

## **SB strongly condemns again false and misleading statements on Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2020**

The Security Bureau (SB) issued a statement again today (April 23), strongly condemning individual organisations for making false statements against the content and legislative purpose of the Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2020 (the Bill), distorting facts, deliberately misleading members of the public and creating fear. The SB must strongly condemn the continuous and intentional smearing and set the record straight.

The spokesman for the SB said, "Recently, some organisations have deliberately distorted the provision in the Bill which empowers the Secretary for Security to make regulations in relation to the provision of passenger information by carriers as a restriction on Hong Kong residents' right to enter or leave Hong Kong. They have been attempting to spread rumours in emotional and hostile rhetoric, misleading members of the public with ill intentions and creating conflicts in society. The SB expressed severe condemnation and emphasised that anyone must bear the responsibility of their words and conduct. Members of the public should also stay vigilant for misleading and smearing information.

The Bill is introduced with a view to more effectively addressing the problems arising from non-refoulement claims that have persisted for years. In fact, there are currently over 13 000 claimants remaining in Hong Kong, with about 99 per cent of claims being unsubstantiated among those determined. The Government incurred huge public expenditures every year, with an average of around 1 billion per year in recent years. Some of the claimants have taken up unlawful employment and are even suspected offenders of robbery, drug trafficking and wounding, etc. The society and the Legislative Council (LegCo) have raised concerns about the threat to public security posed by such claimants. It is the most resentful that the relevant organisations have turned a blind eye to such serious problems faced by the society, and ignored the detailed explanatory work by the Government in the past, launching malicious attacks on the Government's efforts in tackling the challenging problems persisted for years with their smearing and shameless tactics all along."

With regard to the provision to empower the Secretary for Security to make regulations in relation to the provision of passenger information by carriers, we have time and again explained that the practice is introduced by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The Government must fulfill the international obligation under the "Convention on International Civil Aviation" and implement the Advance Passenger Information (API) system, thereby enhancing international civil aviation safety and facilitating the immigration authorities around the world to implement more effective control. It is an enabling provision which requires subsidiary legislation to set out the operational details of the system with provisions stipulated in more

specific terms, after the Bill is passed by the LegCo and takes effect. The making of relevant regulations will also require the scrutiny and passage by the LegCo. The Government has explained clearly this matter during the meetings with the Bills Committee on proper record.

The spokesman reiterated that, "The freedom to travel and the right to enter or leave Hong Kong of Hong Kong residents are guaranteed under Article 31 of the Basic Law. The SB must rebuke the false claims made by individual organisations that the Bill will deprive Hong Kong residents' right to enter or leave Hong Kong, which is complete nonsense and served to smear the legislative work of the Government deliberately.