

Security Bureau statement: Members of public should not enter Victoria Park and take part in unauthorised assembly

A spokesman for the Security Bureau made a statement today (June 4) that the Police have, in accordance with section 17(4) of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245), caused the central lawn, soccer pitches and basketball courts of Victoria Park and the access to those areas to be closed to the public. Members of the public must comply with the order or else they will contravene the law.

According to section 17(4) of the Public Order Ordinance, if a police officer has reason to believe that a public meeting is likely to take place in any public place in contravention of section 7 of the Ordinance, he or she may cause access to that public place and to any other public place adjacent thereto to be barred and to be closed to the public for such time as may be necessary to prevent the public meeting from taking place. Section 17A of the same Ordinance also stipulates that any person who, without permission, knowingly enters or remains in a public place to which access has been closed to him or her under section 17(4) commits an offence and is liable to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 12 months.

The Police have earlier prohibited an organisation from holding a meeting at Victoria Park in accordance with the Public Order Ordinance, and the Appeal Board on Public Meetings and Processions has confirmed the Police's decision after a hearing. That meeting is an unauthorised assembly. In addition, any person who takes part in a public meeting or procession in contravention of section 7 or section 13 of the Public Order Ordinance (i.e. a public order event that is subject to regulation under the Public Order Ordinance but not authorised thereunder) in other places is also taking part in an unauthorised assembly. Those taking part in an unauthorised assembly are liable to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for five years.

The Security Bureau reiterates that no one should take part in or advertise or publicise an unauthorised assembly. The public should not to defy the law. If anyone attempts to challenge the law, including the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation, the Public Order Ordinance and the Hong Kong National Security Law, the Police will take resolute enforcement action according to the law in a serious manner.