

Public consultation launched on control of genuine firearm component parts

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government announced today (February 17) the launch of a four-week public consultation on the control of genuine firearm component parts.

A Government spokesman said, "There has always been stringent control over firearms and their component parts in Hong Kong. In recent years, there has been an increase in cases involving genuine arms in Hong Kong. We found that criminals made use of the loophole in the existing definition of 'arms' under the Firearms and Ammunition Ordinance (Cap. 238) to smuggle the component parts of genuine firearms into Hong Kong in separate shipments and then assemble them into fully functional genuine firearms to evade the law. The situation is worrying. The Government considers it necessary to provide a clearer and more concrete definition of firearm component parts to plug this legal loophole."

The Government proposes to amend the Firearms and Ammunition (Declaration of Arms) Regulations (Cap. 238D) to list out specific essential firearm (i.e. genuine firearm) component parts as "arms" under the Firearms and Ammunition Ordinance (Cap. 238). The proposed amendments seek to provide a clearer and more concrete description of the component parts covered by "arms". The Government also proposes setting a 90-day grace period to allow those who are affected by the proposal to dispose of the component parts or apply for a licence from the Police before the regulations come into operation.

The spokesman said, "The proposed amendments seek to combat the misuse of arms by criminals in posing threats to citizens' lives and property."

The Government will consolidate the views received upon the conclusion of the consultation period and table the proposed amendments by way of subsidiary legislation at the Legislative Council, with a view to completing the legislative process within the current legislative session.

The consultation paper is available on the website of the Security Bureau (www.sb.gov.hk/eng/special/firearm/index.html). Members of the public can submit their views by mail (Security Bureau, 10/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong), fax (2810 7702) or email (firearms@sb.gov.hk) on or before March 16.