

# Police condemn protestors participating in unlawful assembly

Police noticed that some netizens called for participation in public events in various districts yesterday (May 10). Starting yesterday afternoon, protesters had gathered and chanted slogans at various shopping malls in Kowloon and on Hong Kong Island. They were suspected to have violated the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (the Regulation) (Cap.599G), which stipulates that any group gathering of more than eight persons in any public place is prohibited. Police condemn protestors for disregarding the Government's disease prevention and control measures, and participating in or organising prohibited group gatherings.

At about 4pm yesterday, Police noticed that there were groups of people gathering inside a shopping mall on Prince Edward Road West in Mong Kok and suspected to have violated the Regulation. Police urged them to leave. Having given numerous warnings but in vain, Police conducted dispersal actions. Police once deployed pepper rounds after a group of people surrounded Police officers and ignored warnings.

Later, Police intercepted a number of protestors inside the shopping mall. A 22-year-old man was found to have materials purportedly for making petrol bombs in his possession, including gasoline, some towels and lighters. The man was arrested for possession of instrument fit for unlawful purpose and possession of dangerous drugs. Police do not rule out the possibility that someone was planning to use these objects during public events to seriously endanger public safety.

Last night, protestors continued to gather in the vicinity of Mong Kok. They blocked roads and set fire with miscellaneous objects.

As at noon today (May 11), Police issued fixed penalty tickets to 19 persons for violating the Regulation in various districts. Besides, approximately 230 persons, aged between 12 and 65 were arrested for offences including unlawful assembly, possession of instrument fit for unlawful purposes, possessing anything with intent to destroy or damage property, possession of offensive weapon, possession of dangerous drug, disorder in public places, obstructing a police officer in the execution of the officer's duty, assaulting police officer and failing to produce proof of identity etc.

Police stress that in view of the severe situation of the virus, any group gathering may increase the risk of spreading the virus. Members of the public are advised not to participate in any prohibited group gathering. Police adopt zero tolerance against any violation and will take strict enforcement action.