

# HKSAR Government strongly opposes reported granting of refugee status by Germany to a Hong Kong suspect who has jumped bail

In response to press enquiries on media reports which allege that Germany has granted refugee status to a Hong Kong suspect who has reportedly committed serious crimes and jumped bail, a spokesman for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government said today (October 21) that if confirmed to be true, the HKSAR Government expresses strong opposition.

The spokesman said that the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, met this afternoon with the Consul General of Germany in Hong Kong, Mr Dieter Lamlé, at the Central Government Offices. The HKSAR Government asked for this meeting.

Mr Cheung said at the meeting that the HKSAR Government strongly objects to the harbouring of criminals under different pretexts by other jurisdictions. This would only send a plainly wrong message to criminals that they need not face any criminal liability. He stressed that every individual should be responsible for his or her illegal actions.

Mr Cheung reiterated at the meeting that the Basic Law ensures that Hong Kong people enjoy extensive rights and freedoms. The freedoms of speech, media, publication, association, assembly, procession and demonstration, etc. are fully protected under the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights. Hong Kong's rule of law and independent judicial system are the core values of our society, and have long been held in high regard by the international community. According to Article 85 of the Basic Law, the courts of the HKSAR shall exercise judicial power independently, free from any interference. Articles 10 and 11 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights also provide sufficient protection to any person with any criminal charge laid against him, or whose rights and obligations are in a suit at law. Prosecutions are made based on the acts but not political beliefs or background of the persons involved. There is no question of political persecution in Hong Kong.

Mr Cheung also stressed that anyone accused of breaching the law will face an open and fair trial. The Hong Kong courts will, as always, with their sound rule of law and human rights protection, handle all cases in an independent, fair and just manner.

Mr Cheung remarked that given Germany's long-standing diplomatic presence in Hong Kong, the German authorities are expected to duly take into account the above factors in determining the truth and veracity of any claims for refugee status. The HKSAR Government would be dismayed if a basic assessment of facts had not been made.

Mr Cheung reiterated that foreign governments should stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs, which are internal matters of the People's Republic of China.

He asked the Consul General of Germany in Hong Kong to convey the HKSAR Government's position to the relevant German authorities.

The Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, also attended the aforesaid meeting.