

Press Statement

1. The importance of the rule of law hardly requires elaboration. It is a core value of our society and has contributed to the success of Hong Kong.
2. The Hong Kong Bar Association ("HKBA") has all along endeavoured and tried its very best to maintain and promote the rule of law. It is a stance that the HKBA has adopted in the past, and will staunchly maintain in the future.
3. I have the privilege to be the Chairman of the HKBA. During my term, the HKBA has expressed views on various issues concerning the rule of law. These include, amongst others: (a) the shortcomings in the Race Discrimination Bill; (b) the need to have a truly independent legal aid body; (c) the need to devise and develop, within the framework of the Basic Law, methods for electing the Chief Executive and the members of the Legislative Council which are in full compliance with Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and (d) the need to have a truly independent and accountable police complaints system.
4. Concerns have been raised, both by certain members of the HKBA and the public, as to whether my recent appointment as a member of the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference ("CPPCC") will compromise my role as the Chairman of the HKBA. Such concerns are healthy. They demonstrate the importance the HKBA and the public attach to the rule of law. May I reassure both the members of the HKBA and also members of the public that I will not allow such compromise to occur. Needless to say, I shall continue to faithfully uphold the HKBA's stance to maintain the rule of law in accordance with the views that the HKBA has expressed thereon, including those highlighted in the preceding paragraph.
5. Issues concerning my CPPCC appointment were constructively discussed at the HKBA's Annual General Meeting held yesterday. I treasure and respect all the views expressed, irrespective of whether they coincide with mine. In any body or community, difference in opinion is a fact of life and a wholesome situation. All democratic societies should

allow and embrace different opinions. The important point to bear in mind is not to allow *bona fide* differences of opinion to become the enemy of our common goal, *viz.*, the maintenance of the rule of law. Members of the HKBA will no doubt unanimously agree that we shall continue to stand united, as we did in the past, to defend the rule of law.

Rimsky Yuen, S.C.
Chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association
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