

Ministerial Appointments: 25 April 2024

The King has been pleased to approve the following appointments.

HKSAR Government strongly opposes resolution of European Parliament

â€‹The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (April 25) strongly opposed the so-called resolution adopted by the European Parliament against Hong Kong, and strongly condemned the Parliament for making baseless allegations about Hong Kong and smearing the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (the Ordinance), so as to set the record straight.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "It is the constitutional duty of the HKSAR to safeguard national security. In accordance with international law and international practice based on the Charter of the United Nations, safeguarding national security is an inherent right of all sovereign states. Many common law jurisdictions, including western countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Singapore, have enacted multiple pieces of legislation to safeguard national security. Turning a blind eye to the fact and making exaggerated remarks, the Parliament has demonstrated typical political hegemony and hypocrisy with double standards."

"The NSL and the Ordinance clearly specify that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law, as well as 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, are to be protected in accordance with the law. The European Parliament neglected the relevant provisions and lashed out wantonly, fully exposing its malicious intentions."

"The offences endangering national security stipulated by the Ordinance target acts endangering national security with precision, and define the elements and penalties of the offences with clarity. The prosecution has the burden to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the defendant had the actus reus and mens rea of an offence before the defendant may be convicted by the court. The Ordinance will not affect normal business operations and normal worldwide exchanges of local institutions, organisations and individuals. Law-abiding persons (including personnel, organisations and enterprises from the European Union and its member states) will not engage in acts and

activities endangering our national security and will not unwittingly violate the law."

"Extraterritorial effect for the offences endangering national security under the NSL and the Ordinance fully aligns with the principles of international law, international practice and common practice adopted in various countries and regions. It is both necessary and legitimate, and is also in line with those of other countries and regions around the world. It can be seen that the national security laws of various countries, including the member states of the European Union, also have extraterritorial effect under the 'personality principle' and the 'protective principle'. In formulating the extraterritorial effect under the Ordinance, we have already taken into account the principles of international law and international practice of state jurisdiction, as well as the nature of the offences," the spokesman emphasised.

"It is clear that safeguarding national security falls within the internal affairs of a sovereign jurisdiction, so the implementation of the NSL and the Ordinance should be free from any form of intervention. As a matter of fact, during the public consultation of the Basic Law Article 23 legislation, 98.6 per cent of the submissions of opinions showed support and gave positive comments, reflecting a strong consensus in society for the legislation, and it is also the aspiration of the people. The European Parliament blatantly clamoured for so-called 'sanctions' against HKSAR personnel who dutifully safeguard national security. The HKSAR Government strongly condemns its political grandstanding rife with ill intentions, which have been seen through by all."

"As the legal proceedings involving Lai Chee-ying are still ongoing, it is inappropriate for any person to comment on the details of the case. We emphasised that all cases (including the relevant case) are handled strictly on the basis of evidence and in accordance with the law. All defendants will receive fair trial strictly in accordance with laws applicable to Hong Kong (including the NSL) and as protected by the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights," the spokesman also pointed out.

"Any attempt by any country, organisation, or individual to interfere with the judicial proceedings in the HKSAR by means of political power or media or any other means, thereby resulting in a defendant not being able to have a fair trial that one should receive, is a reprehensible act undermining the rule of law of the HKSAR."

"Following the successful enactment of the Ordinance, the shortcomings in the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security are addressed. We must once again emphasise that the Ordinance is a piece of legislation to defend against external forces that endanger our national security, acting like a sturdier door and a more effective door lock to defend our home. The HKSAR Government strongly urges the European Parliament to stop smearing and interfering in Hong Kong affairs which are internal affairs of China and ensure that their remarks concerning the NSL and the Ordinance are fair and just, and stop making scaremongering remarks," the spokesman reiterated.

[Guidance: Asian hornet: UK sightings](#)

Annual confirmed sightings of the Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) in the UK.

[UK condemns environmental damage caused by Russia's war: UK statement to the OSCE](#)

Deputy Ambassador Deirdre Brown calls for the OSCE to continue monitoring the environmental impact of Russia's war.

[Company and director fined after workers exposed to asbestos](#)

A company and its director have been sentenced after workers were exposed to asbestos and its potential harmful effects.

Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited Eye Track Limited's site in Stretford, Manchester, and found an uncontrolled spread of asbestos containing materials around the premises.



Some of the asbestos containing materials on site

HSE has recently updated its webpages on [asbestos safety](#) and in 2023 launched an awareness campaign, [Asbestos and You](#), which provides tradespeople with information about how to deal with asbestos on a job, and the personal risks from asbestos that still exist across the country today.

Earlier this year, the workplace regulator launched its [Asbestos: Your Duty](#) campaign that aims to improve understanding of what the legal duty to manage asbestos involves.

HSE attended the premises on Talbot Road in April 2019 after concerns were raised over workers unsafely working at height during the demolition of a number of units and construction of eight new residential houses.

During the inspection, HSE found significant amounts asbestos-containing materials across the site, mostly large amounts of debris associated with the breakage of asbestos-containing roof sheets from the demolished units. One unit taken down was estimated to contain 100 square metres of asbestos insulation board, 70% of which was demolished by hand and machinery.

A subsequent HSE investigation found the asbestos removal work was carried out under the direct control and instruction of Eye Track Limited director Selcuk Pinarbasi, who was fully aware of the potential dangers of asbestos. Mr Pinarbasi had some months earlier instructed a suitably qualified asbestos surveyor to carry out an asbestos demolition survey which had identified in detail the presence of both licensed and unlicensed materials throughout the site. Mr Pinarbasi was therefore fully aware of the risks the site posed from the presence of asbestos materials on his site prior to any demolition work taking place.

Eye Track Limited, of Talbot Road, Stretford, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £18,783.61 in costs at Manchester Crown Court on 25 April 2024.

At the same hearing. Selcuk Pinarbasi, of Bankhall Lane, Hale, Greater Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) and Section 33(1)(g), by virtue of Section 37(1), of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He received a custodial sentence of 20 weeks, suspended for 12 months. He was also fined £75,000 and ordered to pay costs of £18,783.61.

HSE inspector Phil Redman said: "This case highlights how such behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Lives were deliberately put at risk as profits were prioritised over safety during the uncontrolled demolition and removal of asbestos containing materials.

"Eye Track Limited and its director showed a total disregard for the health, safety and welfare of workers working under their control."

Notes to editors:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator

for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.

2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.