

Government expresses deep regret over remarks made by HK people at hearing of US Congressional-Executive Commission on China

In response to the serious and unfounded allegations made by some Hong Kong people on recent violent protests in Hong Kong and their request for the United States Congress to pass the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act at a hearing of the United States Congressional-Executive Commission on China yesterday (September 17), a government spokesman expressed deep regret over their action and reiterated that foreign legislatures should not interfere in any form in the internal affairs of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

The spokesman said that since Hong Kong's return to the Motherland, the HKSAR has been exercising "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy in strict accordance with the Basic Law. The "one country, two systems" principle has been fully and successfully implemented. Human rights and freedoms in Hong Kong are fully protected by the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and other legislation. The HKSAR Government attaches great importance to these and is determined to safeguard them.

In the past few months, there has been a series of protests in Hong Kong with continuous escalation of violence. In various districts, protesters committed extensive destructive acts such as hurling petrol bombs, setting fires and paralysing traffic. The Police have been exercising a high level of restraint and have been carrying out enforcement actions in strict accordance with the law. Regarding the use of force, police officers will give prior warning, where practicable, and use necessary, minimum and appropriate force in accordance with police guidelines on the use of force. Once the purpose of using force is achieved, the Police will cease to use force. The Police's enforcement actions are to restore public order as soon as possible and to protect the life and property of the general public. The HKSAR Government has reiterated that it fully supports the Police to strictly enforce the law and bring offenders to justice.

The HKSAR Government absolutely respects the public's freedoms and rights of assembly, procession and expression. Since early June this year, the Police have received more than 190 notifications of public meetings or public processions. In over 83 per cent of the cases, applicants were issued a Letter of No Objection. The Police will continue to fully facilitate the conduct of peaceful and rational public events by members of the public.