

March 23, 2025

The Editor
The Guardian

Dear Editor,

I strongly object to the opinion piece by Amy Hawkins dated March 22 containing smearing remarks against the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in the handling of national security cases, and write to set the record straight.

The HKSAR Government steadfastly safeguards the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people as protected under the law. There are over 100 senior counsel, over 1,600 barristers and about 13,000 solicitors admitted in Hong Kong and available. The right to choice of lawyers is protected by the Basic Law, and it is well-established by case law that this means a right to choose lawyers who are available and entitled to practise in Hong Kong.

The introduction of a system for ad hoc admission in national security cases on a case-by-case basis in Hong Kong is more favourable than most other jurisdictions, including the UK, which do not have similar ad hoc admission regimes or regimes that allow overseas lawyers to handle NS cases.

Article 14 of the Hong Kong National Security Law provides that decisions of the Committee for Safeguarding National Security are not amenable to judicial review. This accords with the common law principle, also recognised by the United Kingdom, that the courts afford deference to judgements of the executive authorities on national security matters as they are in a far better position to do so. It does not impair the independent judicial power and the power of final adjudication of the HKSAR courts as guaranteed by the Basic Law. All defendants also receive fair trial strictly in accordance with laws applicable to Hong Kong.

Lai Chee-ying's application for leave to appeal was dismissed through a summary procedure because it was wholly devoid of merits. There is nothing "obscure" about the Court of Final Appeal's determination as suggested by the opinion piece. We reject the use of such biased and misleading language to cast aspersions against the court's professionalism and impartiality.

The HKSAR Government will continue to resolutely safeguard national security in accordance with the law.

TANG Ping-keung
Secretary for Security
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

(ENDS)