

April 1, 2024

The Editor
The Economist

Dear Editor,

It is ironic that you slam Hong Kong for passing a new national security law (“Hong Kong passes a security law that its masters scarcely need”, March 20th, 2024) in fulfilment of its constitutional, legal and moral obligation to protect its country and city, when your Parliament enacted a sweeping and far more stringent National Security Act last July to counter “hostile state threats”.

There is no overlap between our new law and the national security law enacted by Beijing. Offences like “treason”, “sedition”, “theft of state secrets” and “espionage” are not covered in Beijing’s law. They have actually been on our statute books for decades in localised versions of British laws. Whereas your government rejected a “public interest defence” for people, especially the media, vulnerable to the offence of unauthorised disclosure of vaguely defined “protected information” under the National Security Act, our new law provides a defence for persons who are compelled to disclose “state secrets” without authority where there is a serious threat to public order, public safety or public health, among other circumstance.

Your National Security Act 2023 introduced the new offences of "sabotage" and "foreign interference". Similar new offences in our national security law are closely modelled on yours.

You also completely disregard that we have robust rule of law in Hong Kong, and our courts have ruled against the government in many cases. No court observers have been able to find fault with our transparent court proceedings or the learned judgments handed down by our courts.

Regina Ip (Mrs.)
Member, Hong Kong Legislative Council

(ENDS)