

LCQ8: Police's law enforcement actions at airport and Lantau Island

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

Question:

Between July and September this year, quite a number of members of the public went, in response to calls on the Internet, to the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and its neighbouring areas to stage demonstrations. At the request of the Airport Authority Hong Kong, the court granted an interim injunction order on August 13 which restrained any person from unlawfully and wilfully obstructing or interfering with the proper use of HKIA, and up to the present, the injunction order still remains in force. Regarding the law enforcement actions taken by the Police against the demonstrations staged at HKIA and its neighbouring areas, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of persons arrested (i) at HKIA and (ii) in other places on Lantau Island on (a) July 26, (b) August 9, (c) August 10, (d) August 11, (e) August 12, (f) August 13, (g) September 1, (h) September 2, (i) September 7 and (j) September 8, with a breakdown by gender and the age group to which they belonged (set out in tables of the same format as Table 1);

Table 1

Date	Age group	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
(a)	Below 14			
	14 to 16			
	17 to 25			
	26 to 40			
	41 to 60			
	61 to 65			
	Above 65			
...				
(j)				

(2) in respect of the persons arrested respectively (a) at HKIA and (b) in other places on Lantau Island as mentioned in (1), of a breakdown of their numbers by the offences involved (i.e. (i) riot, (ii) unlawful assembly,

(iii) assaulting police officer, (iv) loitering, (v) forcible entry, (vi) carrying offensive weapons at public meetings and processions, (vii) fighting in public, (viii) wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm and (ix) others) as well as by gender and the age group to which they belonged (set out in tables of the same format as Table 2); and

Table 2

Offence	Age group	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
(i)	Below 14			
	14 to 16			
	17 to 25			
	26 to 40			
	41 to 60			
	61 to 65			
	Above 65			
.....				
(ix)				

(3) of the (i) locations, (ii) floor areas and (iii) capacities in respect of the facilities in (a) the Airport District police station, (b) other places inside HKIA and (c) other places on Lantau Island which can be used for detaining arrested persons, as well as the respective numbers and floor areas of the rooms available in such facilities for the arrested persons to meet with their lawyers?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) is an important international aviation hub and one of the busiest cargo and passenger airports in the world. While members of the public have the right to peaceful expression, they must obey the law. Regrettably, some protesters aimed at paralysing airport operations, affecting the journey of many visitors and negatively impacted on Hong Kong's economy. Some protesters even resorted to violence, including besieging and beating up visitors, assaulting police officers as well as sabotaging properties in the airport area. These acts have crossed far beyond the line of peaceful and rational assembly and a civilised society, and have also seriously affected Hong Kong's favourable image as a world city and hospitable city.

From July to September this year, some members of the public, in response to appeals on the Internet, took part in protests at HKIA and its vicinity. On August 12, a large number of protesters obstructed the airport, seriously disrupting its operations. On August 13, some protesters engaged

in violent acts. In addition to severely inhibiting visitors' free entry and exit and paralysing airport operations, some rioters took the law into their own hands by beating up some visitors and even unlawfully detained them, and assaulted police officers.

To resume the normal operation of the airport, and to ensure aviation safety as well as the safety of visitors and airport staff, the Airport Authority obtained an interim injunction order from the court on August 13 to restrain persons from unlawfully and wilfully obstructing or interfering with the proper use of HKIA. However, on September 1, a large number of protesters, in response to appeals on the Internet, openly defied the injunction order by extensively disrupting airport operations as well as the traffic and order in the vicinity again, and wantonly vandalising the Tung Chung MTR station. Meanwhile, some rioters threw objects like bricks and iron bars onto Airport Express trains and tracks, and some even trespassed on the tracks, posing a serious threat to the safety of train operations. On September 7, some protesters made another online appeal, calling for obstruction of the airport and its access roads via different means.

It is the Police's statutory duty to maintain public safety and public order. When public order and public safety are severely threatened by incidents such as illegal road blockage, paralysed traffic, unlawful assembly and violent charging of police cordon lines, the Police will take appropriate actions to maintain law and order and ensure public safety and public order.

Our consolidated reply to Hon Dennis Kwok's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Police do not maintain a breakdown of arrestees relating to public events on the amendment of the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance who were apprehended within HKIA or the Lantau area. The overall arrest figures on the respective dates mentioned in the question are tabulated below:

Date of arrest	Number of arrestees	Gender	Age	Offences involved
July 26	2	2 males	28 and 58	Unlawful assembly, criminal damage, common assault, etc.
August 9	2	2 males	37 and 43	Unlawful assembly, criminal damage and assaulting police officer

August 10	13	12 males, 1 female	17 to 41	Unlawful assembly, possession of offensive weapon, assaulting police officer, etc.
August 11	101	78 males, 23 females	14 to 53	Unlawful assembly, possession of offensive weapon, assaulting police officer, etc.
August 12	28	20 males, 8 females	18 to 60	Unlawful assembly, possession of offensive weapon, disorder in public places, etc.
August 13	4	4 males	17 to 27	Unlawful assembly and assaulting police officer
September 1	63	51 males, 12 females	13 to 52	Unlawful assembly, criminal damage, possession of offensive weapon, assaulting police officer, etc.
September 2	37	33 males, 4 females	15 to 30	unlawful assembly, possession of offensive weapon, assaulting police officer, etc.

September 7	69	54 males, 15 females	14 to 59	Unlawful assembly, criminal damage, possession of offensive weapon, assaulting police officer, etc.
September 8	88	71 males, 17 females	14 to 63	Unlawful assembly, criminal damage, possession of offensive weapon, assaulting police officer, etc.

(3) In formulating policies, procedures and guidelines on custody and detention of detainees as well as in designing and managing the relevant facilities, the Hong Kong Police Force strive to ensure the safety of detention facilities and the protection of detainees' privacy and rights. Detainees enjoy various rights, including the rights to seek legal assistance, communicate with a relative or friend, receive copies of written records under caution, be provided with food and drink and seek medical attention etc.

In general, a person will not be detained for over 48 hours. Police detention facilities are not for prolonged detention. Just like other police districts, Lantau District (including Lantau North Divisional Police Station, Penny's Bay Police Post, Lantau South (Mui Wo) Divisional Police Station and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port Police Base and Reporting Centre) and Airport District (including Airport Police Station and the reporting centres in the Airport Terminal Buildings) are equipped with detention facilities to meet routine operational needs. District and divisional commanders and supervisory staff at all ranks will review and deploy manpower as appropriate to ensure sufficient manpower for implementing the detention and custodial procedures and guidelines, with a view to ensuring that detainees are adequately protected in respect of matters such as safety and their entitled rights.