

S for S speaks on proposed amendments to Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media session after attending the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Security meeting at the LegCo Complex today (February 15):

Reporter: Secretary, since this case, its major content regarding this proposal is mainly concerned about possible extradition to the Mainland. So why is it not possible, or wouldn't it actually be a better agreement to single out the Mainland and not put it in this bill for now? And then for Mainland cases, we handle these through signing a long-term extradition agreement. The second question, what will be the consequences if the LegCo does not back this proposal?

Secretary for Security: Well, this loophole on this big problem has existed in our statute of Cap 503, the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance, for 21 years. The Taiwan murder case indicates that this is a loophole that we must address. If I only deal with a single case now, this loophole will continue to exist. That would mean we will repeat the same problem, the same saga and the same injustice that this – the present situation – has been presenting. I think it is a real fact that a case of similar nature to the Taiwan murder case can happen again. So I think it is important that we address this defect in the law now, rather than repeating making the same mistakes. Can I have your second question?

Reporter: The second question is the consequences if the LegCo does not back this (proposal).

Secretary for Security: The immediate consequence that is so obvious is the suspect in the Taiwan murder case will be free to move around, live in Hong Kong. His case will just be ended like that. The second thing is, as I have reported to the LegCo, I have in hand at least three murder cases in Hong Kong, in which Hong Kong residents were murdered. Two of the cases involve suspects now hiding in a place which is outside Hong Kong and within the PRC (the People's Republic of China). There is another one which involves a suspect who is now hiding in another country. I also have a case involving a suspect who has done a kidnapping case in another country, and this suspect is a Hong Kong resident. Suspects of this kind will be living in Hong Kong with us every day. So I must address the risk to safety and the law and order problem, that if I allow them to continue to either stay in Hong Kong or do nothing, so as to ensure the justice is done. Thank you very much.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)