

Police prohibit public meetings and object to public procession intended to be held on Hong Kong Island on May 1

Police were notified by an organisation of its intention to hold two public meetings and a public procession on Hong Kong Island on May 1.

Upon risk assessment, Police regarded that the public meetings and procession are high-risk activities with crowd gatherings. Police have grounds to believe that the activities do not only increase the risk of infecting COVID-19 by participants and other people, but also pose serious threat to the lives and health of all citizens, jeopardizing public safety and affecting the rights of others.

In view of this, Police believed that it is necessary to prohibit the aforesaid public meetings and object to the aforesaid public procession in accordance with section 9(1), 9(2), 14(1) and 14(2) of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245) ("the Ordinance") for maintaining public order and public safety, and protecting the rights and freedom of others.

Police reminded members of the public that according to section 17A(2) of the Ordinance, where any public meeting or public procession takes place in contravention of section 7 or 13, the public meeting or public procession shall be an unauthorised assembly. According to section 17A(3) of the Ordinance, where any public meeting or public procession is an unauthorised assembly by virtue of section 17A(2)–

(a) every person who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, knowingly takes or continues to take part in or forms or continues to form part of any such unauthorised assembly; and

(b) every person who–

(i) holds, convenes, organizes, forms or collects, or assists or is concerned in the holding, convening, organizing, forming or collecting of, any public meeting or public procession referred to in subsection (2)(a); or

(ii) continues or attempts to continue to hold or conduct, or to direct otherwise than for the purpose of securing obedience to an order given or issued under section 6 or 17(3), any public gathering such as is referred to in subsection (2)(b), or any public meeting, public procession or public gathering, or other meeting, procession or gathering of persons, referred to in subsection (2)(c),

after the same has become an unauthorised assembly as aforesaid,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable—

(i) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for 5 years; and

(ii) on summary conviction, to a fine at level 2 and to imprisonment for 3 years.