

Government strongly condemns rioters breaching public peace

Rioters conducted violent and illegal acts during and after the public procession on Hong Kong Island yesterday (January 1) and some people blatantly launched personal attacks and insults against a judge. A Government spokesman strongly condemns the acts. Police will take follow-up actions seriously in accordance with the law.

The spokesman said that judicial independence is an essential element of the rule of law as well as the cornerstone of Hong Kong's prosperity and stability. Everyone is equal before the law. The courts and judges deal with cases in accordance with the law and the relevant facts and evidence. All along, Hong Kong people respect the courts, judges and judicial proceedings, and do not accept that anyone exerts pressure in any form on the judges or the courts even if they hold different views on the judgments. This is the beauty of the rule of law in Hong Kong. Some rioters defaced the High Court during the procession yesterday once again, and even launched personal attacks on a specific judge. Society would in no way condone the act which would gravely undermine the rule of law in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government strongly condemns the acts.

The spokesman said the public procession on Hong Kong Island yesterday was generally smooth and orderly at the beginning, but it is regrettable that some rioters took the opportunity to block roads, trash traffic lights, hurl bricks and petrol bombs as well as set fire in various places and vandalise a number of banks and shops, posing a danger to people at the scene. The police, taking into consideration public safety, had to end the procession early and subsequently used appropriate and minimum force to disperse the rioters and make arrests.

The spokesman said it is worrying that rioters invariably took the peaceful participants of processions as their cover and conducted illegal and violent acts during or after the processions. While the HKSAR Government respects the peaceful expression of views by members of the public, it appeals to the people not to give tacit approval to or condone any violence in order not to encourage rioters' bad deeds. Procession participants should also stay away from rioters in order not to disrupt the enforcement of law by the police.

On the waving of flags advocating Hong Kong independence by some rally organisations and participants, the spokesman strongly condemns such acts, which are against the constitutional order of Hong Kong and the overall and long-term interest of Hong Kong society.

The spokesman pointed out that "One Country, Two Systems", "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy are the established basic policies of the People's Republic of China (PRC) regarding Hong Kong. Advocating Hong Kong independence is inconsistent with the

constitutional and legal status of the HKSAR as stipulated in the Basic Law. Article 1 of the Basic Law points out that the HKSAR is an inalienable part of the PRC. Article 12 of the Basic Law states that the HKSAR shall be a local administrative region of the PRC, which shall enjoy a high degree of autonomy and come directly under the Central People's Government.

The spokesman also noted that some procession participants waved the flags of foreign countries. The spokesman said the HKSAR Government rejects the interference by foreign countries in any form in the internal affairs of the HKSAR. Members of the public should not encourage foreign countries to do so.

The spokesman stressed that the HKSAR Government will not turn a blind eye to any unconstitutional acts. Members of the public should treasure Hong Kong's unique advantages under "One Country, Two Systems" and should not do anything that would hurt the feelings of the Chinese people.

Suspension of some banking services

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) has been informed by banks that services of some bank branches and ATMs are temporarily suspended due to vandalism of banking facilities. The banks are assessing the extent of disruptions and will provide updates in due course.

Bank customers are advised to take note of the situation and pay attention to notifications made by the banks. They may also visit the unaffected ATMs, or use online banking and other electronic banking services as far as possible.

The HKMA condemns the repeated acts of vandalism against the banking facilities in Hong Kong. The expression of opinions should be conducted in a peaceful manner, without affecting the public's access to banking services.

CAD follows up on brief hitch of ATMS individual workstations

Individual workstations of the Air Traffic Management System (ATMS) of the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) today (January 1) experienced a brief

hitch, during which individual workstations were not being responsive to commands. Throughout the occurrence, Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) were able to continue to monitor and provide Air Traffic Control (ATC) services to all flights in the Hong Kong Flight Information Region (HKFIR) through the Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) display.

"Individual workstations of the ATMS were not being responsive to commands today. The technical staff on-site immediately followed up and carried out an investigation. The individual workstations concerned were then rebooted. As a precaution, after co-ordinating with the ATC supervisors on-site, the technical staff switched to the Fallback System, an identical system, according to the established procedures at 9.10am. Flow control on departing flights was implemented temporarily. Arrivals and flights flying through the HKFIR were not affected. The original Main System was rebooted and checked by the technical staff. It then served as a backup. It was not necessary to activate the Ultimate Fallback System of the ATMS in the process," a CAD spokesman said.

"Aviation safety was not affected by the occurrence. The ATCOs were able to keep direct voice communication with the pilots at all times as well as monitor and obtain full information of all flights (including the three essential types of information, namely flight position, altitude information and secondary surveillance radar code) in the HKFIR through the ADS-B display to provide ATC services," he emphasised.

The CAD attaches great importance to the occurrence. The contractor was tasked right after the occurrence to conduct a thorough investigation and submit a report as soon as possible. The CAD will continue to closely follow up on this occurrence.

[DoJ responds to criticism against judge](#)

In response to the vandalism outside the High Court Building and criticism against a judge today (January 1), the Department of Justice issued the following statement:

Judicial independence is an essential element of the rule of law. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government respects the freedom of speech of individuals. Members of the public have the right to express their views on court decisions and related matters within the boundary permitted by the law. Personal attacks and insults against judges would severely undermine the authority of the courts and damage public confidence in the judicial system.

As pointed out by the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal at the Ceremonial Opening of the Legal Year last year, "... it is no part of a court's function or duty to adjudicate on political or social issues, nor economic ones, whether siding with one extreme or another, or finding some sort of middle ground to solve the community's political, social or economic concerns. Rather, at all times, the court is concerned with dealing with one aspect and one aspect only: a resolution of the legal issues arising in the dispute before it." Any person who is dissatisfied with court decisions may lodge appeals through the excising mechanism and should not criticise judges abusively or impute them of political bias, otherwise, the rule of law in Hong Kong would be undermined.

[Rioters block roads and set fire on Hong Kong Island](#)

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

As the night fell, masked rioters recklessly vandalised public facilities in Causeway Bay, Wan Chai and Central area. They blocked roads with barricades and dug up bricks from pavements, some even set fire to banks and ATM machines.

Having given warnings in vain, Police have conducted dispersal operations, including the use of Specialised Crowd Management Vehicle. Police warn all rioters to stop the illegal acts and dispersal and arrest action will be taken.