

LCQ22: Renewal of identification documents of Hong Kong people stranded on Mainland

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (August 18):

Question:

An organisation supporting cross-boundary families has relayed to me that due to the epidemic, there are at present quite a number of Hong Kong people residing on the Mainland who cannot return to Hong Kong to have their Re-entry Permits and Documents of Identity for Visa Purposes (Hong Kong identification documents) renewed before such documents expired. As a result, they cannot have their Hong Kong and Macao Residents Entry and Exit Permits (commonly known as "Home Return Permits") renewed on the Mainland. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the current number of Hong Kong people who are stranded on the Mainland due to the epidemic and holding Hong Kong identification documents which have expired; and

(2) whether it has discussed with the Mainland authorities the formulation of special measures to assist such Hong Kong people, e.g. regarding the Hong Kong identification documents they are holding as valid supporting documents when vetting and approving their applications for renewal of Home Return Permits; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, my reply to the Hon Mrs Regina Ip's question is as follows:

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Re-entry Permit (Re-entry Permit) and the HKSAR Document of Identity for Visa Purposes (Doc/I) are travel documents issued by the Immigration Department (ImmD). Re-entry Permit is issued to Hong Kong residents for travel to and from the Mainland and the Macao Special Administrative Region. The Doc/I is issued to serve as travel document for Hong Kong residents who are not eligible for the HKSAR Passport. At present, for Hong Kong residents staying in the Mainland whose Re-entry Permits or Doc/Is have expired, they have to return to Hong Kong to replace the documents. During the pandemic, they are subject to compulsory quarantine when returning to Hong Kong. However, since the implementation of the Return2hk Scheme, they may be exempted from compulsory quarantine

arrangement upon fulfillment of relevant conditions.

As regards the Hong Kong and Macao Residents Entry and Exit Permit (commonly known as "Home Return Permit"), it is a travel document issued by the Mainland authorities. In the past, for Hong Kong residents staying in the Mainland whose Home Return Permits had expired, lost or damaged, they would need to return to Hong Kong to apply for renewal or re-issuance of the permits. They could apply to the Mainland authorities for a one-time People's Republic of China Exit and Entry Permit for the purpose of exit from the Mainland. However, for Hong Kong residents who remained in the Mainland, holding an expired Home Return Permit might have caused inconvenience to their daily lives. After the HKSAR Government had reflected Hong Kong people's requests to the Mainland authorities, Home Return Permit holders have, since October 10, 2020, been able to apply for renewal or re-issuance of the Permit from public security authorities above county level in the Mainland. According to the application guidance notes published by the Mainland authorities, for processing the applications, applicants should present their valid Hong Kong Identity Cards for verification. For Hong Kong residents aged under 11 who have not yet applied for a Hong Kong Identity Card or whose Hong Kong Identity Cards do not bear a photo, they should present their Re-entry Permits or Doc/Is for verification.

In reply to part (1) of the question, the HKSAR Government does not have the number of Hong Kong residents staying in the Mainland whose Re-entry Permits or Doc/Is have expired.

In reply to part (2) of the question, in order to assist Hong Kong residents staying in the Mainland whose Re-entry Permits or Doc/Is have expired, the ImmD is actively working out an arrangement to enable them to apply for replacement of these documents through the Offices of the HKSAR Government in the Mainland. Meanwhile, the ImmD will discuss with the Mainland authorities how to assist these Hong Kong residents in applying for replacement of Home Return Permits in the Mainland.