

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam; together with the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, and relevant Directors of Bureau at a media session today (August 5):

Chief Executive: Friends of the media and citizens of Hong Kong, the recent protests and marches have seen escalated violence, and these worrying acts have gone beyond the fugitive offenders bill, particularly when I have already announced some time ago that the bill is dead. Such extensive disruptions in the name of certain demands or unco-operative movement have seriously undermined Hong Kong's law and order and are pushing our city, the city we all love and many of us helped to build, to the verge of a very dangerous situation.

As a result of these widespread disruptions and violence, the great majority of Hong Kong people are now in a state of great anxiety. Some of them do not know whether they could still take some forms of public transport while others are right now being blocked on the way to work. The Government will be resolute in maintaining law and order in Hong Kong and restoring confidence. We all love Hong Kong and have made different contributions to its stability and prosperity over the years. This is the time for us to rally together to set aside differences and bring back order and say no to chaos and violence.

Reporter: Mrs. Lam, just now you mentioned a minority of people challenging national sovereignty. You said the bill was already suspended and you said the IPCC has already agreed to look into all the police handling, but I'm afraid you might have missed the point because the protest has continued precisely because the majority of Hong Kong people, including business groups, wanted you to completely withdraw the bill and set up a COI (Commission of Inquiry), not just on the police but on the whole controversy. So my question was, what are stopping you from taking those actions? And, No. 2, just now you said Hong Kong is in serious crisis. It's not just about the bill. So precisely, what would you do to deal with that crisis apart from issuing condemnations and singling out the police to bear all the blame of the people? Thank you

Chief Executive: First of all, we have never singled out the force to bear the blame. The police force is safeguarding Hong Kong's law and order, and ensuring Hong Kong's continued safety. This is what they have achieved over many years of hard work, to become Asia's finest. That is true and I am very sad every time I meet with the Commissioner that the force is under extreme pressure in enforcing the law during very difficult situations. So I also appeal to the media to have a bit more understanding of the difficulties faced by the police during this very difficult period. The same harassment

and threats that I have just described have been extended to the families of the policemen. We should all be very worried about this sort of situation.

Now coming back to your question about the demands, we have said, we have responded to those demands. Some people may not agree with our response but we have considered every factor involved and come up with the response that we have made. And this is a very strongly worded response as far as the bill is dead. There's absolutely no room politically for us to trigger the exercise to amend the ordinances. But what is in front of us is Hong Kong's stability, Hong Kong's future and escalated violence. If we continue to allow these violent protestors to make use of the fugitive offenders bill and these demands to conceal their ulterior motives, that is going to push Hong Kong to the verge of a very dangerous situation. And I'm sure you know and it has been made very blatantly recently, either on the social media or through some of the violent protestors, that those ulterior motives are going to destroy Hong Kong, to risk "One Country, Two Systems" and also to proceed with what they call "revolution". This is something of extreme importance that I hope every one of us will know.

Reporter: What would you do about this crisis? My question was what would you do about this crisis apart from condemning the people? What would you do?

Chief Executive: The only way to deal with violence is not to do anything to give rise to more violence, or to give more pretext for some of the protestors to resort to more violence. The only way to deal with this is to rely on the rule of law, which is the most important core value of Hong Kong, and that requires the police, and maybe other law enforcement agencies, enforcing the law against people who breach the law, and also the prosecution authority to make sure that justice is done. And ultimately, we will all look to the courts, which are independent in Hong Kong, to arbitrate and decide on these cases.

Reporter: To what extent are you to blame for this fiasco without end and why have you not resigned?

Chief Executive: I have already described our work in amending the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance as a failure, but I have to reiterate, as I did with our overseas officials and friends visiting Hong Kong in the last two months, that exercise was well intended. The exercise was intended to plug a loophole and to ensure that Hong Kong stands in a robust manner to co-operate with international agencies and other jurisdictions to tackle serious crimes together. What we have not done well is, especially in light of very extensive smearing and misleading representations of this exercise, is to explain in a more effective manner the objectives of this exercise and to engage more and perhaps also to listen more so that if there need to be some adjustments to the proposals we could accommodate those adjustments in time. That is something that I, the Secretary for Justice and the Secretary for Security have admitted in public. But what is now in front of us is an extremely serious matter, and that is Hong Kong's continued safety, security and of course, prosperity and these are all important elements that the Hong Kong people value very much. We are still very proud of Hong Kong possessing

these core values and being an international financial and business centre that is attractive to overseas investors, so it is for all of us to join hands, to rally together, to say no to the chaos and the violence that we are seeing. Thank you.

Reporter: Why did you not resign?

Chief Executive: Actually, this question has also been answered many times. I'm taking responsibility for what we have done because I'm the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. If the amendment exercise has given rise to the problems, and now more problems because the nature of these violent protests has changed, it is the time for me to continue to lead my team to address those problems and try to bring Hong Kong out of the current difficult situation. I don't think at this point in time resignation of myself or some of my colleagues will provide a better solution. But we will continue to adopt what I have described on July 1 as a style of governance that will enable us to listen more, to engage more and to do more that will meet the wishes of the people of Hong Kong.

Reporter: You say protesters have ... 40,000 civil servants protested on Friday, as well as members of the finance sector. What would you say those people who are, you know, white collar workers, who are peaceful, who have demonstrated in a way ... every sector turned against you today, what do you say to those people who are not, you know, thoroughly ...?

Chief Executive: Thank you very much. Hong Kong values freedoms that include freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of media reporting. If individual sectors and members of that sector want to express a view to the Government, we respect that expression and we will listen. But unfortunately, as I have stressed time and again, the crisis now in front of us is not about individual aspirations or about the bill. It is about Hong Kong's security and safety and whether we could restore in time the law and order that not only the 7.4 million Hong Kong people value a lot but I am sure individual sectors who still have a stake in this society would like us to defend. Let me make this plea again: please rally together and set aside differences and support the restoration of law and order as soon as possible.

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