

**Washington Post**

August 18, 2020

Dear Sirs,

I refer to your editorial “Hong Kong gets steamrolled” (August 11), which incorrectly links the arrest of Mr Jimmy Lai and others for alleged offences under the National Security Law (the Law) with a completely unrelated issue of press freedom in Hong Kong. In carrying out the operation on August 10, the Police clearly stated that those individuals were arrested for suspected collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security – a contravention of Article 29 of the Law – and conspiracy to defraud.

To suggest that the arrest of Mr Lai somehow signals “a determination to extinguish media freedom” is grossly wrong. It should be stressed that freedom of speech, of the press and of publication are among those rights and freedoms explicitly highlighted in Article 4 of the National Security Law as being protected in accordance with the law in Hong Kong. There is simply no question of “the loss of Hong Kong as an island of freedom.”

Hong Kong has always remained committed to ensuring press freedom, which is part and parcel of the city’s reputation as a vibrant international media hub and global business and financial centre. More than 80 daily newspapers and over 500 periodicals, both local and international, are published in Hong Kong.

Undoubtedly, the past year has been a challenging period for Hong Kong. Violent anti-government protests and wanton destruction of public properties have tarnished the city’s reputation. Added to these are politically-motivated actions by foreign governments, including recent sanctions imposed on Hong Kong by the US government.

Far from being “steamrolled”, the Law paves the way for the restoration of stability and confidence in Hong Kong and ensures the resolute, full and faithful implementation of “one country, two systems”. It will not change Hong Kong’s high degree of autonomy or undermine the legitimate rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people under the Basic Law.

Hong Kong will continue to forge ahead as a vibrant, open and international city.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Cheung Kin-chung  
Chief Secretary for Administration  
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