

HKSAR Government responds to procession in Kowloon

A large number of people today (September 6) ignored the advices from the Police and participated in unauthorised assemblies and blocked roads with barricades in various districts in Kowloon. Some of them also threw hard objects at police officers and chanted slogans connoting "Hong Kong independence". A Government spokesman strongly condemns these unlawful and selfish acts.

The spokesman solemnly points out that participating in unlawful assemblies not only breaches the Public Order Ordinance, and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation which greatly increases the risk of virus transmission in the community and poses serious threats to other peoples' health; acts advocating Hong Kong independence may also breach the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (National Security Law). Police discharged their rightful duties today and took prompt and decisive actions to apprehend the offenders.

Regarding the views on the National Security Law, the spokesman said that safeguarding national security by way of legislation is in line with international practice. Every country has laws and duty to protect national security and sovereignty. The National Security Law is enacted to safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, as well as to safeguard the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, and to protect the lawful rights and interests of the Hong Kong residents. The enactment of the National Security Law is constitutional, lawful, rational and reasonable, which ensures the resolute, full and faithful implementation of "one country, two systems", "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy.

The National Security Law only targets four types of acts and activities that endanger national security. The vast majority of law-abiding residents in Hong Kong will not be affected. Also, the National Security Law clearly states that the rights and freedoms enjoyed by the Hong Kong residents under the Basic Law, and the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong in accordance with the law should be protected by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). These include the freedoms of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration. The National Security Law does not affect the rights legitimately exercised by the Hong Kong residents. Hong Kong residents need not worry about breaching the National Security Law if they do not commit any criminal acts endangering national security when exercising these rights. In fact, in the two months following the enactment of the National Security Law, stability of the society is restored and members of the public no longer live in terror.

Regarding the Legislative Council (LegCo) General Election, the HKSAR Government announced on July 31 that, amid the severe COVID-19 epidemic situation, the Chief Executive in Council has decided to postpone the 2020 LegCo General Election for a year in order to protect public safety and public health as well as ensure elections are conducted openly and fairly. According to the decision made by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on August 11, the sixth-term LegCo of the HKSAR will continue to discharge its duties for no less than one year until the commencement of the seventh-term LegCo.

The epidemic is likely to last for a while. There may also be a winter surge. The LegCo performs important and substantive functions, and has an annual business cycle. Further, preparation work and the voter registration exercise will take months before an election can be held. It is reasonable and in the public interest to postpone the election for a year.

The "Hong Kong Health Code" system is developed for the purpose of facilitating boundary crossing of people to gradually restore the livelihood and economic activities, through the mutual recognition of COVID-19 test results. The "Hong Kong Health Code" system does not have any tracking function it fully complies with the requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. Moreover, application of the Code is voluntary.

The spokesman said, "Although the number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19 has gradually reduced recently, the outbreak has not yet stabilised and silent transmission chains still exists in the community. Our prime goal now is to stay united and focus the resources to fight the virus."