

OPINION

Innocent have no need to fear extradition bill

Discussions on the hotly debated extradition bill were sparked by the high-profile case of Poon Hiu-wing, who was allegedly murdered by her boyfriend in Taiwan last February.

The boyfriend, then 19-year-old Chan Tong-kai, has already been charged and sentenced for money laundering. However, the Hong Kong authorities have hit a roadblock with regard to the murder case, because there is no existing extradition agreement between Hong Kong and Taiwan that sets out the jurisdictional arrangements. The existing extradition laws are also insufficient to send Chan and other fugitives back to wherever they are alleged to have committed the offence.

With the enactment of the proposed bill, the Hong Kong government will have the power to transfer fugitives back to Taiwan, Macau and – most controversial for some – the mainland.

There are clearly two main interests to balance: first, the safety of ordinary, innocent citizens, and second, the fugitives who are feeling victimised by the possibility of standing trial in the jurisdiction where they have committed a crime.

Logical reasoning tells us that the extradition bill is necessary to ensure the safety of all Hong Kong residents. Whichever side a person is on, it reflects that person's own position and the consequences they may face once the bill is passed.

One may argue: why would any ordinary, innocent citizen feel threatened by the bill if they have done nothing wrong and only work diligently to contribute to society and support their family? Exporting fugitives out of Hong Kong would undeniably allow them to continue to do so and be at greater ease.

A fresh law often appears to be infeasible and inflexible at the time of enactment, but a fine-tuning process is inevitable and

Chief Executive Carrie Lam is standing firm on the fugitive bill. Photo: AP

necessary, to fit the law to the culture and needs of a society.

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