

May 16, 2022

The Times

Dear Editor,

The Times Leading Article of May 9 “The Times view on John Lee, Hong Kong’s new leader: No-Choice Election”, contains unfounded criticisms and misleading comments on the Chief Executive Election and the National Security Law (NSL) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

Following the social unrest in 2019 coupled with threats to our constitutional order, calm and stability have been restored to the HKSAR. Under the NSL and improvements to our electoral system, Hong Kong’s streets are once again safe and the HKSAR Government has returned to normal operations. It is false and baseless that the article describes Hong Kong as among the “most repressed” cities in Asia. Rather, Hong Kong remains a free society where all legitimate rights and freedoms are protected.

Chief Executive Election

The HKSAR’s democratic development is assured, in line with a white paper entitled “Hong Kong: Democratic Process Under the Framework of One Country, Two Systems” issued last December by the State Council of the People’s Republic of China. While acknowledging that Hong Kong enjoys a high degree of autonomy, it confirmed the Central Authorities’ right to supervise the exercise of the autonomy. It also highlighted the determination of the Central People’s Government to allow democracy to develop in the city, and explained that this will be a democracy “with Hong Kong characteristics”.

Under the Basic Law of the HKSAR, the Chief Executive is accountable to both the Central People’s Government and the HKSAR. The method for selecting the Chief Executive is set out in the Basic Law. All relevant local electoral laws are enacted by Hong Kong’s Legislative Council, including improvements to our electoral system that were introduced in 2021. Elections under the improved electoral system, including the recent sixth-term Chief Executive Election, have been conducted in strict accordance with the laws and in an open, fair and honest manner.

National Security Law

Contrary to the article’s claims, the NSL aims to, amongst others, improve our city’s legal system and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding national security, as well as maintain prosperity and stability of the HKSAR. It clearly

specifies that the legitimate rights and freedoms, including the freedoms of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration, which Hong Kong residents enjoy under the Basic Law and the provisions of the international covenants as applied to Hong Kong, shall be protected in accordance with the law.

Any law enforcement actions taken by Hong Kong law enforcement agencies are based on evidence, strictly according to the law, for the acts of the persons or entities concerned, and have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation.

Following a difficult period in our recent history, Hong Kong is back on the right track under “One Country, Two Systems”, and it was high time for Hong Kong to start a new chapter of development, a chapter that will be geared towards greater prosperity for all.

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