

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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam; together with the Secretaries of Department and Directors of Bureau, and the Commissioner of Police, at a media session today (July 22):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, on your government statement overnight, you actually put the Sheung Wan violence as well as the Yuen Long violence together, and on the Yuen Long violence you said, basically, some people congregated on the platforms, the MTR platforms, and attacked commuters and there were confrontations. It sounded like a very mild description of what happened. Would you characterise this, as some lawmakers suggested and also political analysts have suggested, that it is a terrorist attack? Also can I ask you about – don't you think this is a failure of the government in putting people's safety first? And because there are talks within the community saying that they need to form their own vigilantes group to protect themselves because the police cannot protect them last night in Yuen Long. And also can I ask the Police Commissioner, what are your plans – there are already chatters talking about another round of attacks in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. What's your plan? And shouldn't some senior members within your force take responsibility for what happened in Yuen Long? Also can you talk about manpower being stretched too thin? Could you give us some numbers? How exactly were the police force stretched too thin? Why were the police stations shut down? Why did the police station in Yuen Long shut their doors? Were there any protocols involved in there, in that police can refuse and reject citizens' call for help? Thank you.

Chief Executive: First of all, thank you for raising that question so that I may clarify that we were monitoring the whole situation throughout Hong Kong last night. At the time when we issued that statement about the Yuen Long violent acts, we were not in possession of all the facts. As the Commissioner may also share with you, actually these violent attackers came back twice to attack the people. At the time when we issued that press statement to condemn those violent acts, we were not in possession of all the actual situation on the ground. But what I have said just now in my brief introductory remarks, that we absolutely do not condone those kinds of violent acts. Let me make this clear again – violence is not a solution to any problem. Violence will only breed more violence. And at the end of the day, the whole of Hong Kong and the people will suffer as a result of the loss of law and order in Hong Kong. Thank you.

Commissioner of Police: I must admit, since June 9, I think every citizen within the community noted there were a series of violent confrontations during the public processions or public meetings, and definitely, our manpower is stretched. Because every time when there is a major event which may lead to violent confrontation, we have to redeploy some of my manpower from various districts to the Hong Kong Island, so that I can ensure

sufficient manpower to deal with this incident, and that is exactly what the CE and the S for S have just said, violence will only breed more violence. I therefore urged young people, if they really have something to voice out, why not use a peaceful way. And because what they are doing is at the cost of the whole community, I really don't want to see what happened in Yuen Long to happen again. We will review our manpower deployment and do our best to ensure the public order and public safety of every district in Hong Kong.

About the closure of the police stations, because at that time there were big groups of protesters surrounding the police stations or even besieging the police stations, so because of the reason of safety, they have to close the gate but they (the public) can still make report to Police through 999 or other means. And indeed, as I have just said, we received the call and responded to the scene already. And only because we have to redeploy manpower from other districts, that's why the time taken is a little bit longer. And there are also various allegations arising from the incident, I want to reiterate that the Police will not tolerate any violence, and we will pursue at all cost to bring the offenders to justice. Thank you.

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