

# Government statement on public meeting

A government spokesman expressed regret over a public meeting organised today (August 18) by an organisation targeting the Police as its slogan.

The spokesman said that Hong Kong had always been a very safe city. The overall crime figure in 2018 dropped to 54,225 cases, a decrease of 1,792 cases or 3.2 per cent when compared with 2017. The figure was the lowest since 1974. The crime rate measuring by the number of crimes per 100,000 population stood at 728 cases, representing a new low since 1970.

In addition, the Police Service Satisfaction (PSS) Survey and the Public Opinion Survey in 2018 conducted by the Police showed that 84 per cent of respondents were either "Very Satisfied" or "Quite Satisfied" with its overall service performance; the highest percentage since the inception of the PSS in 2000.

Unfortunately, after numerous public processions and public meetings held in the last two months, radical and violent protesters repeatedly charged police cordon lines, deliberately blocked roads, vandalised public facilities, set fire in various locations, attacked police officers with offensive weapons, and threw bricks and petrol bombs. Many police stations were attacked or besieged for over 75 times. The Police have been handling these illegal acts with tolerance. Only when they were violently attacked and left with no choice did the Police use minimum force to disperse protesters in order to restore social order. So far, about 180 police officers had been attacked by violent protesters and got injured.

Police officers have been under tremendous work pressure and have always carried out their duties for long hours. Their family members are also under different degrees of intimidation and bullying. Their living quarters were severely vandalised and women and children residing there were frightened and disturbed. During this difficult time, police officers are still discharging their duties fearlessly and with dedication to maintain law and order.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government fully supports the Police in strictly enforcing the law and deeply appreciates police officers' efforts in restoring public order and peace, protecting the lives and properties of members of the public and bringing violent protesters who have violated the law to justice.

The spokesman said that the Government highly respected the public's right of peaceful assembly and freedom of speech. He appealed to those participating in public meetings and processions to express their views in a peaceful and rational manner and say "no" to violence so that Hong Kong can resume order as soon as possible, return to rationality and regain momentum.