

Suspension of agreement on surrender of fugitive offenders and agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters between Hong Kong and New Zealand

In accordance with the instruction of the Central People's Government (CPG), the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has issued a notice to the New Zealand Consulate-General today (August 3) to suspend the implementation of the Agreement for the Surrender of Accused and Convicted Persons between the HKSAR Government and the Government of New Zealand and the Agreement between the HKSAR Government and the Government of New Zealand Concerning Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLA).

A Government spokesman said, "It is an international practice to safeguard national security through enactment of laws. New Zealand has put in place relevant legislation and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding its national security and sovereignty, such as the Intelligence and Security Act and the Crimes Act 1961.

"However, New Zealand has unilaterally suspended the agreement on surrender of fugitive offenders (SFO) with the HKSAR using the enactment of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as an excuse. The move by New Zealand smacks of political manipulation and double standards. It is also gross interference in China's internal affairs and a grave violation of international law and basic norms governing international relations. The HKSAR Government strongly objects to New Zealand's move. It has politicised juridical co-operation, thereby seriously damaging the basis of juridical co-operation between the HKSAR and New Zealand. For this reason, in accordance with the instruction of the CPG, the HKSAR Government has suspended the implementation of the SFO agreement and the MLA agreement between the HKSAR and New Zealand."

All along, with the authorisation and assistance of the CPG, the HKSAR Government has conducted close and effective law enforcement co-operation with New Zealand under the legal framework of SFO and MLA agreements based on the principle of mutual assistance and reciprocity. Notwithstanding the suspension of the Agreement for the Surrender of Accused and Convicted Persons between the HKSAR Government and the Government of New Zealand and the Agreement between the HKSAR Government and the Government of New Zealand Concerning MLA, the HKSAR has established a comprehensive co-operation regime for the surrender of fugitives and mutual legal assistance. The HKSAR Government will, as always, uphold the principle of mutual assistance and reciprocity, and carry out law enforcement co-operation with other members of

the international community in accordance with the law.