

8 July 2026

The Editor

The Sydney Morning Herald

Dear Editor,

We strongly oppose and condemn the highly biased and misleading article entitled “Australia’s foreign interference laws once enraged China. Now they’re used to justify Hong Kong’s crackdown” (5 July 2026). It shamelessly embellishes the increasingly violent havoc that roiled Hong Kong for more than 10 months as a “pro-democracy uprising”. It is a spiteful repudiation, in the face of solid figures and objective facts, of the success of the Hong Kong National Security Law (HKNSL) that brought Hong Kong from chaos to order, ensured the protection of human rights and enhanced businesses’ confidence. It is a blind denial of the constitutional responsibility of Hong Kong to safeguard national security – one shared by other jurisdictions. It is an expedient obliviousness to the fundamental principle that any person who commits an offence is liable to facing the letter of the law.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is an inalienable part of the People’s Republic of China. It is a local administrative region that enjoys a high degree of autonomy under the “one country, two systems” principle and comes directly under the Central People’s Government. The HKSAR steadfastly safeguards national sovereignty, security and development interests, and fully and faithfully lives up to this top priority of the “one country, two systems” principle.

In accordance with international law and international practice based on the Charter of the United Nations, safeguarding national security is an inherent right of all sovereign states. Endangering national security is a serious crime, and no country will watch with folded arms any activities endangering its national security. Western countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, have all enacted extensive laws for safeguarding national security, and they keep enhancing such laws from time to time.

After China’s resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, the HKSAR however

had remained “undefended” for a long period of time in the absence of effective national security legislation, where anti-China elements and external forces continuously challenged the principle of “one country, two systems” and even attempted to seize the power of governance. The nefarious “black-clad violence” in 2019, which lasted more than 10 months, was the Hong Kong version of a “colour revolution” that had severely damaged Hong Kong’s societal, economic and business environment, and caused the public to live in fear.

Against this background, the enactment of the HKNSL in June 2020 was a watershed moment in Hong Kong’s transition from chaos to order, as stability and safety in the city were quickly restored upon implementation of the law. With the local enactment of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) in March 2024, the city’s legal system and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding national security were further improved. The HKNSL and the SNSO, which are compatible and complementary, together build a strong line of defence to safeguard national security in Hong Kong.

Both the HKNSL and the SNSO clearly stipulate that human rights shall be respected and protected, and that the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents under the Basic Law, and the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong shall be protected in accordance with the law. The principle of the rule of law shall be adhered to in preventing, suppressing and imposing punishment for offences endangering national security, which includes protection for the right to defend oneself and other rights in judicial proceedings that a criminal suspect and defendant are entitled to under the law.

The HKSAR has a solid and resilient foundation of the rule of law that is well-recognised by the international community. Enforcement actions under national security laws are based on evidence and strictly in accordance with the law.

Extraterritorial effect for offences under the HKNSL and the SNSO fully aligns with the principles of international law, international practice and common practice adopted in various countries and regions. It is both necessary and legitimate, and is also in line with those of other countries and regions around the world.

For those anti-China destabilising elements who have fled overseas to evade criminal responsibilities for violating Hong Kong's national security laws or those who are suspected to have endangered our national security outside Hong Kong, the HKSAR Government will take all lawful measures to pursue these fugitives regardless of distance, until they are brought to justice.

Where necessary, the Secretary for Security of the HKSAR Government will exercise the powers under the SNSO to specify persons who have absconded overseas and are subject to warrants of arrest issued by the court for being suspected of having committed offences endangering national security.

No persons or countries should harbour these fugitives, or provide any forms of assistance to them for evading their criminal responsibilities.

Hong Kong's unrelenting pursuit of absconders is fully justified, necessary and legitimate. To ensure that these fugitives are duly brought to justice, appeals to the public for any information concerning their whereabouts are made on official channels and platforms, including the police website and the National Security Exhibition Gallery (the Gallery).

The rule of law in Hong Kong has been built and maintained over the years by the joint efforts of the Judiciary and legal professions, including judges at all levels of courts, and it will not be changed because of the departure of individual overseas non-permanent judges. In fact, quite a number of current and former non-permanent judges expressed confidence in the independence of the members of Hong Kong's Judiciary. The HKSAR Government supports the Judiciary's continuous efforts in seeking suitable candidates, both locally and overseas, to serve as non-permanent judges of the Court of Final Appeal, and to handle such judicial appointments in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal Ordinance.

As the HKSAR Government continues its fight in safeguarding national security by taking enforcement actions in accordance with the law, the importance of promoting national security education on all fronts should be highlighted.

The Gallery aims at enhancing visitors' appreciation of the profound significance of national security, and deepening citizens' general knowledge and understanding of national security-related concepts and issues. Opened in August 2024, the Gallery houses the first thematic exhibition in the

HKSAR dedicated to the systematic promotion of national security education. Developed around the core of a holistic approach to national security, the Gallery serves to promote patriotism and affection for our Motherland. Messages are conveyed to encourage all citizens to take part in safeguarding national security, and to elevate their sense of responsibility and ownership. Information shown in the Gallery emphasises the prevailing situation about security and social stability in Hong Kong, and Hong Kong's unique advantages of being backed by the Motherland and connected to the world. Since its opening, the Gallery has been attracting visitors in droves. The number of visitors to the Gallery has surpassed 1.8 million to date.

The implementation of the HKNSL six years ago has enabled the livelihood and economic activities of the Hong Kong community at large to swiftly resume to normal, and the business environment has since been improving continuously. According to the Global Wealth Report 2026, Hong Kong is ranked the world's largest cross-boundary wealth management centre. According to the Economic Freedom of the World 2025 Annual Report, Hong Kong has once again been ranked as the world's freest economy. In addition, Hong Kong's ranking improved for the third consecutive year to second globally in the World Competitiveness Yearbook 2026. Also, Hong Kong continues to rank among the top three global financial centres and came first in the world in terms of funds raised through initial public offerings in 2025. These internationally recognised achievements are built upon the freedom and stability brought to Hong Kong society by the HKNSL, other relevant laws of the HKSAR, and the work of safeguarding national security.

Safeguarding national security is the constitutional responsibility of the HKSAR. The HKSAR Government will continue with its endeavours on all fronts, be they education or law enforcement actions, to address, combat, deter and prevent, in accordance with the law, any acts and activities endangering national security.

Back in early June, we furnished your correspondent with the above information, the different parts of which are all closely linked to each other and inextricably intertwined to form a full picture of the exhibition now on display in the National Security Exhibition Gallery. We requested that our response be posted in its entirety so that your readers are given an open and fair account of the background and purposes of the Gallery, and removing any part depletes its completeness and is prone to it being taken out of context. It is regrettable that only two sentences from our reply were quoted in the article to serve the politically biased narrative and suit the existential stance of the publication,

in defiance of the basic tenets of responsible journalism.

Benjamin Mok

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Security Bureau

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region