

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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (September 14):

Reporter: First of all, can I follow up on the legislative election in Macao? You said it's too early to say if the same situation, I mean the low turnout or the many blank votes that happened in Macao, will re-happen in Hong Kong, but there's similarity, because in Macao we can see that some pro-democracy candidates being disqualified and the same thing also happened in Hong Kong, do you think it's reasonable for people to expect the results that happened with the legislative election in Macao to happen again in Hong Kong? And secondly, about a letter that was issued from the security chief Chris Tang to the Hong Kong Alliance a week ago, saying that he will propose to you to strike the Alliance off the Companies Register in the interest of national security. But why hasn't the Government done anything about it in the past if the Alliance was a threat or has been a threat to national security, for example, during your time as the Chief Secretary? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Two questions, first of all, I think the so-called similarities between the Macao elections and the Hong Kong SAR elections lie in the legal requirements – we have the same electoral arrangements that should ensure that only patriots will administer Hong Kong, and similarly, only patriots will administer Macao, but it doesn't mean that we have the same political make-up in Hong Kong as with Macao. I don't know exactly the candidates in Macao, and I cannot predict who will come out to run for the LegCo elections later this year. It is premature for me to judge on the various aspects of an open election in terms of who will be the candidates as well as the voter turnout. The right to vote and the right to stand for elections are enshrined in the Basic Law. This is a demonstration of the civic responsibility to register as a voter and then to cast your vote on election day.

The second question about the action taken by the Secretary for Security, this is also related to the legal requirement that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region should prevent and suppress actions that will endanger national security. I have time and again emphasised that this very important National Security Law is not just about arresting suspects and then punishing them; it is also about preventing such activities from happening because that's the best approach to safeguard national security in any place. The Secretary for Security, based on the recommendations of the Commissioner of Police, which must have a lot of evidence, has taken this action, which is provided for under the Companies (Winding-up and Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance, that where a certain registered company is being regarded as sort of breaching the law or endangering national security, then a case could be put to the Chief Executive in Council for a decision to strike off that company from the register. This is what the Secretary for Security has done.

Ultimately we will have to await the evidence and the sort of explanations provided by the Alliance and the whole case will be brought before the Chief Executive in Council. Why didn't we do it earlier because the Alliance has existed for some time? I think this same question could be asked on a lot of things. Why didn't we do earlier in promoting national education in schools? Why didn't we make sure that organisations which will collude with external forces are subject to enforcement actions? It's not quite meaningful to ask that sort of questions. Let's face the reality. After an unprecedented period of social unrest and riots endangering national security, we are now in a very good position with the support of the National Security Law and the capability under the Law given to the enforcement departments including the police and the government prosecutors, so we are duty-bound to take action to safeguard national security. And that action could be based on the National Security Law, it could also be based on other existing legislation in Hong Kong. On this occasion, this existing legislative provision is in the Companies (Winding-up and Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance, I think it is section 360C of this piece of law. The law enforcement body, in this case the Secretary for Security and the Commissioner of Police, have to dutifully discharge their responsibilities.

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