

Transcript of remarks by Secretary for Security on exercising power under Societies Ordinance

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, on exercising power under the Societies Ordinance at a media session at Central Government Offices, Tamar, today (September 24):

Reporter: I've got three questions. First, can the National Party (Hong Kong National Party) plan all those political slogans, say chants, to really be counted as something that will affect national security or the rights and freedom of others, and warrant such a ban? The second question – what if the members of the National Party join other groups, or they start another group? Will they still be considered as acting illegally? Third question – would the Government review if other pro-independence groups should be banned also under this Ordinance?

Secretary for Security: I have explained in detail the considerations that I included in my decision. I have explained that the Hong Kong National Party has a very clear agenda to achieve its goal of Hong Kong being made an independent republic. I have also explained that over two years, it has plans, it has executed actions to implement the plans. I have given examples of how the Hong Kong National Party tried to achieve this.

Let me repeat some of the examples. First, the Hong Kong National Party tried to register its party as a company. Its convenor also tried to appear as a candidate for an election, so as to obtain more resources, allow the Hong Kong National Party an opportunity to be more noticed, so as to achieve its goal. It has various plans to, for example, recruit members, go into schools to infiltrate, and advertise what he wants to achieve. And he also staged street booths to let people know and support its goal. What the agenda of the Hong Kong National Party aims to, is in strict contravention of the Basic Law, and also is against national security. In the course of achieving its aims, the Hong Kong National Party also spreads hatred and discrimination against Mainlanders in Hong Kong. It has also made it very clear that it would make use of all means to achieve its goal, and this includes the option of using force. It has also used the term "armed revolution" while its convenor has on some occasions indicated that they would use non-violent means to achieve the goal. I cannot ignore the fact that the Hong Kong National Party has repeatedly advocated that it would use all methods, including the use of force, and also encouraging its supporters to use force.

Taking the whole in totality, in the interests of national security, public safety, public order, and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, I made the decision that I exercise the power that is given to the Secretary for Security to issue an order to prohibit its operation or continued operation.

In regard to your question about some of the members using different ways to appear to further its goal, we have to look at the provisions under the Societies Ordinance. I explained that Section 19 to Section 23 clearly explain what are the acts that members of an unlawful society will be governed by the law. So depending on how these people act, we have to look at the action they have done in the circumstances of the actual case, whether it constitutes an offence under the law.

Reporter: Would the Government review if other pro-independence groups should also be banned under the Ordinance?

Secretary for Security: Any person or any organisation, if their acts are governed by the laws of Hong Kong, then they will have to take responsibilities for their acts. Law enforcement agencies will act in accordance with the law to deal with the situations.

Reporter: You said previously Vice-Premier of China, Han Zheng, has spoken to you about this ban. In your consideration of making this decision, have you taken into account his words or words of any other Mainland Chinese officials?

Secretary for Security: I considered the case of the Hong Kong National Party based on the Assistant Societies Officer's recommendation, the representation made by the Hong Kong National Party or its representatives. I considered all the laws that are applicable to Hong Kong. I made the decision myself. Any other things are not taken into consideration, such as what you have described.

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