

Transcript of remarks by SCMA at media session on EAC's report on REO's loss of Register of Electors

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Patrick Nip, at a media session today (July 24) at the Central Government Offices on the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC)'s independent investigation report on the loss of a Register of Electors:

Reporter: When exactly did the Chief Electoral Officer first find out about the loss of the Register of Electors? Why did it take so long, nearly two years, for the government to make public the findings? Was there any cover-up involved? Is there any need for a full revamp of the personnel involved in the incident?

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs: Thank you very much for your questions. The EAC's investigation report has set out the facts and findings of the investigation. We have also explained before what follow-up actions we had taken when it came to our notice that there was a possibility of losing the Register. Once we confirmed the Register was lost, we had taken all necessary follow-up actions to remediate the situation. What's your second question?

Reporter: Why did the government take so long to make public the findings about the loss (of the Register of Electors)? More than two years.

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs: The investigation report also explains that because of the deficiency in the internal management of the REO (Registration and Electoral Office) and in the handling of electoral materials, when the Register of Electors failed to be found, there was not an immediate reporting mechanism within the REO (for staff) to report to the seniors. Even after it had come to the notice of the seniors, because of their lack of sensitivity, no proper immediate follow-up actions had been taken. So it is important for us to set out an internal guideline within the department to make sure that in future there will be a mechanism in place to make sure that whenever there is a possibility (of any loss of electoral materials), this will be reported to the seniors and necessary follow-up actions will be taken.

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