

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (September 3):

Reporter: Chief Executive – can you just tell us why you told the business sector that you don't have a choice to quit? Did you ever try to resign and got rejected by Beijing? If not, why did you say you don't have a choice? And my second question concerning the Reuters report, because there are now some rumours and allegations that it's you or someone from your Government that leaked all these details to the media on purpose in a bid to try to sway public opinions or even shift the blame to Beijing, can you just clarify whether it's something that you are trying to achieve?

Chief Executive: First of all, in very clear and strong terms, I have to refute the second point. I was, and am still, very disappointed that my remarks in a totally private, exclusive session, a lunch actually, which clearly is subject to Chatham House Rules, had been recorded and then passed to the media. I think this is quite unacceptable. To further suggest or allege that myself or the Government have any role to play in this thing is absolutely unfounded. That point has to be made extremely clear.

On the first point about resignation, I said on several occasions previously and also reaffirmed by my colleagues in the Chief Executive's Office in response to media enquiry that throughout this period – that is from the very beginning till now – I have never, I have never tendered a resignation to the Central People's Government. I have not even contemplated to discuss a resignation with the Central People's Government. The choice of not resigning is my own choice. If you want to understand, in a private session I just attempted to explain that as an individual, given the very difficult circumstances, it might have been an easy choice to leave. But I told myself repeatedly in the last three months that I and my team should stay on to help Hong Kong, to help Hong Kong in a very difficult situation and to serve the people of Hong Kong. That remains my position. I know it is not going to be an easy path and that's why I said that I have not given myself the choice to take an easier path – and that is to leave. I'd rather stay on and walk this path together with my team and with the people of Hong Kong.

Reporter: Mrs Lam, why won't China let you resign? The audio recording, whether it was meant to be public or not, it was made. They were your words. They were your remarks. You said if you had a choice you would quit. So why won't China let you resign?

Chief Executive: The simple and straight answer to your question is, I have never tendered any resignation to the Central People's Government, so your question does not arise. I have never tendered any resignation.

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