

January 11, 2022

The Editor
The Economist

Dear Editor,

I am appalled by the biased reporting in the article which you published on January 8, 2022 using a blatantly misleading description, “Hong Kong’s new legislature has been sworn in. It is a mockery of democracy”.

First, the Legislative Council election on December 19 was conducted in an open, fair and honest manner, returning 90 legislators from different political backgrounds. The election was widely covered and reported by the media, which was facilitated throughout in the same way as elections that had taken place in Hong Kong since the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China in 1997.

All of the 90 elected legislators have the commitment to act in the interests of Hong Kong and the Country. No country will by its constitution or ethics allow treasonists, traitors, foreign agents or other forms of non-patriots to take part in its political system. This minimum standard of non-betrayal of one’s own people and nation is the common ground of all nations, including China.

Second, it is shameful that the article makes a serious but baseless accusation that the polls were “rigged”. If anything was “rigged”, it was the deliberately distorted image of Hong Kong that has been manipulated from the dark side of one’s personal internal bias. Hong Kong voters in the election were and will continue to be free to cast their ballot and make their own choices. There is legislation specifically in place to prevent anyone from rigging polls. That includes criminalising acts of inciting another person not to vote or to cast an invalid vote.

Third, the right to vote and to stand for election, as well as the freedom of speech and of the press, are enshrined in the Basic Law. The exercise of these rights, as covered in the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as applied to Hong Kong, are well protected,

provided that it is done within the confines of the law, including not endangering national security.

Any legal actions taken by the Hong Kong Police are strictly based on evidence and in full accordance with the law. They aim at the unlawful acts of the persons or entities concerned, regardless of the suspects' political stance, background or occupation.

No country has a monopoly on democracy. There are many different models of democracy. The success of any model is to be measured by how effective it is in enabling its people to prosper in their living.

The democratic development of Hong Kong has been well defined under the Basic Law. Its development will be progressive and in accordance with the actual situation of Hong Kong, in adherence to the principle of "One Country, Two Systems". If a foreign country tries to define or impose a model of democracy on Hong Kong, it is undemocratic in itself.

The massive violence and lawlessness in 2019, fueled by interference by foreign forces, threatened not just the personal safety and security of Hong Kong. It also threatened Hong Kong's rule of law and judicial independence, where judges were also targeted for intimidation and courts damaged by petrol bombs. The National Security Law has swiftly and effectively restored stability and security. These are facts and experiences of people living here in Hong Kong, who are relieved and happy to see Hong Kong now continue to be an open, safe, vibrant and business-friendly metropolis.

Yours sincerely,

John K C Lee
Chief Secretary for Administration
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region