

December 21, 2023

The Editor
The Washington Post

Dear Editor,

We strongly oppose the considerably flawed and misleading remarks in your editorial board's piece "Show trials and fake elections are destroying Hong Kong" (December 19).

As regards Lai Chee-ying's case concerning the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL), it must be reiterated that as the legal proceedings involving Lai are still ongoing, it is inappropriate for any person to comment on the details of the case. All cases, including the relevant case, are handled strictly on the basis of evidence and in accordance with the law. All defendants will receive fair trial strictly in accordance with laws applicable to Hong Kong, including the NSL, and as protected by the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights.

Without commenting on any individual case, we must point out that all cases concerning offence endangering national security will be handled in a fair and timely manner by the law enforcement, prosecution and judicial authorities of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) as required by Article 42(1) of the NSL.

In particular, the Department of Justice (DoJ) of the HKSAR, by virtue of Article 63 of the Basic Law, controls criminal prosecutions, free from any interference. All prosecutorial decisions by the DoJ are based on admissible evidence, applicable laws and guidelines such as the Prosecution Code. Prosecutions would only be commenced if there is sufficient admissible evidence to support a reasonable prospect of conviction and if it is in the public interest to do so. Cases will never be handled any differently owing to the profession, political beliefs or background of the persons involved. To suggest otherwise is utter nonsense without regard to objective facts with the intention to smear the judicial system of the HKSAR.

Safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests is the top priority of the principle of "one country, two systems", as well as the responsibility of the HKSAR. The HKSAR Government discharges steadfastly the duty and obligation in safeguarding national security to prevent, suppress and impose punishment for acts and activities endangering national security in accordance with the NSL and other relevant laws. The five wanted persons with reward notices have repeatedly engaged in acts and activities that endanger national security publicly, including advocating to achieve "Hong Kong independence" through "force" and requesting foreign countries to impose so-called "sanctions" on officials of the Central Government and the HKSAR Government as well as judicial and law enforcement personnel. The HKSAR Government must fight head-on to fulfil its constitutional duty in safeguarding national security and uphold the principle of "one country, two systems" and the spirit of the rule of law.

We are also appalled by the serious misunderstanding demonstrated in your editorial board's piece about the seventh-term District Council (DC) election. It was the first large-scale territory-wide election held after improving the district governance system and reforming the DCs, enabling the DCs to return to their positioning as district advisory and service organisations in accordance with Article 97 of the Basic Law and fully implementing the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong". It is of utmost significance.

This was a high-quality election that met the objectives of being conducted in a fair, just, clean, safe and orderly manner overall, fully demonstrating an election culture of excellence and the superiority of the reformed DCs system. Over 1.19 million registered electors cast their votes in the election. The cumulative turnout rate in the DC geographical constituencies was 27.54 per cent, and that of the District Committees constituencies was as high as 96.9 per cent. This shows that all the voters were eager to choose excellent DC members who would be devoted to serving the community and representing their views for building a better community together.

The HKSAR will continue to resolutely discharge the responsibility of safeguarding national security, effectively prevent, suppress and impose punishment for acts and activities that endanger national security in accordance with the law, and safeguard the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people in accordance with the law at the same time.

Chan Kwok-ki
Chief Secretary for Administration
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

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