

Inter-departmental counter-terrorism exercise simulates bomb attack

The Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit (ICTU) conducted a counter-terrorism exercise today (March 20) at the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point. Codenamed "CATCHMOUNT", the exercise simulated an operation against extremists who plotted a bomb attack at a boundary control point in Hong Kong using improvised explosive devices (IED). Over 250 officers from the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), Fire Services Department (FSD), Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and Immigration Department (ImmD) took part in the exercise.

Speaking to the media prior to the exercise, Police Senior Superintendent of the ICTU, Mr Chu Man-lung, said there were a number of recent cases involving IEDs. Among which, radio-controlled IED has been placed at crowded location which would result in severe casualties should there be an explosion. Mr Chu further pointed out that the behavior of these violent extremists was very close to terrorist attacks commonly seen in other countries. Members of the public should stay vigilant and beware of an emerging "homegrown terrorism" threat.

The exercise comprised two sessions. The first session was staged at the public transport interchange at the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point. A man detonated a radio-controlled bomb in a rubbish bin, resulting in multiple casualties. The area was then cordoned off for rescue and investigation by officers from the HKPF and FSD who sped to the scene.

Following the bomb detonation, the second scene showcased officers of the C&ED and the ImmD discovered another suspicious object at the departure hall. Evacuation was immediately conducted in an orderly and safe manner. Explosive Ordnance Disposal Bureau officers of the HKPF were called to scene to handle the suspicious object at scene.

Through this exercise, Police aimed to highlight how extreme violence posed serious threat to public safety and to heighten public vigilance and awareness of suspicious objects. The exercise also served to enhance the co-ordination and response capabilities between Police units and other member departments of the ICTU for better protecting the lives and property of the public.