

EAC appeals to all sectors to cherish Hong Kong's good election culture

The following is issued on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC):

The Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC) originally scheduled last night (October 24) to hold a briefing session for 2019 District Council Ordinary Election (DCOE) candidates and their agents on the electoral arrangements and important points to note when conducting electioneering activities. Due to disruptive acts, the briefing session had to end prematurely.

A spokesman for the EAC said today (October 25) it is believed that all candidates and electors wish the smooth proceeding of the DCOE. Therefore, he urges all sectors to respect each other and strive to ensure that the election is conducted in a peaceful, orderly, fair and open manner. Hong Kong has all along had a very good election culture which should not be destroyed by obstructing the election.

Regarding the appointment for the Returning Officer (RO) of the Southern District, the spokesman for the EAC reiterated that it was informed yesterday that the District Officer (Southern) has been on sick leave and her post was taken up concurrently by the District Officer (Yau Tsim Mong), Mrs Laura Aron. Following the established mechanism, the EAC appoints District Officers in the Districts as ROs for elections. The acting appointment of the District Officer was fully handled by the Government, and the EAC was not involved in the process. Post holder of the District Officer was appointed as the RO.

The spokesman reiterated that whether a candidate's nomination is valid or not is solely determined by the RO according to the legal requirements. The EAC is neither empowered nor involved in the making of such a decision and would not provide any advice on the decision made by the RO. The EAC would not provide any guidelines to the RO for determining whether a candidate's nomination is valid or not. The EAC will only make practical arrangements for the election according to the list of validly nominated candidates determined by the RO. The ruling on the validity of the candidates is bound by the legislation. If the RO decides that a candidate is invalid, the RO must endorse on the nomination form the decision and the reason(s) for it, which will be made available for public inspection. If the RO's decision is not agreed, election petitions through judicial proceedings can be made to query the result of the election.

"We are devoting all efforts to prepare for the election and formulate contingency plans for possible incidents to ensure that the election is held in an open, fair and honest manner," the spokesman said.

"As in previous public elections, the election contingency plan may include setting up of a Crisis Management Committee (CMC). The CMC advises the EAC on matters which may affect the proceeding of the election, such as inclement weather and issues on public health and safety. So far, no

meeting has been held on matters relating to the 2019 District Council Ordinary Election.

"The District Council Ordinary Election is an important platform for registered electors to elect their representatives. The number of valid nominations till yesterday is 1 090. The EAC calls upon the community to treasure the civil rights for over 4.13 million registered electors in Hong Kong, and to ensure that the election can proceed in a peaceful and safe manner."

The EAC is an independent, apolitical and impartial body. As in the past, the EAC is committed and will make the utmost effort to ensure that public elections are held in an open, fair and honest manner.