

Letters Editor, The Guardian

Dear Editor,

I refer to the articles “China's grip on Hong Kong eroding its status as financial hub, investors believe” (www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/08/chinas-grip-on-hong-kong-eroding-its-status-as-financial-hub-investors-believe) of 8 July and “Britain can't protect Hong Kong from China – but it can do right by its people” (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/02/britain-hong-kong-from-china-beijing-freedom-uk>) of 2 July.

Safeguarding national security and the rule of law in Hong Kong is essential to the maintenance of the “one country, two systems” principle and the long-term stability and safety of Hong Kong. It is an international practice to do so by way of legislation. It is the fundamental duty of every responsible government to have such laws. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is an inalienable part of the People’s Republic of China, and a local administrative region which enjoys a high degree of autonomy and comes directly under the Central People’s Government. In view of the increasingly pronounced national security risks in Hong Kong, the enactment of a national security law at the state level is both necessary and urgent in order to plug the loophole in national security in Hong Kong.

In concrete terms, the law on safeguarding national security (the Law) targets only four types of acts and activities that endanger national security, namely, secession, subversion of state power, organising and carrying out terrorist activities, and collusion with foreign or external forces to endanger national security. The Law will therefore only target an extremely small minority of offenders who commit these four specific offences, while the life and property as well as basic rights and freedoms of the overwhelming majority of Hong Kong residents, including overseas investors, will be protected.

Of note is that the Law stipulates very clearly that the various rights and freedoms, including the freedoms of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration, which the HKSAR residents enjoy 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.

It also highlights that the HKSAR shall adhere to a number of important principles in line with the rule of law, including presumption of innocence, well-defined conviction and sentencing of the crimes, non bis in idem, right to fair trial and non-retrospectivity.

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