

## CE strongly objects to German asylum for two bail jumpers

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (May 24) told Germany's Acting Consul General in Hong Kong, Mr David Schmidt, that she strongly objects to, and deeply regrets, the reported granting of asylum to two Hong Kong residents who jumped bail to flee Hong Kong while awaiting trial on serious charges.

Mrs Lam had requested the meeting with Mr Schmidt at the Chief Executive's Office this afternoon. The Director of Chief Executive's Office, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, also attended the meeting.

Mrs Lam stressed that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)'s rule of law, law enforcement agencies and judicial independence have long been held in high regard by local and international communities. In particular, independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication is guaranteed under the Basic Law. Relevant provisions in the Basic Law also provide for the invitation of judges from other common law jurisdictions to sit on the Court of Final Appeal. She said that 14 eminent overseas judges from the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada currently sit on our Court of Final Appeal as non-permanent judges, which in itself is a testimony to the integrity of Hong Kong's rule of law and independent judiciary. That judicial system is fully practised and has been well respected for over 20 years since the establishment of the HKSAR. For example, she noted, the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report ranks Hong Kong first in Asia for judicial independence.

Mrs Lam said anyone accused of breaching the law in Hong Kong would face an open and fair trial. She expressed deep regret and strong objection to the reported granting of asylum to the two bail jumpers by Germany, which had unjustifiably undermined Hong Kong's international reputation in the rule of law and judicial independence.

Mrs Lam expressed doubts as to whether the German authorities' decision had been based on the facts. She said the two men are facing serious charges including riot and assaulting police in relation to the Mong Kok riot in February 2016. The riot involved the hurling of bricks and wooden pallets, burning cars, attacking police, surrounding police vehicles, wounding others and destroying public property. She said the violent actions of the rioters had seriously jeopardised public order and safety, resulted in injuries to more than 80 Police officers and unsettled many people in Hong Kong. Given Germany's long-standing diplomatic presence in Hong Kong, such facts, which were on the public record and easily available, should have been duly taken into account by German authorities in determining the truth and voracity of any asylum claim. She said she was dismayed that apparently such a basic assessment of facts had not been made.

She asked Mr Schmidt to convey her deep regrets and strong objections to the relevant German authorities.