

# Government strongly appeals to underage persons to stay away from high-risk protests and related news reporting activities

In response to an incident in which underage persons claimed that they were conducting news reporting activities at a protest in Tsim Sha Tsui yesterday (May 10), a Government spokesman today (May 11) expressed deep concern and strongly urged underage persons to stay away from high-risk protests and stop participating in any news reporting activities at scenes of protests.

The spokesman said, "Underage persons are easily influenced by others to defy the law or take part in high-risk events. Parents, schools and teachers have the responsibility to protect the personal safety and well-being of children and students and remind them not to attend or participate in protests, which in recent months have often ended up in violent clashes.

"It is extremely dangerous for underage persons to conduct news reporting activities at scenes of protests in the capacity of student journalists. One can imagine how difficult it is for a child aged 12 or 13 to handle the complex and ever-changing situation at the scene. We are very worried that there are organisations arranging for young students to work as volunteer reporters. They totally disregard the young students' safety and are extremely irresponsible."

During a protest in Tsim Sha Tsui yesterday, a 12-year-old boy and a 16-year-old girl told the Police that they were volunteer reporters carrying out news reporting activities at the scene. In view of their safety, the Police took them to a police station without arresting them. The Police subsequently contacted their guardians to pick them up. The guardians also understood why the boy and the girl were taken to the police station.

The spokesman stressed, "Protests and acts of violence have taken place in various districts again recently. Young people have less life experience and may be easily incited to commit crimes. They may not know the serious consequences of breaking the law. We have the responsibility of reminding underage persons not to participate in any illegal act that may jeopardise their future. Society should stop this undesirable trend from spreading and spare no effort to curb violence."