

Transcript of remarks by CE at press conference (1)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, together with Secretaries of Department and Directors of Bureau, held a press conference today (October 4). Following is the transcript of remarks of the press conference:

Reporter: A question for Carrie Lam. A protester, a young protester, was shot by Police with live ammunition on your streets, your streets of Hong Kong. It's clear that two things could help defuse this situation: one is that you launch an independent inquiry into how the Police are dealing with these protests, and two, your stepping down, your resignation. My question is, are either of those things or both of those things going to happen?

Chief Executive: As I've said in my introductory remarks, we are very concerned about the large number of young people and students being involved in these violent protests and many of them being arrested. Specifically, about the young student you mentioned, as I'm sure you know, the young person has been charged for rioting and for attacking the Police. This is something we would not like to see and that's why we made a very strong appeal to parents and to principals and teachers to keep their young people away from such violence, and the making of this regulation today also aims to enhance the deterrent effect against such violent protesters.

As far as independent inquiry, I have already made our position known throughout the process, but more categorically on September 4 when I provided a video message to each and every one of the demands. Stepping down is not something that will help the situation. Hong Kong is now in a very critical state of public danger, and I and my Principal Officials will try our very best to return calmness and order to Hong Kong society.

Reporter: But this seems to be escalating it rather than defusing it.

Chief Executive: I think we all have our own hypotheses for the escalating violence that has taken place on the streets of Hong Kong and we believe that stepping up law enforcement and creating the necessary legal means to enhance deterrent effect is one of the ways that we could de-escalate the situation. The other way is of course to start a political dialogue, which we have started including the district dialogue session that we organised last week, and I and my Principal Officials are fully committed to continuing that dialogue with the people of Hong Kong.

Reporter: The question for Chief Executive Carrie Lam. You have taken a very dramatic step today and you said you are doing so in order to save the present and future of Hong Kong. If this measure fails to bring stability back to Hong Kong, what will you do next? What additional measures, what additional emergency measures do you plan to take next?

Chief Executive: The decision that the Chief Executive in Council has made this morning, as I said, is not an easy decision, especially when we are invoking a piece of legislation that has not been used for some time. I fully understand that and that's why we have taken the trouble to study and examine and re-examine before we come to this decision this morning. I would say that it is a responsible decision that we have taken because of the much-escalated violence that we have seen especially in recent days. I am sure you know that on a single day of October 1, we have over 200 violent protestors and rioters being arrested. And we have seen a lot of violence in different districts in Hong Kong. Of course, it is our objective and our aim to de-escalate the situation and to end the violence. We are not hundred per cent sure that the step, this single step, that we have taken today, will achieve that objective. But as you will realise and as I've said in answering a Cantonese question, the situation is a fluid one and an evolving one, and the Government as well as our law enforcement agencies are on the reacting side. If there is no violence, if there is no protest, we do not need to have all these instruments with us in order to deal with this violence, so we will have to closely monitor the situation. And I appeal to members of society to help us to end the violence by appealing to not only the young people but also other sectors in society to join hands together to restore law and order to Hong Kong. Of course, if the situation worsens, I suppose that's your question, then as a responsible Government, we will have to continue to identify other means that we could tackle the situation. But in doing so, in the same way that we have fully examined before coming to this single decision today, we will be extremely cautious in making sure that whatever we do is in the overall public interest of Hong Kong.

(to be continued)