

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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (July 4):

Reporter: The Police obtained the warrants for the eight people. What's the actual practical benefit for the very high profile announcement because you can't capture them if they're not in Hong Kong? And what would it do to Hong Kong's image that you're trying to rebuild, given there are so many reactions from other governments already? And will...in contact or interacting with these people, face legal consequences, such as maybe sharing the posts or whatsoever? About the timing, is it related to the open letter issued by foreign organisations asking Washington to not let you attend the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) summit because they issued the letter on June 30 and it came out just days later? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Well, the Police's action to use all possible legal means to arrest the wanted persons, who are suspected to have committed serious offences that endanger national security, is the execution of the duties, of an important duty, that is imposed on them. They should do it because these are suspected criminals who have violated serious offences. They should do it because we cannot allow people to just go away without taking the responsibility to face justice, to face the law. The Police should do it because that is a strong message to everybody that any act that endangers national security will not be tolerated, and serious action will be taken against that. The Police should do it because that's the message not just to Hong Kong, but to those who try to endanger our national security. We want them to know that we will not sit and do nothing.

I am in support of the Police's action. It's not just that this is an important duty they should do. But it is to try to get as much assistance as possible from law-abiding citizens. A lot of them feel a strong responsibility to protect national security, and I think they will be very pleased to provide information to the Police. And that law-abidingness is important.

I also want to tell the criminals that, well, the only way to end their destiny of being an abscondee who will be pursued for life is to surrender.

I have strong faith in the Police's ability to do what they can to carry out their duties, and we'll be pursuing the abscondees' criminal responsibilities for life until they surrender themselves.

As regard the action, I think the Police should take action as they consider appropriate, particularly considering the whole operational requirements. Our action is to tell everybody that endangering national security is not something we will tolerate. We'll do whatever legally to

pursue the responsible person. How overseas politicians or officials say will not, in any way, change our strong belief in the need to uphold our protection of national security. I know that they have been doing things for their own political reasons, for their own political gains.

The way we are handling national security cases is in conformity with the practices that will be taken for pursuing criminals that have absconded for their national security offences. Extraterritorial power exists in many countries' national security law. Hong Kong's National Security Law is one of the many such laws, as in other countries, that will have the same power of taking extraterritorial action against criminals who have contravened their country's law in this regard.

I am not in any way troubled by any attempt to sabotage our action, because I have strong faith that Hong Kong Police will be able to do what they can. I'm not afraid of any political pressure that is put on us because we do what we believe is right. And safeguarding national security is the duty of the people of respective countries, particularly I, as the Chief Executive, have the constitutional duty to safeguard national security.

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