

香港特別行政區政府
保安局



The Government of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Security Bureau

香港添馬添美道 2 號

2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

本函檔號 Our Ref.:

April 30, 2021

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

The Editor
Financial Times

Dear Editor,

Re your article, “Hong Kong immigration law change raises ‘exit ban’ fears”, (April 28).

Comparing the Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2020 with so-called “exit bans” is based on nothing more than idle speculation and smacks of anti-China fearmongering.

I reiterate that the Bill targets potential claimants at source, before they enter Hong Kong. Currently, there are more than 13,000 non-refoulement claimants in Hong Kong. The new legislation will help to expedite the handling of these claims and reduce numbers in future.

I have stated publically in the Legislative Council that the subsidiary legislation to be made will clearly set out that the power to direct a carrier not to carry a particular person will only apply to flights heading to Hong Kong.

In no way does the Bill impinge on the rights of Hong Kong residents to travel and to leave and to enter Hong Kong. These rights are guaranteed under the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

I also directly address a couple of questions that appear in your article, which have been reportedly raised by the business community:

1. No, regular business clients need not be worried about the Bill, neither should any law-abiding person. The regulations specifically aim to prevent potential claimants from entering Hong Kong.
2. No, there is no risk that your business clients will be unable to leave Hong Kong. As I have stated, the regulations will apply only to carriers, passengers and crew heading to Hong Kong.

The Bill is the first step allowing Hong Kong to comply with its international obligations to implement the Advance Passenger Information system as a member of the International Civil Aviation Organisation. As a major international business and aviation hub and a responsible member of the international community, Hong Kong will continue to live up to its responsibilities in promoting cross-border safety and security by implementing effective, transparent and widely-recognised immigration controls.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.K.C. Lee', written in a cursive style.

(John K C Lee)

Secretary for Security

Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region