

Hong Kong resident detained for illegal work in Southeast Asian country returns to Hong Kong safely (with photos)

The Security Bureau (SB) today (January 16) said that a Hong Kong resident sought assistance from the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the Immigration Department (ImmD) earlier. Follow-up actions and assistance were provided through the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Chinese Embassy in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Chinese Embassy in the Kingdom of Thailand, the SB's dedicated task force and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Bangkok ETO) in Bangkok. The relevant person, with the assistance from staff of Bangkok ETO and relevant Thai authorities, returned to Hong Kong from Myanmar via Thailand today. Upon arrival, the SB dedicated task force provided assistance to that person and followed up with investigation on the case.

The SB attaches great importance to cases where Hong Kong residents are suspected of being lured to Southeast Asian countries and detained to engage in illegal work. Following the departure for Thailand by the dedicated task force comprising members from the SB, the Hong Kong Police Force and the ImmD to follow up on these cases, the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, met with the Consul-General of Thailand in Hong Kong, Mr Chaturont Chaiyakam, this morning. Mr Tang thanked the Thai government for sending high-level officials to meet with the task force, demonstrating great importance to these cases and offering positive feedback. Mr Tang exchanged views on the cases and discussed follow-up work with Mr Chaiyakam, with a view to assisting more assistance seekers in returning to Hong Kong safely as soon as possible.

In August 2022, the SB established a dedicated task force to co-ordinate follow-up work on the cases by relevant law enforcement departments. Since 2024 to date, law enforcement agencies received a total of 28 requests for assistance in relation to Hong Kong residents alleging to be detained in Southeast Asian countries and unable to leave. Together with the individual who returned to Hong Kong today, 17 of them have already returned. The remaining 11 cases reported restrictions on their movement but were still safe and able to contact their families or the task force.

Hong Kong residents who encounter difficulties or require urgent assistance outside Hong Kong may call the ImmD's 24-hour assistance hotline (852) 1868; call the 1868 hotline using network data or use the 1868 Chatbot via the ImmD Mobile Application; send messages to the 1868 WeChat or 1868 WhatsApp assistance hotlines; or submit online forms to seek assistance.

