



**Statement by The Law Society of Hong Kong
in Response to Concerns regarding the Verdict of
“Lai Chee Ying Case” HCCC 51/2022**

1. The Law Society of Hong Kong notes widespread concerns of the community regarding the “Lai Chee Ying Case” HCCC 51/2022, as well as various media reports characterizing the trial and conviction as a “sham trial”. As a statutory self-regulatory professional body, The Law Society of Hong Kong has a responsibility to address these comments from a legal perspective.
2. Judicial independence in Hong Kong is constitutionally entrenched in The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (the “Basic Law”). Article 2 guarantees independent judicial power, including the power of final adjudication, in accordance with the Basic Law; Article 19 further provides that Hong Kong shall be vested with independent judicial power; and Article 85 stipulates that the courts shall exercise judicial power independently, free from any interference.
3. The constitutional duty of judges and judicial officers is to apply the law. Article 84 of the Basic Law provides that judges and judicial officers shall adjudicate cases in accordance with the law. The Judicial Oath requires all judges and judicial officers to safeguard the law and administer justice without fear or favour.
4. Article 39 of the Basic Law provides that the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (“ICCPR”) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (“ICESCR”) as applied to Hong Kong shall remain in force and shall be implemented through the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“HKSAR”). The Article also provides that the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents shall not be restricted unless as prescribed by law.
5. The Hong Kong Bill of Rights (“BOR”) Ordinance (Cap. 383) gives effect in local law to the provisions of the ICCPR and ICESCR as applied to Hong Kong. While the freedom of opinion and expression is protected under Article 19 of the ICCPR and Article 16 of the BOR as set out in the BOR Ordinance, the relevant right is not absolute, and may be restricted in law.
6. The Law of the People’s Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“NSL”) was enacted in accordance with the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China and the Basic Law. Notably, the NSL expressly provides that, in safeguarding national security, the HKSAR shall respect and

protect, in accordance with the law, the human rights enjoyed by the residents under the Basic Law and the provisions of the ICCPR and ICESCR as applied to Hong Kong, including freedoms of speech, press, publication, association, assembly, procession and demonstration.

7. As stated in the Reasons for Verdict, the NSL was enacted for the purposes of ensuring the resolute, full and faithful implementation of the policy of One Country, Two Systems under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy, safeguarding national security, preventing, suppressing and imposing punishment for acts and activities endangering national security, maintaining prosperity and stability of the HKSAR and protecting the lawful rights and interests of the residents. Hong Kong is not unique in having a law safeguarding national security; other common law jurisdictions, including United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Singapore, have similar legislations.
8. The “Lai Chee Ying Case” was tried in the Court of First Instance by a panel of three judges pursuant to Article 46 of the NSL. The trial was conducted in open court over 156 days. All parties had legal representation throughout the proceedings. The Law Society of Hong Kong further notes that during the course of the trial, none of the parties’ legal representatives raised any allegation of unfair treatment.
9. According to the Rule of Law Index 2025 released by the World Justice Project on 28 October 2025, Hong Kong ranks 24th among 143 countries and jurisdictions globally, and even ranks 9th globally in respect of “Absence of Corruption”, reflecting the enduring and wide international recognition of its legal system.
10. The Law Society of Hong Kong expresses its deepest regret over certain media reports describing the trial and conviction as a “sham trial”. The Law Society encourages all members of the community to carefully review and fully understand the contents of the Reasons for Verdict.
11. The Law Society of Hong Kong maintains its unwavering trust and confidence in the legal system of Hong Kong, the independence of the judiciary and the integrity and professionalism of its judges.

The Law Society of Hong Kong
16 December 2025