

Transcript of remarks by S for S after FCC meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media session at Central Government Offices, Tamar, after the Fight Crime Committee meeting this afternoon (March 1):

Reporter: How would the report regarding the National Party be drafted?

Secretary for Security: When the Chief Executive met the press to inform the public about the request of the Central People's Government for her to submit a report on the matter relating to the prohibition order regarding the Hong Kong National Party, she has indicated that the report would likely contain the whole process regarding how the prohibition order was issued and dealt with in accordance with the Societies Ordinance, the legal procedures, and also the fact involved in the matter. She has also indicated that she would prefer to make her report public subject to legal advice because it is likely the society concerned may institute some legal proceedings.

Reporter: I just want to ask the latest development of the Saudi sisters, as the permission for them to stay actually expired yesterday. When will they get an answer whether the permission for them to stay as tolerated overstayers will be renewed? Is it illegal for them to stay in Hong Kong as of this moment because they still have not received this permission? The second question is on the extradition proposal. Since Taiwan is unlikely to accept that proposal on the grounds said because it is "one China" premise, is that any point that defeats your purpose of putting forward this whole bill?

Secretary for Security: Your first question regarding a particular immigration case, it will be inappropriate for me to go into the case details. But it is the policy of the Hong Kong SAR Government that it will always act in accordance with the law. So in relation to whatever immigration case, the Immigration Department will act in accordance with the law, having regard to prevailing immigration policy.

In regard to the Security Bureau's proposal to amend the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance, we are aiming at plugging a loophole. To answer the question, first of all we have to ask ourselves: should we allow a person who has committed a serious crime to escape justice? The second question is: should we allow such a person to live amongst us, so as to pose a threat to citizens of Hong Kong? If the first answer is we should not allow a person who has committed a serious crime to escape justice, and if the second answer is we should also not allow a person who has committed a serious crime to live freely amongst us on a day-to-day basis, so as to threaten our safety and law and order, then we must plug the loophole. That is what the Security Bureau is doing.

The proposal is aiming at one single standard applicable to all places around the world, based on the case merits, without considering all other factors except the safeguards that have long been laid down in the present Fugitive Offenders Ordinance. It is important to note that since the occurrence of the (Taiwan homicide) case, we have already received a request for legal assistance and the handover of the suspect to Taiwan. We have received the request already. We aim to amend the law so that we are not forbidden to start discussing with jurisdictions with which we have no long term agreement. It is only to allow the Hong Kong Government to proceed, to talk people all over the world. So it is an amendment to the domestic Hong Kong law which will take away the restriction. We will be discussing with all places around the world if the amendment is passed by the LegCo (Legislative Council). And it will be done on the principle of mutual respect.

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