

Party organiser and clubhouse licensee relating to dance cluster imprisoned and fined for violations of anti-epidemic regulation

A licensee of a clubhouse (Palladium International Dance Club) located at 9/F, BCC Building, 25-31 Carnarvon Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, was fined \$48,000 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (April 7) for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F). Moreover, a party organiser hiring the above premises was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G).

The courts heard that in September and November last year, the licensee of the clubhouse did not comply with relevant requirements and directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to the clubhouse under Cap. 599F. The non-compliance included not having taken all reasonable steps to ensure that all persons within the clubhouse were wearing masks, having arranged live performance at the premises while some performers were not wearing masks, and not having effective buffers between the performers and any guest/audience member. Separately, a party organiser holding a party with about 100 guests on November 16, 2020, at the clubhouse violated the relevant restrictions on group gathering under Cap. 599G. According to earlier information from the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, the clubhouse was related to the outbreak of the dancing-linked cluster at the end of last year.

A spokesman for the Home Affairs Department (HAD) stressed that clubhouses with a Certificate of Compliance issued by the HAD are one of the scheduled premises under Cap. 599F requiring compliance with the relevant requirements and directions issued by the Government. Persons responsible for scheduled premises that contravene the statutory requirements under Cap. 599F would have committed a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The HAD will continue to proactively take stringent enforcement actions and step up inspections at clubhouses in various districts across the territory to ensure that the responsible persons of the premises and the patrons strictly comply with relevant provisions in the regulations for the prevention and control of diseases. The Government appeals to members of the public for their full compliance with various anti-epidemic requirements so as to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the community.