

## LCQ7: Damage and impacts caused by violent protests since June

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (November 6):

Question:

Since June this year, scenes of members of the public taking to the street to demonstrate have been seen time and again. During the demonstrations, some demonstrators resorted to violent and illegal acts, including storming and forcing their way into the Legislative Council Complex, laying siege to government structures (including the Police Headquarters, police stations and the Revenue Tower), setting fire on streets and at entrances/exits of MTR stations, hurling petrol bombs at police officers, blocking roads, and vandalising public facilities such as government structures and traffic lights. Some members of the public are concerned that such acts have seriously breached public peace and jeopardised public safety. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on, since June this year,

(i) the number of MTR stations in which the facilities were damaged, as well as the repair or reprovisioning cost of each type of facilities;

(ii) the quantity of on-street facilities (including traffic lights, street lamps, mills barriers, water barriers, pavement railings and rubbish bins) that were damaged or stolen, as well as the repair or reprovisioning cost of each type of facilities;

(iii) the number of occasions on which the cultural and recreational facilities under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department were suspended from service or closed as a result of demonstrations, as well as the number of person-times affected; and

(iv) the franchised bus, green minibus and tram services which were diverted or suspended as a result of demonstrations, together with a breakdown by route of the number of person-times affected; and

(2) of the measures in place to expeditiously restore social order and public peace to enable members of the public to resume a normal life?

Reply:

President,

Since June, there have been continued public order events including protests and rallies in Hong Kong, in which many of them ended up in violence. Rioters vadalised public facilities, including MTR stations, Light

Rail (LR) stations and traffic lights, in various districts. The illegal blocking of roads in various districts also seriously affected public transport services and government services. Rioters even set fire wantonly, damaged shops and hurled a large number of petrol bombs, posing serious threats to people's lives and properties. After consulting the relevant departments, our reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) (i) As for the situation on the recent large-scale damage on railway station facilities, up till October 29, among 93 MTR stations and 68 LR stations, there were accumulatively 85 MTR stations and 60 LR stations reported damaged. A large number of station facilities were vandalised, including about 1 600 times on exit/entry gates; 960 times on ticket-issuing machines, Octopus add-value machines and enquiry machines and facilities in customer service centres; 915 times on LR Octopus fare processors; 1 100 times on CCTV cameras; 75 times on escalators; about 50 times on elevators; about 1 060 times on glass panel walls; as well as 130 times on roller shutters at station entrances or exits. The maintenance team of the MTR Corporation is making every effort to repair the damaged station facilities. Yet, due to serious and repeated damage on station facilities, the maintenance team has worked over night to repair after service hours. There are still a lot of facilities to be repaired in various stations. The cost of repair or replacement will be enormous, with the actual figures under estimation and verification.

(ii) From June till the end of October this year, there were 460 sets of traffic lights being vandalised or tampered about 850 times, 40 street lamps were damaged, 45 600 metres of railings along walkways were removed and about 2 900 metre square of paving blocks on footpaths were removed. There were about 670 litter containers from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) found damaged. Highways Department (HyD) has also found over 900 temporary plastic barriers and 1 500 water-filled barriers missing. During this period, HyD incurred over \$10 million in the maintenance and replacement work. FEHD had incurred about \$0.56 million to reinstall the litter containers.

(iii) From June to date, leisure venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), including public swimming pools, sports centres, sports grounds, parks, etc., have been affected by processions and protests, and were temporarily closed on more than 1 900 occasions. Cultural venues of LCSD, including performance venues, museums, libraries, etc., were temporarily closed on more than 500 occasions in light of the circumstances and safety concern. As members of the public were not required to purchase tickets or register prior to using some of the facilities and venues, LCSD is unable to provide the number of users being affected.

(iv) Up till the end of October, there were over 300 franchised bus routes, over 300 green minibuses routes and all tram routes being affected that required truncation or diversion. Statistics on the number of users being affected in individual items are not available. However, according to Transport Department's Monthly Traffic and Transport Digest, the average daily passenger journeys of franchised bus routes, green minibuses routes and tram routes have dropped to 3.9 million, 1.49 million and 127 000 in August

2019 respectively, comparing to 4.18 million, 1.51 million and 158 000 in May 2019, indicating a drop of 6.6 per cent, 1.5 per cent and 19.3 per cent respectively.

(2) We are making efforts in implementing the "four actions" announced by the Chief Executive in early September, with a view to providing the driving force for the community to move forward, and taking an important step from getting out of the impasse:

Firstly, the Secretary for Security moved a motion according to the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Council to withdraw the amendment bill on the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance on October 23, officially putting a full stop on the bill.

Secondly, the Government will fully support the work of the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) and will provide sufficient resources to the IPCC secretariat for its work. IPCC plans to publish its first phase report regarding the large-scale public order events by end this year. The Government will carefully study and follow up the recommendations made in IPCC's reports.

Thirdly, the Chief Executive and Principal Officials have reached out to the community to start a direct dialogue from September. People from all walks of life are invited to provide views on solutions through this dialogue platform. The first Community Dialogue session was held on September 26 at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium in Wanchai.

Fourthly, the Chief Executive will continue to invite community leaders, professionals and academics to independently examine and review society's deep-seated problems and to advise the Government on finding solutions.