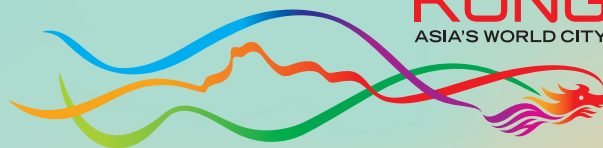


HONG KONG ECONOMIC &amp; TRADE OFFICE IN SINGAPORE

# HONG KONG FILES

**HONG  
KONG**  
ASIA'S WORLD CITY

ISSUE NO. 2/2020

## Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). It is a local administrative region directly under the Central People's Government (CPG) and enjoys a high degree of autonomy. Safeguarding sovereignty, unification and territorial integrity of the PRC are the constitutional responsibilities of the HKSAR, the duty of the HKSAR Government, and also in the interests of all Hong Kong residents.

Since June 2019, Hong Kong has been severely affected by social unrest and violent protests that have had negative impacts on the economy and stability of Hong Kong and posed a threat to national security, including calls for independence and revolution. Opposition forces and organisations advocating "Hong Kong independence" have blatantly challenged the authority of the Central Authorities and the HKSAR Government, pleaded for interference in Hong Kong's affairs by foreign countries and even begged for sanctions against Hong Kong. External forces have intensified their interference in Hong Kong's internal affairs. These activities disregard the interests of Hong Kong people and seriously jeopardise national sovereignty, security and development interests.

In view of the increasingly pronounced national security risks faced by the HKSAR, the enactment of a national security law at the State level is both necessary and urgent in order to plug the loophole in national security in Hong Kong. The legislation is an important step to improve the "One Country, Two Systems" regime as well as to restore stability in Hong Kong society as soon as possible.

On June 30, the National People's Congress Standing Committee passed "The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)" for inclusion in Annex III to the Basic Law according to Article 18 of the Basic Law. By way of promulgation the law is now effective in the HKSAR.

**"The National Security Law is the turning point for Hong Kong to find a way out of the impasse and restore order from chaos. By establishing and improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms to safeguard national security, Hong Kong will be able to stay clear of riots and return to stability. Together, we can relaunch Hong Kong and take forward the city's development."**

Chief Executive of the HKSAR,  
**Mrs Carrie Lam**

## What You Need to Know



- » The purposes of the National Security Law are to safeguard national security, **prevent, suppress and impose punishment for the offences of secession, subversion, organisation and perpetration of terrorist activities, and collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security in relation to the HKSAR**; maintain prosperity and stability of the HKSAR; and protect the lawful rights and interests of HKSAR residents.
- » The Law only **targets an extremely small minority of persons** endangering national security while the life and property as well as various lawful basic rights and freedoms enjoyed by the overwhelming majority of HKSAR residents are protected.
- » The Law clearly stipulates that the **principle of the rule of law shall be adhered to** in preventing, suppressing and imposing punishment for offences endangering national security, including that of conviction and sentencing in accordance with the law, presumption of innocence, no one shall be liable to be tried again for an offence for which he or she has already been convicted or acquitted in judicial proceedings, and protection of the rights of the suspect in judicial proceedings, etc. The offences created by the Law have **no retrospective effect** and are only applicable to acts after the commencement of the Law.
- » The Law clearly stipulates that in safeguarding national security the HKSAR shall protect in accordance with the law **Hong Kong people's rights and freedoms under 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, including the freedoms of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration.
- » Except under the exceptional circumstances specified, the **HKSAR shall have jurisdiction over cases concerning offences under the National Security Law**. The National Security Law and the laws of the HKSAR shall apply to procedural matters, including those related to criminal investigation, prosecution, trial and execution of penalty.
- » The Law provides for the establishment of a **Committee for Safeguarding National Security of the HKSAR chaired by the Chief Executive**, which shall be responsible for affairs relating to, and assume primary responsibility for, safeguarding national security in the HKSAR. It is under the supervision of and accountable to the CPG. The Committee has a National Security Adviser, who is designated by the CPG.
- » As the principal authorities to enforce the National Security Law, the **Hong Kong Police Force and the Department of Justice** of the HKSAR Government have set up dedicated divisions to handle national security affairs.
- » The State Council has established the **Office for Safeguarding National Security of the CPG in the HKSAR**, headed by Mr Zheng Yanxiong. Mr Luo Huining has been appointed by the State Council as National Security Adviser to the Committee on National Security of the HKSAR.



## *To Clear the Myth*

*The National Security Law targets collusion with foreign or external forces. Will the law affect activities between Hong Kong citizens, organisations or corporations and their foreign counterparts in regard to academic exchanges, religious contacts, cultural interchanges, trade and investment, etc?*

No. The basic rights and freedom of Hong Kong citizens, including freedom to enter or leave the HKSAR, freedom of conscience, freedom to engage in academic research, literary and artistic creation, and other cultural activities, are protected by the Basic Law and will not be affected. The national security offence of colluding with foreign or external forces as stipulated under the National Security Law only refers to specific acts, which have been clearly defined under the law. It will not affect the normal exchange activities between individuals, organisations or corporations and their foreign or external counterparts, neither will it cause anyone to breach the law inadvertently.



*Will the National Security Law erode foreign investors' confidence and undermine Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre?*

Social unrest, the failure of the rule of law, the lack of protection for corporate assets and personal safety are the genuine factors which would undermine investors' confidence. As a matter of fact, these were the factors that have led to the fall of Hong Kong's international rankings in the past year. The United Kingdom, United States of America, France, Germany and Mainland China all have enacted national security legislation, but we have never heard that such legislation affected the economic development and business environment of these countries. The National Security Law can promptly revert the chaotic situation in the past year and restore stability in Hong Kong, thereby improving Hong Kong's business and investment environment. We strongly believe that only with national security safeguarded can Hong Kong enjoy long-term stability and security. Therefore, the legislation will be conducive to Hong Kong continuously improving its strengths, attracting overseas talents, strengthening its status as an international financial centre as well as a shipping and trading hub, in addition to giving impetus to promoting the development of innovation and technology.

More information is available for reference:

**Booklet** - [https://www.isd.gov.hk/nationalsecurity/eng/pdf/NSL\\_QnA\\_Book.pdf](https://www.isd.gov.hk/nationalsecurity/eng/pdf/NSL_QnA_Book.pdf)

**Website** - <https://www.isd.gov.hk/nationalsecurity/eng/index.html>

## TOGETHER, WE FIGHT THE VIRUS

Hong Kong's COVID-19 epidemic situation was kept firmly under control for almost two and a half months from mid-April to late June. Most confirmed cases were imported with the vast majority being Hong Kong residents returning from overseas, and there were only sporadic local cases concentrated in a few clusters. During this period, the Government gradually relaxed its social distancing measures under the "suppress and lift" strategy. Most business premises previously closed were reopened; people went to school and work as usual; public services generally returned to normal; and some 50,000 candidates completed this year's Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination.

However, Hong Kong's epidemic situation has deteriorated since July 5, with an upsurge in local confirmed cases involving a wide variety of settings and sectors. The sources of infection for over 40% of these cases remain unknown, significantly increasing the risk of virus transmission and putting the city on the verge of a large-scale community outbreak. The third wave of the COVID-19 epidemic has lasted for almost two months since it started in early July. The Government has been maintaining the most stringent social distancing measures adopted since the outbreak of the epidemic.

Here are some of the major measures implemented by the Government in response to developments from May to August:

### **Preventing imported cases**

July 29 - The crew change arrangement for passenger vessels and goods vessels without cargo operation in Hong Kong was suspended, and the testing and quarantine arrangement for sea crew members, air crew members and other persons exempted from quarantine requirement arriving in Hong Kong was tightened.

### **Tightening social distancing measures**

July 29 - These included prohibiting dine-in services in catering business premises, incorporating sports premises and swimming pools into the list of scheduled premises requiring closure, reducing the number of persons allowed in group gatherings in public places from four to two and requiring people to wear mask at all times in public places.

### **Enhanced quarantine arrangements and isolation and treatment facilities**

End July - A quarantine facility for residents of residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities in AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE) began operation. In addition, two quarantine centres for residents of residential homes at Hong Kong PHAB Association Jockey Club PHAB Camp in Pok Fu Lam and Cheung Muk Tau Holiday Centre for the Elderly in Sai Kung were activated.

August 1 - The Hospital Authority commenced operation of the community treatment facility at Hall 1 of AsiaWorld-Expo to admit confirmed patients with mild symptoms and stable conditions.

### **Enhanced testing**

From May 12 - public hospitals conducted COVID-19 testing for inpatients with influenza-like illness symptoms. Admission screening was conducted for a random sample of institutional residents and patients admitted to psychiatric wards.

From May 15 - Department of Health set up a service point at Hong Kong International Airport to provide containers to airport workers for collecting their deep throat saliva samples for testing of COVID-19.

Since mid-July - testing for high-risk groups was provided through the Targeted Group Testing Scheme. Testing was also arranged on a regular basis or by random sampling for certain targeted groups depending on risk assessment and anti-epidemic needs; staff of critical infrastructure and services; and high-exposure groups such as public transport drivers, frontline staff of catering businesses, stall operators and personnel working in markets.



*The Hospital Authority (HA) Chairman, Mr Henry Fan (first right), and HA Chief Executive, Dr Tony Ko (second right), visit the community treatment facility and communicate with healthcare staff on duty.*





## TOGETHER, WE FIGHT THE VIRUS

## Supply of masks

June 30 - The Government started delivering disposable masks produced under the Anti-epidemic Fund's Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme for free to 2.8 million residential households.

The Innovation and Technology Bureau announced in May that the Government will distribute free reusable CuMask+™ to the door of all Hong Kong citizens. The CuMask+™ is developed by the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel. It is a six-layer mask with special ergonomic features. Two of its layers contain copper which is capable of immobilising bacteria, common viruses and other harmful substances. The mask complies with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F2100 Level 1 Standard in terms of particle filtration efficiency (PFE), bacterial filtration efficiency (BFE), resistance to penetration by synthetic blood, flammability and pressure resistance, and is reusable for up to 60 washes.



*The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam (second right), chats with a worker during an inspection of the production site of CuMask+™.*



*Mrs Lam inspects one of the production sites of CuMask+™ in Tsuen Wan. Looking on is the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit (right).*

## Postponement of Legislative Council General Election



Amid the severe COVID-19 epidemic situation, the Chief Executive (CE), Mrs Carrie Lam, announced on July 31 to postpone the 2020 Legislative Council (LegCo) General Election, originally scheduled for September 6, 2020, for a year to September 5, 2021. This is aimed to protect public safety and public health as well as ensure elections are conducted openly and fairly. CE has invoked the Emergency Regulations Ordinance (Cap. 241) to make the Emergency (Date of General Election) (Seventh Term of the Legislative Council) Regulation. The Regulation specifies the new election date, brings the current electoral process to an end, and deals with such matters as election expenses and donations.

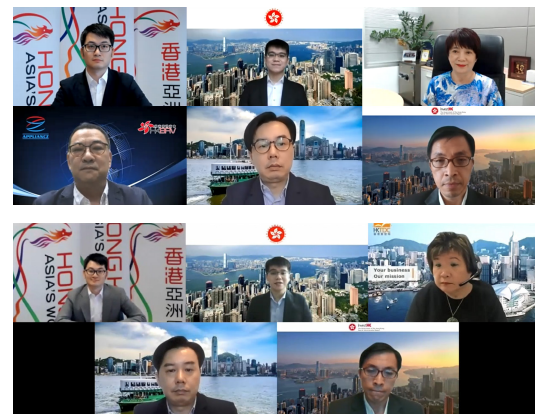
A Government spokesman said, "The epidemic situation has been extremely severe since the outbreak in early July. There is an increasing risk of a major community outbreak that may lead to a collapse of the local public hospital system, which would be a significant public crisis. The LegCo General Election is massive in scale. A situation with millions of voters casting their votes on the same day will create a very high infection risk. Under the existing regulation to prohibit group gatherings, it would not be possible for candidates to carry out any meaningful rallying activities. Further, a large number of voters are living, working and studying in the Mainland, while many are stranded overseas. These voters will not be able to return to Hong Kong to vote in view of the border control measures. In addition, elderly voters may refrain from voting amid the severe epidemic situation due to their higher infection risk. Therefore the HKSAR Government had to make the difficult but necessary decision to postpone the election."

## EVENTS GALLERY

### Engagement with regional audience

Despite various social distancing measures and travel restrictions in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO) in Singapore continued to engage interlocutors in the region by moving communication online to host two webinars on June 29 and August 13.

Titled "Bridging from Crisis to Recovery", the first webinar shared with participants in Singapore on how Hong Kong rode out the pandemic crisis, what were the strategies adopted to help businesses to tide over their difficulties as well as the opportunities in store on the path of economic recovery. The second webinar titled "Gearing Up for the New Norm" briefed participants from Vietnam on Hong Kong's latest situation, the city's investment environment and Startup Ecosystem and strategies to revive Hong Kong's tourism industry under the "New Norm".



## EVENTS GALLERY

Both webinars were co-organised by Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB). Hong Kong Business Association Vietnam (HKBAV) was another co-organiser for the Vietnam webinar.

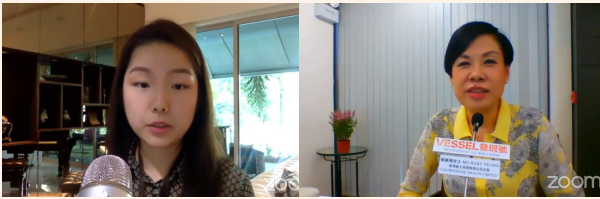
The Director of the HKETO in Singapore, Mr Wong Chun To, briefed the audience on Hong Kong's updates. Other speakers included Director, Singapore of HKTDC, Ms Vivienne Chee; Director of Indochina at HKTDC, Ms Tina Phan; Head of Investment Promotion at InvestHK, Mr Melvin Lee; and Regional Director - Southeast Asia of HKTB, Mr Raymond Chan; as well as Chairman of HKBAV, Mr Michael Chiu.

Participants from the business and academic sectors, government agencies and members of local Hong Kong community in Singapore and Vietnam have joined the online events. During the Question & Answer session, the speakers fielded questions on issues relating to the National Security Law, opportunities at the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and online solutions available to help enterprises conduct business as usual.

### *A Tale of Two Cities within A World of This Order*



The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges not only to businesses, but also the cultural sector. Supported by the HKETO in Singapore and organised by The RICE Company Limited, the webinar held on July 17 was another joint effort in promoting cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and Singapore. The virtual event was aimed to provide the opportunity for arts, culture and creative practitioners in both cities to exchange best practices in a new world order.



The webinar presented renowned arts advocate and educator, Executive Director and Co-artistic director of Hong Kong's Zuni Icosahedron, Mr Mathias Woo; and former co-artistic director of Singapore's The Substation, Ms Audrey Wong. They held an online discussion on the role of the arts in healing crisis and what different cultures could learn from one another. In another session, iconic figures from both cities namely playwright, actor and co-artistic director of Checkpoint Theatre, Mr Huzir Sulaiman; Ms Churen Li and Mr Ka Jeng Wong, both pianists; and Chairman and Founder of VESSEL, Ms Ruby Yeung, shared how they re-fashioned their practice and addressed social and economic needs while retaining artistic and creative integrity in their work.



### *HKETO welcomes Regional Desk of Hong Kong Shipping Registry in Singapore*

To better support ship owners who station overseas, the Hong Kong Shipping Registry (HKSAR) of the Marine Department of the HKSAR Government set up Regional Desk (RD) in Singapore in June 2020, after another two RDs were established in Shanghai and London in late 2019.

Led by Regional Head of the HKSAR, Mr Philip Ho, the team has provided ship owners/operators of Hong Kong registered vessels in this region with more prompt and direct support in terms of ship registration, maritime conventions compliance and in handling of emergency matters. Mr Ho has met up with recognised organisations and the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore to establish better network, which will facilitate closer cooperation in future. Visits have also been conducted to meet local ship owners and operators of Hong Kong registered vessels.

Located in the office of the HKETO in Singapore, the RD aims to develop and implement strategies to strengthen the presence of Hong Kong Flag in the region, work with stakeholders in organising safety seminars for stakeholders in the shipping industry to promote safety awareness and uphold quality standard of Hong Kong registered ships. It will also join forces with the HKETO in Singapore in promotion activities, with a view to promoting Hong Kong as an international maritime centre.

*Regional Head of HKSAR, Mr Philip Ho (right), and Senior Manager of HKSAR, Mr C.Y. Liao joined HKSAR's Regional Desk in Singapore in June. The team has conducted inspections onboard vessel and paid visits to shipping companies in Singapore.*

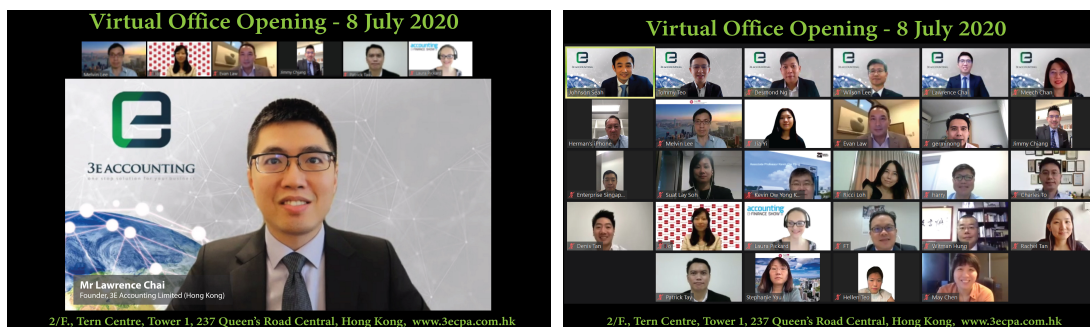




## Singapore-based corporate service provider establishes foothold in Hong Kong

Corporate service provider 3E Accounting opened its Hong Kong office on July 8 to tap the continuous growth in demand for corporate services among newly set up companies in the city. The company offers a series of professional services including company incorporation, accounting, tax, immigration and compliance services for start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Founder and Chartered Accountant, Mr Lawrence Chai, is confident that the number of foreign investors setting up a base or presence in Hong Kong will continue to grow in the long term given the city's unique economic and geographic advantage in relation to Mainland China's development. Being an international finance and business hub, Hong Kong offers access to the global markets. The city is also an important gateway to the Mainland with pivotal roles in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative, which Mr Chai believed will provide ample business opportunities for his company not found elsewhere.



*Pictures show Founder and Chartered Accountant, Mr Lawrence Chai, speakers and guests at the virtual opening.*

## HONG KONG SPOTLIGHT

### Liantang Port/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point

The cargo clearance facilities of the Liantang Port (LP)/Heung Yuen Wai (HYW) Boundary Control Point (BCP) opened on August 26. The LP/HYW BCP is the seventh land-based control point between Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, led a delegation of officials of the HKSAR Government to attend the opening ceremony of the BCP. Addressing the ceremony, she said that the opening of the LP/HYW BCP on the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone was particularly meaningful. The new BCP greatly shortens the travelling time between Hong Kong, Shenzhen and eastern Guangdong, thereby facilitating the smooth and efficient operation of cross-boundary logistics; furthering the co-operation and development of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, eastern Guangdong and neighbouring provinces; enhancing the "one-hour living circle" of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao; and providing extremely favourable infrastructure connectivity for the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

*(left photo) The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, delivers a speech at the ceremony. (right photo) Mrs Lam (seventh right) with other officiating guests at the opening ceremony*



*(left photo) The cargo clearance facilities at LP/HYW BCP commence operation on August 26. The first lot of Hong Kong goods vehicles passes through the control points of the Customs and Excise Department to leave the territory. (right photo) HKSAR Government officials at an exhibition of the BCP*

## *Hong Kong ranked fifth in World Competitiveness Yearbook 2020*

Hong Kong was ranked fifth globally in the latest World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY) 2020 published by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD). IMD attributed Hong Kong's lower ranking (ranked second last year) to a decline in economic performance, social turmoil as well as the rub-on effect of the Chinese economy.

Despite a lower ranking in "Economic performance" and "Domestic economy", other factors like "International trade" and "International investment" remained unscathed. In addition, Hong Kong's rankings in "Government efficiency" and "Business efficiency" remained unchanged at first and second respectively, and that in "Infrastructure" improved to 14th, indicating that Hong Kong's core competitiveness remains intact. Among various sub-factors, Hong Kong's ranking remained first globally in "Business legislation". Within the "Institutional framework" sub-factor, Hong Kong's ranking improved from second to first globally in the indicator "Legal and regulatory framework" and from 19th to first in the indicator "Exchange rate stability". These top-of-the-world rankings reaffirm Hong Kong's institutional strengths, particularly in legal and monetary affairs.



A Government spokesperson said, "The unprecedented social unrest that has taken place in Hong Kong since June last year dealt a severe blow to inbound tourism, local consumption activities and investment sentiment in the second half of 2019, pushing the economy into recession. The social unrest involving a high level of violence, acts of vandalism and intimidation of people holding a different political standpoint has also affected how Hong Kong was perceived, as certain survey indicators of the IMD report showed that survey respondents were deeply concerned about Hong Kong's social and political stability.

"It is thus critical, essential and urgent for the National People's Congress to take the decision to establish and improve the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security from the state level in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law. This ensures the continuous successful implementation of the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle and helps maintain an environment that is conducive to business and investment, thereby safeguarding the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong.

"The HKSAR Government is committed to enhancing the competitiveness and vibrancy of the Hong Kong economy. Moreover, Hong Kong is poised to be both an active promoter and a beneficiary of important national development strategies such as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative alongside the further opening up and deepening of economic reform in the Mainland."



### COMMENTS / SUGGESTIONS

**The Editor, HK FILES**  
**Hong Kong Economic and Trade  
Office in Singapore**

9 Temasek Boulevard,  
#34-01 Suntec Tower Two,  
Singapore 038989

Email: [hketo\\_sin@hketosin.gov.hk](mailto:hketo_sin@hketosin.gov.hk)  
Website: [www.hketosin.gov.hk](http://www.hketosin.gov.hk)

### Our Social Media

LinkedIn



Facebook



Instagram



@hketosg