

May 4, 2023

The Editor
The Washington Post

Dear Editor,

Your editorial “Thirty years in, World Press Freedom Day offers little to celebrate” (May 2) contains groundless and fallacious remarks about Hong Kong.

I wish to point out that residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) enjoy freedom of the press and freedom of speech, both of which are protected under the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights. Article 4 of the Hong Kong National Security Law also stipulates that such freedoms shall be protected in accordance with the law in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR.

However, freedom of the press and freedom of speech are not absolute, and can be restricted for reasons including protection of national security in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. No one is above the law. Journalists, like everyone else, have an obligation to abide by all the laws.

The arrest and prosecution of Jimmy Lai and other entities are completely unrelated to the issue of press freedom. Rather, they were arrested and prosecuted for their criminal activities such as fraud and collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security. All defendants have received and will receive a fair trial by the courts of the HKSAR exercising judicial power independently.

Any law enforcement actions taken by Hong Kong law enforcement agencies are based on evidence, strictly according to the law, for the acts of the persons or entities concerned, and have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation.

The media landscape in Hong Kong remains vibrant. As always, the media can exercise their right to monitor the HKSAR Government’s work, and their freedom of commenting on or criticising government policies remains uninhibited, as long as this is done in full compliance with the law.

The HKSAR Government will, in accordance with the law, continue to resolutely safeguard national security and protect the rights and freedoms that residents of HKSAR enjoy, ensuring the steadfast and successful implementation of the “one country, two systems” principle.

Chan Kwok-ki

Chief Secretary for Administration

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region