

# Transcript of remarks of interdepartmental press conference (with video)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, together with the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah; the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law; the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan; and the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, held an interdepartmental press conference today (October 10). Following is the transcript of remarks of the press conference:

Reporter: So three questions. So you've said that the anti-mask law is a new implementation and time is needed for everyone to get used to it, but so far would you say it's effective? And second question is, will you do anything more on the Policy Address to clamp down the protests? And my third question is, could you tell us more about the impact of the protests on the traffic, especially the MTR and also on the economic losses? Thank you.

Chief Secretary for Administration: I will leave the third question to Frank, Secretary for Transport, to deal with. I will tackle the first two questions. First question is whether the Prohibition on Face Covering Regulation is effective. I think it's early days. It came into operation only last Saturday, so it's only a few days now. It takes time for everybody to familiarise with that regulation. But I'm sure that given time, this will act as an effective deterrent to help the Police in its enforcement work. We have no further intention, particularly in the context of the Policy Address, of devising new measures to clamp down on protests. We never clamp down on protests. We only clamp down on violence. Protest is allowed if it's legal, if it's lawful, if it's peaceful. In Hong Kong, assembly, protest is part of Hong Kong's landscape, it's part of our core value – freedom of expression, and assembly, of course, provided that it's within the law, within the bounds of the law, provided that it's peaceful, I don't think it's a problem. We never clamp down on peaceful protest, but we do disagree, disapprove of violence, particularly unlawful assemblies. Breaking the law intentionally in the process is not what we want to see. OK? Frank?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: Maybe you would be able to appreciate the impact on public transport after I have given you the kind of distribution of passenger trips per day on various kinds of public transport means. As I have just shared with you, the number of passenger trips taken on board of the public transport is about 12 million passenger trips per day. Out of these 12 million passenger trips, more than 5 million of them are actually conducted on mass transit (railway), with less than 4 million passenger trips on buses, slightly less than 2 million on minibuses, and slightly less than a million on taxis. Therefore, at a time when the MTR stations are being attacked, actually the bulk of our public transport capacity would be handicapped. That's why when we are not able to operate the

entire railway system in full, people have to queue for buses, minibuses and taxis. Now you would realise how important the MTRC is, not only because it's mass transit, but because it's also a very green transport means, you know it uses electricity and reduces carbon emission too. Therefore, as far as public transport is concerned, we need to protect it, we need to keep it going to support Hong Kong people on the move. I appeal to every one of us here to help promulgate to everyone in Hong Kong not to strike down our MTR system – it's our system, it's our pride and our need. I don't see any reason for anybody to attack the MTRC for any purpose.

Reporter: Two questions about the HKmap.live app. Which local laws the HKmap.live violates and why should Apple remove HKmap.live when apps which allow users to track the location of police checkpoints remain in the app store? Thank you.

Chief Secretary for Administration: If I understand your question correctly, in fact the question you actually raise is more in connection with the Apple organisation rather than the Hong Kong Government as such, is that right?

Reporter: This is about the apps that the Police said that it is because the apps threaten the public safety, if that's why the Apple removed the app and we are just asking about this. Why the Apple should remove the app when the other apps allow the user to track the location of the police check points remain in the app store and which local laws the HKmap.live violates?

Chief Secretary for Administration: I suppose the Police have already explained the reasons for it, okay? And, we have nothing further to add.

Secretary for Transport and Housing: Indeed the taking down of the app from the Apple store is the decision made by the operating company – Apple. So, if you want to know the reason for them to take down the app, maybe you can approach Apple (Apple Inc) and the Apple store.

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