

Transcript of remarks by CS and SHA at media session (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services), Mr Lam Ka-tai, and the Assistant Commissioner for Transport (New Territories), Ms Stella Lee, at a media session today (July 26):

Reporter: Chief Secretary, do you feel that the police had, sort of, succumbed to the threat made by rural communities in Yuen Long and that's why they are banning the protest tomorrow? And is the government expecting any violent clashes tomorrow? And secondly, given the rather huge consensus in society that they want the government to set up a CoI to look into what happened in the past month, would the government consider revisit your decision? Thank you.

Chief Secretary for Administration: The police has already explained clearly yesterday the reasons why they objected to the application primarily on safety grounds and also in light of the local circumstances. No question of succumbing to any pressure at all. It's always in the public interest, in overall safety of Hong Kong residents, particularly people living in Yuen Long. As you can see, Heung Yee Kuk and the District Council also expressed grave concern over the situation. So that's why I am here. The appeal board is meeting at the moment, so irrespective of the outcome, as you can see we have taken a very serious attitude towards tomorrow's move, whether there is a procession or not, we can't rule out the possibility of a large number of people turning up. As I said, if the appeal board upholds the decision of the police, then the procession is not lawful. So I just remind participants that you know, do take this fully into account and also their own safety is very important. The second question is you asked about police performance basically, is that right?

Reporter: No, my second question was about- will the government revisit its decision ...

Chief Secretary for Administration: Oh I see. The question of the CoI has been thoroughly explained before. We believe that it is better at this stage to pursue the idea through the existing mechanism of the Independent Police Complaints Council- the IPCC, as this is an established mechanism operating on the basis of the findings of CAPO – Complaints Against Police Office. But I must say that we are fully aware of these public sentiments – a very strong body of opinion in the public sector urging the government to establish a commission. So we are engaged now, if I put it rightly, in a reflective process on the whole issue – put it this way. But our position has been explained clearly that we believe it is better to be done, pursued, through the existing mechanism.

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