

Government's response to UK officials meeting with wanted persons suspected to have committed offences endangering national security

In response to media enquiries on the United Kingdom (UK) officials meeting with wanted persons suspected to have committed offences endangering national security, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (January 23) responded as follows:

Regarding the attempt by Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, Mr David Lammy, and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Ms Catherine West, to interfere in the HKSAR's enforcement actions in accordance with the law by meeting with the wanted persons suspected to have committed offences endangering national security, the HKSAR Government expressed strong disapproval and condemnation.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said that, "Endangering national security is a very serious crime. No country will watch with folded arms the acts and activities that endanger national security. Those persons who have fled overseas are suspected of continuing to commit offences under the Hong Kong National Security Law. Thus, the Police applied to the court for the arrest warrants in accordance with the law and put them on the wanted list. The UK Government has ignored the malicious acts of those wanted persons, which showcases the hypocrisy with double standards."

The spokesman stressed that, "The HKSAR law enforcement agencies have been taking law enforcement actions based on evidence and strictly in accordance with the law in respect of the acts of the persons or entities concerned, which have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation. The HKSAR Government has the responsibility to pursue the legal liabilities of the persons who are suspected to have committed offences endangering national security and absconded overseas in accordance with the law.

"Any individuals who endanger national security should not believe that being overseas will allow them to evade criminal responsibility and remain beyond the reach of justice. The HKSAR Government will exhaust all means to pursue and combat criminals absconding overseas and endangering national security, ensuring that violations of the law will be pursued regardless of the distance. The HKSAR Government urged the wanted persons to return to Hong Kong and surrender so as to rectify their mistakes."

The spokesman reiterated that, "The Constitution and the Basic Law steadfastly safeguard the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people. Any attempt by foreign countries or external forces to undermine Hong Kong's

situation will only expose their own weakness and faulty arguments and be doomed to fail.

"The HKSAR Government will, as always, continue to resolutely discharge the duty of safeguarding national security, whilst upholding the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong people in accordance with the law, so as to ensure the steadfast and successful implementation of the principle of 'one country, two systems'. The HKSAR Government strongly demands the UK Government to immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong matters which are purely China's internal affairs."