

Transcript of remarks by ExCo Non-official Members at media session (with video)

The following is issued on behalf of the Executive Council Secretariat:

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Convenor of the Non-official Members of the Executive Council (ExCo), Mr Bernard Chan, and other Non-official Members of ExCo at a media session on the ground floor lobby of the Chief Executive's Office this afternoon (July 22):

Reporter: Mr Chan, it sounds like you are linking, you are blaming the Yuen Long attacks to the violence that happened after the protest, can you clarify that? Because you are saying that you don't want to see violence to spread. And also can we talk about the fear that the public is feeling right now. There is talk about forming their own protection teams, their own vigilantes to protect themselves because the Police cannot protect them. And as advisors to the Government, how would you advise the Government to resolve the public anger towards the Government? It looks like the protesters were targeting the authority, instead of attacking it indiscriminately, while Yuen Long attackers were attacking indiscriminately? Thank you.

Convenor of ExCo Non-official Members: First of all, on behalf of all Non-official Members of the Executive Council, we condemn all acts of violence. Referring to your question on the Yuen Long incident, we totally condemn those people who were involved in the attack of innocent bystanders and commuters. We are not blaming anyone. The fact that violence occurred and innocent people were injured, that is totally not acceptable in Hong Kong. These people, if caught, should be prosecuted according to the law of Hong Kong. So I think there is no doubt among us. No matter which side you are on, which belief you have, violence is not acceptable by any means, so for that, I want to assure you that we all agree on that. You are absolutely correct. There is this unnecessary fear now spreading, that is why in my statement just now, I said it is very important for Hong Kong Government together with the Police Force to address this issue immediately. We should not allow this fear to continue. I think the Police definitely would have to take reasonable measures to protect the interests of the citizens. I think for years and years, we are proud of the Police Force in Hong Kong, and there is no reason why they cannot do that job. Unfortunately, the last month or so has been a very difficult time for our Police Force. Their morale is low, they have been stressed. But unfortunately, this is their job. I would certainly hope that they would continue to protect the citizens of Hong Kong no matter which political belief that each of the citizens have. That should not be the matter. They should always have the best interests of Hong Kong people at large, so I certainly would hope that they would continue to maintain the law and order in Hong Kong.

Reporter:As a former minister, what do you think about the Police

performance yesterday?

ExCo Non-official Member Mrs Regina Ip: I must share my experience with you all. I have visited a lot of Police families last week. In fact, normally, policemen, frontline policemen, police officers and their families had been under extreme pressure. Their personal particulars had been exposed. They complained to me that their children are being intimidated and bullied at school. I think we must do all we can to shore up police morale, because these 30 000 people are all we have at the moment. I fully understand everybody's anxiety, but in the near term we must depend on the Police, trust and have faith in their professionalism.

Reporter: Do you think we need assurances to the international banks and other businesses here that their employees are safe in Hong Kong after the scenes in Yuen Long last night? And also can you tell us whether or not Carrie Lam has the situation under control?

Convenor of ExCo Non-official Members: I can't give you a personal assurance because things are evolving so fast. But I would certainly hope that our Police Force in Hong Kong can continue to do their job as they have been all these years. Unfortunately in the last month or so, things have been so heated up and the society has been so divided, and the Police Force has been stressed to the point that they may have not all the necessary resources. But I still believe that as Mrs Ip mentioned, they are our only law enforcement officers in Hong Kong. That is their job to maintain the law and order in Hong Kong. I am in the financial sector too, so I am equally anxious to know if this law and order can be maintained and I would certainly believe that violence is not the solution to end the division. I hope that we can continue to be objective and reasonable in addressing some of these other political issues, but we should not try to allow any vigilantes or any personal act in trying to resolve these matters. We do not allow, we should not condone this, we should condemn every bit of violence. No matter which side are you on, that should not be allowed in Hong Kong, that should be what Hong Kong is about.

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