

New York Times

August 18, 2020

Dear Sirs,

I refer to your editorial “Jimmy Lai Is Arrested in Hong Kong. Freedom Loses Again” (August 10), which confuses the arrest of Mr Lai on serious charges under the National Security Law (the Law) with the overriding commitment to protect the freedoms of law-abiding citizens.

On August 10, Mr Lai was among 10 people arrested for suspected collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security – a contravention of Article 29 of the Law – and conspiracy to defraud.

The operation was targeted at the alleged offenders’ unlawful acts, but not any individual media organisation. To suggest that the Law is being used to “stifle free expression” is simply wrong.

Let me stress that freedom of speech, of the press and of publication are among the rights and freedoms explicitly highlighted in Article 4 of the Law as being protected in accordance with Hong Kong laws. The Law also ensures the resolute, full and faithful implementation of “one country, two systems” – 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.

While the past year has been a challenging time – as has been widely and freely reported by your publication and others – Hong Kong will remain a staunch defender of the wide-ranging and well-protected freedoms that constitute Hong Kong’s core values cherished by all sectors of this vibrant, open and international city.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Cheung Kin-chung
Chief Secretary for Administration
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government