

July 12, 2021

Editor

Mirage News

Email: hello@miragenews.com

Dear Editor,

I write in response to your article “Apple Daily closure a devastating blow” on June 24, 2021 which made a groundless claim that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is using the Hong Kong National Security Law (HKNSL) against its citizens to stifle scrutiny and to undermine press freedom.

Every country has a right – indeed, a duty – to protect its sovereignty and national security. China, with Hong Kong as its Special Administrative Region, is no different.

The case in question is about a suspected conspiracy to commit collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security in breach of the HKNSL. This is an offence that the HKSAR Government takes very seriously, which involves the use of journalistic work as a tool to collude with a foreign country or with external elements to impose sanction or engage in hostile activities against the HKSAR and the People’s Republic of China. As clarified by the HKSAR Government at a media session on June 17, 2021, the operation is not about the work of media or journalists. Normal journalistic work takes place freely and lawfully in Hong Kong.

Freedom of speech, of the press and of publication are among rights and freedoms explicitly mentioned in Article 4 of the HKNSL as being protected in accordance with Hong Kong laws. The HKNSL also ensures the resolute, full and faithful implementation of the “One Country, Two Systems” principle – it will not change Hong Kong’s high degree of autonomy or undermine the legitimate rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people under the Basic Law.

Apart from embracing key legal concepts including the presumption of innocence, the prohibition of double jeopardy, and the right to defend oneself and other rights in judicial proceedings that a criminal suspect, defendant and other parties in judicial proceedings are entitled to under the law, the four types of offences endangering national security provided in the HKNSL are clearly defined.

Hong Kong remains a secure, open and dynamic environment that welcomes investors and entrepreneurs from around the world.

Yours sincerely,

Trista Lim

Director

(Representative to Australia and New Zealand)

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Sydney

Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region