

## NATIONAL SECURITY LAW AT 5

**Editor's note:** The Hong Kong SAR National Security Law, enacted on June 30, 2020, has become a cornerstone of the city's restored stability. As this year marks the law's fifth anniversary, China Daily interviews key architects involved to explore the landmark legislation's lasting influence on Hong Kong's governance and society.

# SAR targets 'soft resistance'

Security chief emphasizes strengthening security and public awareness

By WILLIAM XU in Hong Kong  
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Secretary for Security Chris Tang Ping-keung reaffirmed his commitment to combat the covert and ever-evolving "soft resistance" tactics aimed at inciting hatred of the central and local governments.

He pledged stronger intelligence gathering and intensified public awareness campaigns, and underscored the necessity to continuously refine local laws that shield Hong Kong from national security threats.

During an exclusive interview with China Daily, Tang, who was the city's police commissioner during the social turbulence in 2019, said the traumatic period took a significant toll on the city, recounting violence and harassment of police officers and their facilities.

He said the implementation of the HKSAR National Security Law (NSL) on June 30, 2020, dispelled the cloud, restoring stability and plugging a long-existing loophole in the city's legal system. He added that the law, together with the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance 2024, serves as the legal foundation against national security threats.

With this year marking the fifth anniversary of the NSL's implementation, Tang said Hong Kong has ushered in a significant transition from chaos to order.

"Our crime rate stands at about 1,200 cases per 100,000 population, which is one of the lowest in the world," he said.

The city remains one of the world's top financial hubs, and had the fourth-largest IPO market in the first quarter of this year. Hong Kong ranked ninth in respect of "order and security" on the 2024 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index,



Secretary for Security Chris Tang Ping-keung tells China Daily that ongoing efforts to refine local laws are essential to safeguard national security and Hong Kong's stability. ADAM LAM / CHINA DAILY

surpassing the United Kingdom and the United States.

## Enduring vigilance

Tang urged heightened vigilance against "soft resistance" — a tactic he described as using covert and evolving forms to oppose the central government's overall jurisdiction over the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the SAR's high degree of autonomy.

"It usually exploits social or livelihood issues that seem unrelated to national security to circulate false information, inciting people's distrust or even hatred of the authorities," Tang said.

Tang highlighted intelligence gathering as key to counteracting "soft resistance". Measures include cyberpatrols — detecting crimes on the internet — and the operation of the police's national security reporting hotline (+852 6271 7171, for texts only), which has received over 940,000 messages since its inception in 2020.

Initiating timely clarification campaigns against misinformation is another strategy. He said that since the implementation of the NSL, the authorities had refuted and exposed slanderous remarks on more than 200 occasions. "Apart from refutations, it is also necessary to make the public aware of the tricks used by slanderers and the facts of involved topics."

Tang also stressed the government's ongoing efforts in updating local laws that have yet to fully comply with the national security requirements stipulated in the NSL and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance.

He cited a recent amendment to the Prison Rules, proposed by the Security Bureau, as an important refinement. The amendment, effective from July 16 and submitted to the Legislative Council for negative vetting, focuses on enhancing prison security and management, particularly in addressing national security risks.

Intensifying the public's awareness of the need to safeguard national security and enhance their ability to recognize "soft resistance" carries similar weight, Tang said.

One major initiative in this regard, the 1,100-square-meter National Security Exhibition Gallery was opened at the Hong Kong Museum of History in Tsim Sha Tsui in August 2024. As of mid-July, the gallery had welcomed over 1 million visitors.

Patriotic elements such as national flag-raising ceremonies have been integrated into school education, with more activities, contests, and seminars focusing on national security being hosted at the community level to boost youth awareness, Tang said.

The SAR government has also been publishing engaging picture books, animated videos, and cartoons, with easy-to-understand storytelling to introduce national security concepts to children, he added.

# Counterterrorism measures to ensure National Games safety

By STACY SHI and WILLIAM XU in Hong Kong

Extensive counterterrorism measures — including venue security and artificial intelligence technologies — are being implemented across the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to ensure a safe and smooth 15th National Games, the city's security chief said.

In an interview with China Daily, Secretary for Security Chris Tang Ping-keung reaffirmed the "moderate" terror threat level for the upcoming mega sports event, which Hong Kong is cohosting with Guangdong province and Macao from Nov 9 to 21. This means no specific intelligence has been detected indicating a possible attack, but a threat cannot be ruled out.

Despite the low risk, Tang said, "We must remain vigilant and ensure all preparations are in place."

Hong Kong will stage eight professional events and one mass participation event at various venues, including the new Kai Tak Sport Park, Central Harbourfront, Victoria Park, and the Hong Kong Golf Club in Fanling. The government has conducted dozens of emergency drills simulating attack scenarios to eliminate potential risks.

Enhanced security measures will be in effect, including patrols and stricter access control. Spectators will be briefed on self-protection measures and evacuation routes in case of an incident.

Cutting-edge technologies, such as AI-powered surveillance cameras and drones, will be deployed to detect suspicious behavior and assist with crowd control.

These initiatives also reflect the government's updated counterterrorism strategy. Chief Execu-

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Chris Tang Ping-keung, secretary for security

ive John Lee Ka-chiu's 2024 Policy Address ordered the city's security efforts to shift from a reactive to a more proactive approach.

"The new model strengthens preventive measures, including intelligence operations and interdepartmental collaboration," Tang said.

A three-tier prevention framework, established at the end of 2024, comprises the Chief Executive Counter-Terrorism Steering Group, the Secretary for Security Counter-Terrorism Coordinating Group, and interdepartmental working groups. These teams conduct drills, strengthen intelligence gathering, and step up public education around counterterrorism.

In June 2024, a trilateral agreement was signed among Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao to enhance intelligence sharing and joint counterterrorism efforts. The agreement also facilitates mutual emergency response support, including cross-border deployment of rescue teams during crises.

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# Shopping festival to boost local products' visibility

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The 2025 Hong Kong Shopping Festival will be held throughout August to support small and medium-sized enterprises in the city, helping them to tap into the expanding online retail market on the Chinese mainland.

At the launch ceremony on Wednesday, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the organizer, announced that the event features more than 260 Hong Kong brands — an increase of 10 percent from the previous edition — and over 500 curated products, offering month-long discounts.

The participating brands span seven key categories — health supplements, food and beverages, home and living, personal care and cosmetics, apparel, smart gadgets, and elderly-friendly products.

As a flagship event of HKTDC's E-commerce Express, the festival provides mainland consumers with exclusive access to Hong Kong's best offerings.

Irina Fan Yuen-ye, director of research at HKTDC, said that its 2024 study found nearly 65 percent of surveyed Hong Kong traders consider the mainland the most promising e-commerce market in the world.

Fan stressed that understanding the preferences of mainland consumers is critical for Hong Kong businesses to maintain their strengths. When purchasing Hong Kong goods online, mainland shop-



Patrick Lau Hui-ping (center), deputy executive director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, joins guests at the launch ceremony for the second Hong Kong Shopping Festival at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai on Wednesday. Over 260 brands will feature in the online discount month. ADAM LAM / CHINA DAILY

pers prioritize brand reputation, with high regard for product quality and safety standards — areas that Hong Kong businesses need to focus on, she added.

This year's festival features two key highlights: a discount month offering up to 75 percent off on all participating Hong Kong brands, and live-streaming e-commerce activations.

Patrick Lau Hui-ping, deputy executive director of HKTDC, said this year's festival will be simultaneously live-streamed across mainland platforms, including Douyin, Taobao, Tmall, and JD.

He revealed that leading mainland live-streaming sale hosts, such as Li Jiaqi, will participate in this promotion. Some mainland online influencers have visited Hong Kong in person to select products, underscoring the rigorous quality assurance process for featured Hong Kong items.

Lau said this festival offers Hong Kong businesses a valuable opportunity to study cutting-edge e-commerce models from the mainland while gaining a firsthand insight into its e-commerce ecosystem — one of HKTDC's key objectives behind creating this initiative.

Ryan Tse, president of the Hong Kong Health Food Association, said that the participating Hong Kong brands will showcase their finest products at highly competitive prices.

He said the festival helps mainland consumers discover authentic Hong Kong brands and experience the genuine quality of Hong Kong's products.

Jones Ng, founder of Chiwa Digital Media Capital Group Ltd, said that Hong Kong products generally command a price premium over some mainland alternatives. He emphasized the need for targeted marketing of Hong Kong brands to articulate their unique value proposition, enabling mainland consumers to appreciate the quality-to-price ratio that justifies their purchasing decisions.

Actress Samantha Ko Hoi-ling, who gained fame on the mainland for her role in 2023 drama *The Queen of News*, and has tried live-streaming herself, said the festival's timing is perfect. As the mainland's e-commerce is surging, she said, it gives Hong Kong's finest home-grown brands the spotlight they deserve.

# City's leading intl financial center status remains solid amid changes

By OSWALD CHAN in Hong Kong  
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Despite challenges posed by geopolitical, technological and digital changes, as well as fierce global competition, Hong Kong has maintained its status as a leading international financial center, while making progress in restructuring its industrial structure and promoting innovation and technology.

Hong Kong Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po made the remarks on Wednesday at a news conference that outlined the findings of a new report on Hong Kong's business environment.

Four years after the first such report, the special administrative region government published its second "Report on Hong Kong's Business Environment: Unique Strengths Under 'One Country, Two Systems'". The report highlights the city's latest developments and strengths, showcasing its open, safe, stable, efficient, and internationalized business environment.

With the Hong Kong economy growing 3.1 percent in the first quarter of this year, the government expects this positive momentum to continue into the second quarter.

Although the external environment remains complex and volatile — affected by geopolitics, US tariffs, and other uncertainties — mainland export companies have rearranged their overseas industrial chains to mitigate the effects of the tariff turmoil, Chan said.

"Local consumption has also stabilized, and the government has successfully attracted tourists by organizing major mega events," Chan said. "The number of visitors to Hong Kong has increased by double-digit percentages in the first half of the year, and the growth of international tourists has been signifi-

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Paul Chan Mo-po, financial secretary

cant, all of which have helped the market to a certain extent."

Hong Kong's economy is currently transitioning, with a revival of initial public offering fundraising, and growth in its asset and wealth management business. However, traditional industries such as retail, catering and cinemas are faltering.

"The responses and pace of adjustment across various industries may not be uniform. Some emerging industries are performing better, while some industries, especially traditional industries, are facing pressure and challenges in their transformation. The government will provide assistance through various financial guarantees and digital transformation programs so that industries can adapt to the changes faster and better," Chan said.

He said Hong Kong's residential property prices have stabilized, with the asking prices of new properties close to the market value, and sales remaining strong. He expects incoming companies and professionals to be the next-stage buyers of commercial and residential properties.

"We believe the city's secondary property market will gradually become active. As the pace of inter-

est rate cuts in the United States has been slower than expected while overseas capital inflows into Hong Kong have increased in the past two or three months, the Hong Kong interbank offered rate has decreased, which is helpful to the property market," Chan said.

He added that the demand for commercial properties is picking up in Hong Kong.

"Multinational financial institutions engaged in wealth management or hedge funds have leased multistory office buildings in Central, and over 80 key strategic enterprises brought in by the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises have leased over 1.6 million square feet (148,600 square meters) of commercial spaces. The government has refrained from selling commercial land to provide time for the market to absorb the excess inventory," Chan said.

In a statement, Mary Huen Wai-yi, chairperson of the Hong Kong Association of Banks, said, "The banking industry will continue to closely collaborate with various sectors, leverage Hong Kong's unique advantages, and seize opportunities in emerging areas such as fintech and green finance for innovation, thereby attracting more talent and leading enterprises to the city and supporting high-quality economic growth."

Lo Kam-wing, president of the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, said, "Hong Kong stands at a new starting point for high-quality development driven by innovation. The business community should actively seize opportunities offered by national plans such as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative, and play a greater role in industrial upgrading, brand expansion, and supply chain restructuring."