

Remarks by SJ after meeting of Subcommittee on Two Items of Subsidiary Legislation Made under the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, and the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, met the media after attending a meeting of the Subcommittee on Two Items of Subsidiary Legislation Made under the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance this afternoon (May 15). Following are the remarks by Mr Lam:

Reporter: The vetting for the subcommittee takes (took) about five hours with no amendments proposed. Do you think the time frame is sufficient for lawmakers to thoroughly scrutinise all of the law changes? Why does the process need to be so quick?

Secretary for Justice: I think you have to bear in mind that we are talking about two items of subsidiary legislation. In relation to the subsidiary legislation concerning the power of the Office for Safeguarding National Security, there are only 15 provisions. As to the declaration concerning prohibited places, it only refers to six premises. But as a matter of fact, as you have pointed out, we have spent more than five hours, and the number of questions plus opinions expressed by members of the Legislative Council exceeded 150. So I think any reasonable person would have agreed that the whole process is extremely serious and thorough discussion had been given to all relevant provisions.

As a matter of fact, initially, we were supposed to finish the meeting at 4pm, but in order to enable the Legislative Councillors to have sufficient time to go through all the provisions and to ensure that they can ask any questions that they have in mind, the time for the meeting had actually been extended. I am very confident that any reasonable person would have agreed that this is a very proper and thorough process which serves its legislative intention.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the remarks)