

The Law Society of Hong Kong Press Statement
In relation to the public reaction to a recent District Court decision

The Law Society notes the recent media and public attention over certain decision of the District Court and the highly critical comments targeted at the judge concerned. The Law Society does not comment on the merits of the court decision.

The Law Society recognizes the right to freedom of speech and encourages any fair, informed and reasoned discussion of issues that touch upon the administration of justice. However, the Rule of Law and the independence of the judiciary are equally important cornerstones of our society. In exercising the right to freedom of speech, respect and integrity of our judicial system should not be compromised.

As part of the Rule of Law, our courts are entrusted with administering justice. In delivering a sentence, a court must properly consider all sentencing options and pass a sentence that it considers most appropriate in all the circumstances in accordance with the law. In arriving at any decision, the detailed analysis and scrutiny are set out in the court's reasoned decision. The proper procedure for challenging a court decision is by way of an appeal. Any attempt made to bring public pressure on a judge to decide or review a case in any particular way is to be deplored as an affront to the Rule of Law and may constitute an offence of contempt.

Whilst committed to upholding the right to freedom of speech, the Law Society is confident that the Rule of Law is firmly established in Hong Kong and administered by a strong and independent judiciary.