

Transcript of remarks by S for S after Fight Crime Committee meeting (with video)

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 (October 16):

Reporter: Hi, three questions from RTHK. So just to follow up on the crime figures, could you tell us briefly about the deception cases? What led to the marked increase in the deception cases, and especially related to the COVID-19 situation? Secondly, about the Chan Tong-kai's case, you said that you would be happy to use the Police liaison mechanism to communicate with the Taiwan authorities. Is there any plan for Hong Kong to initiate a conversation with the Taiwan counterparts? Thirdly, about the 12 Hongkongers detained in Shenzhen, because the Government has time and again reiterated that they are fugitives, have the Police neglected their duties by letting these serious criminals flee or was it a deliberate attempt? Thank you.

Secretary for Security: First of all, in regard to deception cases, the international trend, I think, indicates that the prevalence of this offence is likely to continue. And the simple reasons are, first of all, such deception cases have low risk of being caught because a lot of these deception cases go through the Internet or telephone when actually the culprits are overseas. So the risk of being caught is low but the possibility of making the return – that is deceiving money- is high. So all these criminal elements show that the prevalence of these offences is going to continue. The second reason for the increase, as I have explained earlier, is that people tend to stay at home more often than before for two reasons. First of all, since June last year, there have been quite a large number of social disorder cases, unlawful and violent acts which in some ways make people tend not to go out. And the second reason is COVID-19, because people tend to stay home to ensure that there is the least social distancing they have to consider and try to reduce their activities. So this exposed them to the opportunities of being contacted by those who want to deceive. And thirdly, there is a tendency for people to engage in communications through the Internet and social media because that has been the habit of life. And because of this interaction, the opportunities of being tracked by all these scammers are becoming higher. So that explains the rising trend and that is why I would like to repeatedly emphasise the risk of deception so as to let everybody be careful.

In regard to Chan Tong-kai's case, the Government's position is very clear. We will do anything that is possible within the law to offer assistance but one must appreciate that, Chan is a free man. He has served his sentence; he has now got his freedom. There is nothing that we can do to coerce him to do anything other than himself making the wish to surrender

himself, getting on board the plane. He has made his first step by indicating his willingness to surrender to Taiwan. The second step has to be taken by the Taiwan authorities so as to let him in, to answer his warrant of arrest, which I think is valid indefinitely. One would assume that any authorities which have issued a warrant arrest will make all their efforts to arrest the man. And when Chan indicated his willingness to go to Taiwan, it shocks, I think, everybody with common sense, that he will be refused, or his intended trip to Taiwan is in any way hindered.

The Police liaison channel is opened but as I have explained, the Government has no authority to require Chan to do things which are beyond his wish. So we have to wait for the Taiwan side to make the second step, so that we can actively examine how we can help in the whole matter. But it is my intention and the Government's intension that this case should be resolved as soon as possible. We really urge the Taiwan authorities to refrain from political considerations and deal with this matter practically in the name of justice.

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