

September 3, 2024

The Editor  
Wall Street Journal

Dear Editor,

We strongly oppose your fact-twisting opinion piece "Hong Kong Convicts Two Editors" (September 2).

Hong Kong citizens enjoy freedom of the press and of speech as protected under Basic Law and Hong Kong Bill of Rights. In Hong Kong, like all other places, such rights and freedoms are not absolute. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates that media and relevant personnel must observe and discharge "special duties and responsibilities", including protecting national security. No responsible government would tolerate dissemination of disinformation, incitement of hatred and glorification of violence. Recent example includes a British journalist reportedly being arrested for allegedly violating the UK Terrorism Act. The disparagement of the HKSAR cases only exposes double standards.

Precedents from the European Court of Human Rights also point out that journalists must act in good faith and on accurate factual basis and provide reliable and precise information in accordance with the tenets of "responsible journalism" to enjoy protection of their rights.

The reasons for verdict pointed out clearly that the ideology of Stand News was localism which excluded China, and that it even became a tool to smear and vilify the Central Authorities and the HKSAR Government. Relevant articles, without any objective basis, attacked the National Security Law and relevant enforcement and prosecutorial process; spread hatred and anti-government sentiment with disinformation; attacked enforcement by the Police and glorified the behaviour of rioters.

Penalties for offences in connection with seditious intention under the new Safeguarding National Security Ordinance do not have retrospective effect.

We are not intimidated by the so-called "sanctions" mentioned in your piece, which are despicable political manipulation. We will resolutely continue to safeguard national security.

Tang Ping-keung  
Secretary for Security  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

(ENDS)