

HKSAR Government responds to Report by All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hong Kong

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (August 5) strongly deplored and opposed the report published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Hong Kong of the United Kingdom (UK) on August 4.

The HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), a local administrative region that enjoys a high degree of autonomy under "One Country, Two Systems" and comes directly under the Central People's Government (CPG). Matters relating to the HKSAR remain China's internal affair. No other state has the right to intervene under any pretext.

The HKSAR Government strongly deplores and opposes the biased comments carried in the report. APPG does not represent the UK Parliament and comments in the report come from the information tendered by allegedly unnamed or anonymous persons. There is no actual evidence with regard to the reasons for imposing the so-called sanctions against Hong Kong.

The HKSAR Government clearly states that the Hong Kong Police are a professional law enforcement agency. The Police have the statutory duty to take lawful measures for apprehending all persons whom it is lawful to apprehend and for whose apprehension sufficient grounds exist, irrespective of the background, affiliation, political stance or occupation, etc. of the persons involved. The Police attach great importance to the safety and well-being of all persons (including protestors, arrested persons, healthcare workers, etc.) at scene of public order events and will not obstruct any bona fide rescue work. The Police have and will continue to facilitate ambulance and medical services to those at scene who require such services as far as possible, and at the same time, the Police must take into account the circumstances, safety and security situations at scene. It is the general practice for the Police to arrange for ambulancemen of the Fire Services Department of Hong Kong to provide medical treatment to persons in need when it is safe to do so. If an arrested person is injured on the spot or during an arrest, arrangement will be made to send him/her to the hospital directly for medical treatment. Further, most police officers have received professional training on first aid knowledge and skills. Where necessary, police officers will provide immediate care to those who are injured and arrange for further medical treatments.

At some of the unlawful public order events since June last year, the Police had encountered persons without having undergone any professional training or acquired any relevant qualification claiming to be first-aiders. Intelligence also indicated that rioters impersonated as first-aiders by putting on a reflective vest with a view to evading legal liabilities. There

is a need for the Police to be prudent in verifying the qualifications of these self-claimed "first-aiders".

The international community should take an objective view on the events that happened in Hong Kong in the past year. Between June last year and early this year, Hong Kong was haunted by the ever-escalating violence. The public transport system was extensively damaged and shops maliciously attacked. An innocent man was killed by rioters, another seriously burnt and hundreds of frontline police officers injured. Cases involving explosives and firearms were uncovered every now and then, seriously endangering public safety. Faced with these serious unlawful acts, the Police have the statutory duty to take lawful measures to maintain public order and public safety. The Police have a set of stringent guidelines on the use of force that are consistent with the international human rights norms and standards.

The Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) submitted in May 2020 the "Thematic Study Report on the Public Order Events arising from the Fugitive Offenders Bill since June 2019 and the Police Actions in Response" to the Chief Executive (CE), putting forward 52 recommendations to the HKSAR Government. The CE has accepted all the recommendations in the report. The Secretary for Security has set up a task force and is personally supervising the task force to carefully follow up each and every recommendation. The task force will submit regular progress reports to the CE, and the Police will also have to report its follow-up actions to the IPCC in accordance with the mechanism under the Independent Police Complaints Council Ordinance.

Regarding the biased statements in the report regarding the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the National Security Law), the HKSAR Government spokesman seriously points out, "Since the return to the Motherland, the HKSAR has been implementing the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle, 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy in strict accordance with the Basic Law. It is the legitimate right and duty of every state to safeguard its national security. As national security falls squarely under the purview of the Central Authorities and after some 23 years, the HKSAR has yet to fulfil its constitutional obligations to enact local legislation to safeguard national security, the enactment of the National Security Law is thus absolutely rational, reasonable, constitutional and lawful.

"Since the enactment of the National Security Law, some politicians from the UK have made it an issue, neglecting the fact that the UK has also put in place relevant legislation and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding its national security and sovereignty, for example, the Treason Felony Act, Official Secrets Act, Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act, and Security Service Act. They ignore the serious unlawful acts of rioters in Hong Kong and even, under the pretext of the Police's operations last year, indicated in a high-profile manner that certain measures or acts targeting Hong Kong would be adopted. The HKSAR Government strongly objects to such and urges other countries to stop all political manipulation and interference."