong, shall be protected.

It also highlights that the HKSAR shall adhere to a number of important principles in line with the rule of law, including presumption of innocence, well-defined conviction and sentencing of the crimes, no “double jeopardy”, right to fair trial and non-retrospectivity.

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