

Hong Kong firmly upholds freedoms and human rights

A Government spokesman stressed today (December 26) that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government attached "the utmost importance to and firmly upheld human rights and various freedoms" in Hong Kong.

"Despite the social unrest affecting Hong Kong over the past six months, freedoms and human rights have continued to be jealously guarded and remained a top priority of the Government. Along with the rule of law, a fiercely independent judiciary, a clean government, a level playing field for business, openness, diversity and inclusiveness, freedoms and human rights constitute our much-cherished core values which underpin Hong Kong's success," the spokesman said.

The spokesman was referring to media reports that an organisation – Stand With Hong Kong – had invited religious and faith leaders across the United Kingdom to sign a letter to the British Prime Minister and Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to urge the UK government to "urgently ensure the lives and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong are protected".

"We deeply deplore the move as it is absolutely unwarranted and grossly misguided. It also totally ignores the real situation of Hong Kong, let alone failing to do justice to our good track record on the protection of human rights and freedoms in this dynamic world metropolis. The fact is that freedoms and rights here have by no means been eroded at all in recent months.

"Specifically, we object vehemently to the organisation's remark that over the past six months, the people of Hong Kong 'have endured suppression of their basic freedoms and human rights in their fight for justice and democracy' and that Hong Kong people 'are routinely subjected to police brutality and state repression'.

"This is a patently groundless, insulting and malicious accusation which must be rejected outright. Nothing can be further from the truth."

The spokesman emphasised that the protection of human rights and freedoms, including freedom of speech, of the press, of publication, of association and assembly, of procession and of demonstration; free flow of information; freedom of religious belief and free education; free flow of capital; and free trade and free port are all enshrined in the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and other legislation. The provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as applied to Hong Kong before 1997 remain in force. The 50,000-plus public assemblies and processions held over the past five years testify to the freedoms enjoyed by our people.

"Indeed, Hong Kong has remained the world's freest economy for 25 years in a row since 1994, according to the Washington-based Heritage Foundation," he added.

"During the past six months, the vast majority of the requests for public meetings, processions and protests were given the green light by the Government. For requests not approved, it was generally a decision made in the hopes of preventing violence, ensuring peace and public order.

"It is important to point out the public protests against the extradition bill which began as largely peaceful and orderly marches in June soon spiralled out of control into a highly violent and disorderly campaign. This was despite the fact that the bill was formally withdrawn in October.

"Unprecedented violence, reckless and organised destruction became the norm. Radical activists attacked police officers and facilities with petrol bombs, iron bars, bricks and chemicals. Some 8,000 petrol bombs were found from two local university campuses. Public infrastructure and transport are repeatedly vandalised, with the Cross-Harbour Tunnel paralysed for two weeks. Also targeted are countless shops, restaurants and shopping malls which apparently did not side with the radical activists. Even HSBC and Starbucks have been targeted. Innocent members of the public with a dissenting voice were severely and glaringly attacked in streets. What is more, intimidation and doxxing through social media of senior government officials, police officers and their families as well as other outspoken individuals have been rampant. Earlier this month, the so-called "freedom fighters" vandalised and threw petrol bombs at the Court of Final Appeal and High Court – our edifices symbolising the rule of law," the spokesman elaborated.

"These unlawful and violent acts must be condemned, curbed and ended if Hong Kong is to continue as a vibrant international financial, business and logistics hub. As in any society that believes in the rule of law, it is incumbent on our police force to maintain public safety and order.

"Contrary to their claims to be campaigning for freedom, the radicals and violent protesters have openly joined hands to undermine the rights and freedoms of those who do not agree with them and attack the rule of law in an organised fashion."

The spokesman concluded, "For a long time, Hong Kong has always enjoyed the full substance of real freedoms – the envy of many other economies. This is one of the success factors which make Hong Kong tick and propel us forward. The HKSAR Government will ensure that this crucial attribute is well preserved and safeguarded."

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected ketamine \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 6 kg of suspected ketamine with an estimated market value of about \$4.1 million at the Hong Kong International Airport yesterday (December 25).

A 29-year-old male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Amsterdam, the Netherlands via Zurich, Switzerland yesterday. During customs clearance, the suspected ketamine was found concealed in eight scented candles inside his check-in baggage. The man was then arrested.

The arrested man has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. The case will be brought up at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (December 27).

Customs will continue to apply risk assessment strategy to select inbound, outbound and transit passengers for clearance to intercept different kinds of drug trafficking activities.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[Appeal for information on missing man in Sau Mau Ping \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (December 26) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Sau Mau Ping.

Lee Man-kuen, aged 91, went missing after he left his residence in Kwun Tong Garden Estate yesterday afternoon (December 25). His family made a report to Police on the same day.

He is about 1.65 metres tall, 65 kilograms in weight and of medium build. He has a long face with yellow complexion and short straight white hair. He was last seen wearing a black jacket, black trousers, black shoes and carrying a black umbrella.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon East on 3661 0316 or email to rmpu-ke-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



[FEHD orders two siu mei and lo mei shops in Sham Shui Po to suspend business for 14 days](#)

The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene has ordered two siu mei and lo mei shops in Sham Shui Po to suspend business for 14 days as the

operators repeatedly breached the Food Business Regulation (FBR) by storing open food improperly on the premises.

The two shops, which are located at Shop 106 and Shop 108 respectively on the ground floor at Block 20 of Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po, were ordered to suspend business from today (December 26) to January 8.

"In March and October this year, two convictions for the above-mentioned breach were recorded against the siu mei and lo mei shop at Shop 106. A total fine of \$4,500 was levied by the court and 15 demerit points were registered against the licensee under the department's demerit points system. The contraventions resulted in the 14-day business suspension. While in June and October this year, two convictions for the above-mentioned breach were recorded against the siu mei and lo mei shop at Shop 108. A total fine of \$5,000 was levied by the court and 15 demerit points were registered against the licensee under the department's demerit points system. The contraventions resulted in the 14-day business suspension," a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said.

The licensee of the food premises at Shop 106 had a record of two convictions for the same offence in January and March this year respectively. A total fine of \$4,000 was levied and 15 demerit points were registered. The breaches led to business suspension for seven days from June to July this year. While the licensee of the food premises at Shop 108 had a record of two convictions for the same offence in January and March this year respectively. A total fine of \$4,300 was levied and 15 demerit points were registered. The breaches led to business suspension for seven days from June to July this year.

The spokesman reminded licensees of food premises to comply with the FBR, or their licences could be suspended or cancelled.

Licensed food premises are required to exhibit a sign, at a conspicuous place near the main entrance, indicating that the premises have been licensed. A list of licensed food premises is available on the FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/index.html).

Approval letters to be issued to successful applicants under White Form Secondary Market Scheme 2019

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

Following the ballot for the White Form Secondary Market Scheme 2019 (WSM 2019) drawn on August 15, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has completed detailed vetting of the eligibility of the applicants. Approval and confirmation letters for the 3 000 successful applicants (2 700 family applicants and 300 one-person applicants) will be issued tomorrow (December 27).

"Each successful applicant will be issued with one Approval Letter and two Confirmation Letters. One Confirmation Letter is applicable to the HA's HOS Secondary Market while the other is applicable to the Hong Kong Housing Society (HS)'s Flat-for-Sale Scheme (FFSS) Secondary Market. Within four weeks from the date of issue, holders of the Approval Letters may submit the Confirmation Letters to the HA and/or the HS for application for the Certificate of Eligibility to Purchase (CEP) to purchase a flat with premium not yet paid on the HA's HOS Secondary Market or the HS' FFSS Secondary Market. The fee for each CEP is HK\$770," a spokesman for the HA said.

"The CEP is valid for 12 months from the date of issue and no extension will be granted upon its expiry. To complete the transaction, holders of the CEP need to apply for a Letter of Nomination from the HA or the HS after they have entered into a Provisional Agreement for Sale and Purchase. The applicant and the family member(s) listed in the application form must meet the eligibility criteria of the WSM 2019 from submission of the application form up to the date of signing the Provisional Agreement for Sale and Purchase," he said.

The list of successful applications will be uploaded to the HA/Housing Department website (www.housingauthority.gov.hk) tomorrow.