

# SB seriously condemns misleading remarks against Police investigation and pressure from foreign politicians exerted on financial institutions fulfilling their obligations

The Security Bureau (SB) today (January 27) made a statement that in order to crack down on illegal activities, the Police have to conduct investigations according to the law and where necessary, collect evidence and request information from relevant organisations. Some people made biased remarks to mislead the public that collection of evidence could only be conducted legally with the consent of suspects concerned, attempting to create an illusion of injustice on the part of the Police. Moreover, some foreign politicians exerted pressure on institutions which have been fulfilling their obligations. The SB seriously condemns these misleading remarks and political manipulation.

A spokesman for the SB emphasised that the Police conduct their operations and investigations strictly according to the relevant laws and regulations. Under prevailing legislation, the Police have statutory duties to take lawful measures for preventing and detecting crimes and illegal acts. The law also provides the Police the legal power to make application to the magistrate for warrant to collect evidence. In their investigation of a case, the Police will, if necessary, request for information related to crime investigation from relevant people or organisations. This is the statutory duty of the Police and must be performed in accordance with the law.

On the other hand, while local financial institutions have been complying with the laws of Hong Kong and fulfilling their responsibilities regarding the handling of funds from suspected money laundering activities in accordance with the law, some foreign politicians attempted to exert pressure on them. The spokesman pointed out that the acts by such politicians disregarded the rule of law and were purely politically motivated. As a matter of fact, on anti-money laundering, the intergovernmental organisation Financial Action Task Force requires competent authorities to be able to obtain all relevant documents and information for money laundering investigations, prosecutions, and related actions, including to require financial institutions to produce customer records to the competent authorities. The laws of Hong Kong comply with the relevant requirements.

The spokesman stressed that Hong Kong is a society that upholds the rule of law, and law enforcement agencies are duty-bound to take action against all unlawful acts. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government affirms and supports the financial institutions' rightful fulfilment of their legal obligations in assisting in the Police's investigations.