

(By email)

To the Letters Editor of the Financial Times

The recent arrests of certain people for organising and participating in unauthorised assemblies in Hong Kong have nothing to do with any virus crisis as suggested in your articles "Beijing clamps down on Hong Kong under cover of coronavirus" (April 24) and "How strongman leaders will exploit coronavirus crisis" (April 21), but everything to do with upholding the rule of law.

The arrests were made based on evidence from investigations and strictly in accordance with Hong Kong law, which is enforced in a transparent manner and free from political interference. In Hong Kong, as in the UK, everyone is equal before the law; no one can break the law without facing consequences. The Police are duty bound to handle every case in a fair, just and impartial manner. Cases will not be handled any differently owing to the political beliefs or background of the persons involved.

Recent comments by the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government (CPG) in Hong Kong should be seen from the perspective of the constitutional setup of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). As a Special Administrative Region of China, the HKSAR enjoys a high degree of autonomy and comes directly under the CPG according to Article 12 of the Basic Law. The Liaison Office of the CPG and its personnel shall abide by the Basic Law and laws of the HKSAR. There is no question of the Liaison Office interfering in the affairs which the HKSAR administers on its own in accordance with the Basic Law.

Like elsewhere in the world, the HKSAR Government is presently devoting most of its time and energy to combatting COVID-19, keeping its citizens safe, preventing the spread of the virus inside and out of Hong Kong, and gladly sharing our knowledge on our very effective strategies to detect, isolate, trace and treat COVID-19 infections and possible carriers. At the same time, we must also ensure the smooth functioning of government and our legal system both of which are fundamental pillars of Hong Kong's success.

Sincerely,  
Winky So  
Director-General  
Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office, London