

Hong Kong Customs clarifies on Hong Kong Journalists Association's press conference

In response to the press conference and the press release by the Hong Kong Journalists Association this afternoon (September 13), which mentioned that reporters started to receive anonymous messages ever since Customs officers conducted search on their baggage during arrival clearance, suspecting that leakage of personal data was involved. Hong Kong Customs issued the following clarification:

Customs has all along applied risk assessment and intelligence analysis to select passengers, cargoes, postal packets and conveyances for checks and clearance, and worked closely with relevant departments through intelligence exchanges and joint enforcement actions to combat smuggling of contrabands, activities of conveying or bringing controlled articles into and out of Hong Kong illegally.

Customs officers will not collect passengers' personal mobile phone numbers during custom clearance.

Customs attaches great importance to protecting personal data privacy. The department shall endeavour to ensure the collection, use, retention, transfer and access of personal data in operations, investigations and services be executed in accordance with the requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, and that all officers must strictly follow the relevant regulations.

Immigration Department appoints Youth Ambassadors in Wuhan (with photos)

The Director of Immigration, Mr Benson Kwok, officiated at the appointment ceremony of the Immigration Department (ImmD) Youth Ambassador Programme (the Programme) today (September 13) held in Wuhan. He appointed eight young people from Hong Kong who are studying and living in the central region of the Mainland as ImmD Youth Ambassadors.

It is the fourth time ImmD appointing Youth Ambassadors in the Mainland, after Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai. The appointed Youth Ambassadors will receive diversified training provided by the ImmD during the one-year term and collaborate with the Immigration Divisions of the Mainland Offices of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, in disseminating the

latest information and the business scope of the ImmD. The ImmD expects that the Programme will broaden the Youth Ambassadors' horizons and lay a solid foundation for their future work in various positions within society.

During the appointment ceremony, Mr Kwok encouraged the Youth Ambassadors to take this opportunity to shoulder more responsibilities and missions, act as the bridge between the ImmD and the public, promote mainstream values characterised by patriotism with affection for the country and Hong Kong, spread positive energy to society, and make contribution to the stability and prosperity of the country and Hong Kong.



[HKSAR Government opposes foreign interference with judicial proceedings concerning Hong Kong National Security Law case](#)

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (September 13) strongly disapproved and opposed the acts of the "international legal team" for Lai Chee-ying and his son Sebastian Lai, and those of Sebastian Lai himself, to scandalise the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) and the judicial system of the HKSAR, and to abuse the United Nations mechanisms by soliciting the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture to interfere in the judicial proceedings of Lai Chee-ying's case concerning the NSL.

A spokesman for the Government said, "Hong Kong is a society underpinned by the rule of law and has always adhered to the principle that 'laws must be obeyed and lawbreakers be held accountable', which is well recognised by international communities. The Department of Justice (DoJ) of the HKSAR, by virtue of Article 63 of the Basic Law, controls criminal prosecutions, free from any interference. Independent prosecutorial decisions for each case are made in a rigorous and objective manner, strictly based on evidence and

applicable laws and are in accordance with the Prosecution Code. Prosecutions would be instituted by the DoJ only if there is sufficient admissible evidence to support a reasonable prospect of conviction, and if it is in the public interest to do so.

"Any attempt by any country, organisation, or individual to interfere with the judicial proceedings in the HKSAR by means of political power, in order to procure a defendant's evasion of the criminal justice process, is a blatant act undermining the rule of law of Hong Kong and should be condemned. The suggestion that persons or organisations with certain backgrounds should be immune from legal sanctions for their illegal acts and activities is tantamount to granting such persons or organisations privileges to break the law and is totally contrary to the spirit of the rule of law."

The spokesman stressed, "The NSL and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance clearly stipulate that human rights shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security. The rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents under the Basic Law and the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to the HKSAR are protected in accordance with the law."

The spokesman said, "The HKSAR Government strongly rejects unreasonable smears by external forces regarding treatment received by Lai Chee-ying in correctional institutions. In fact, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to ensuring that the custodial environment is secure, safe, humane, appropriate and healthy, and have put in place established mechanism to safeguard the rights of persons-in-custody (PICs), including independent visitors, namely Justices of the Peace, who are vested with the statutory duties to inspect the prisons, to ensure the rights of PICs are protected.

"All correctional institutions are equipped with hospitals, staffed by qualified medical staff with the collaboration of doctors stationed by the Department of Health, to provide 24-hour basic medical services. If inmates require further examination and treatment, they will be referred to specialist medical staff or to public hospitals for further follow-up. In addition to basic medical services, the CSD will also arrange regular physical examinations for elderly inmates. According to the law, every PIC needs to participate in physical exercises unless exempted by the medical officers on medical grounds. PICs will be arranged to exercise outdoors for not less than an hour every day. Each cell or dormitory is of adequate size and designed to ensure proper lighting, ventilation, and fittings essential for maintaining health."

The spokesman stressed, "The CSD adopts the above arrangements when handling matters related to inmate Lai Chee-ying, which is the same as other inmates. Any accusation concerning Lai Chee-ying not receiving appropriate treatment in prisons, including not having access to optimal medical services, cannot be further from the truth and is only spreading rumours to create trouble."

The HKSAR Government will never tolerate, and strongly deplores, any form of interference by anyone with the judicial proceedings of the HKSAR.

Remarks by US for S after Fight Crime Committee meeting (with video)

Following is the remarks by the Under Secretary for Security, Mr Michael Cheuk, at a media session after the Fight Crime Committee meeting at the Central Government Offices this afternoon (September 13):

Reporter: Firstly, following up again on the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), is the Security Bureau aware of the reports of harassment and doxxing reported by the HKJA today? Can you provide any details, perhaps the state of these cases, whether they are being investigated or not? Second, will the Bureau itself take any action to assist the HKJA as there is concern that this incident would affect the perception of press freedom in Hong Kong? Lastly, again following up on the potential leakage of the Government database, there are some concerns from the HKJA that there was leakage in Government databases as three individuals received threatening messages after they were searched by the Customs. Does the Government have any comment on that?

Under Secretary for Security: First of all, I was just attending the meeting so I am not aware of it. I am not quite sure whether my fellow officers in the Security Bureau are aware of it, so at the moment I could not give you a definite answer. But in any event, Hong Kong is a place of rule of law. We condemn all sorts of actions that should be outlawed. Any individual should be free from threats, free from fear and free from harassment. If any individual, irrespective of who you are, if you are receiving such threat or harassment, please come out and report. As to the allegation by the HKJA about the leakage of data from Government database, first of all, I don't think there is any basis for that allegation. At the moment, we have not received any information that the database of any individual department is being compromised. As for freedom of the press, I would say that Hong Kong already has freedom of the press and we already enjoy freedom of the press. Anyone's freedom, not just about freedom of the press, but free from fear, freedom of expression, whatsoever, those rights should be respected and should not be compromised. If any of these individuals consider themselves under threat or being harassed, please come forward to report to us. We will take action accordingly.

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

CE meets Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of Serbia (with photo)

â€‹The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, met with the visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior of Serbia, Mr Ivica Dačić, today (September 13) to exchange views on issues of mutual interest. The Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, also attended the meeting.

Mr Lee welcomed Mr Dačić's visit to Hong Kong. Mr Lee said that the economic and trade relations between Hong Kong and Serbia had grown steadily in recent years, with bilateral merchandise trade amounting to US\$200 million in 2023, representing a growth of more than 10 per cent over 2022. He added that there is potential for Hong Kong and Serbia to further deepen economic and trade ties, and jointly explore more co-operation opportunities.

Mr Lee highlighted that Hong Kong has the distinctive advantage of enjoying the strong support of the country and being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems". Hong Kong boasts a highly internationalised, market-oriented and friendly business environment, making the city an ideal place for companies to expand their global operations. Serbian enterprises can leverage Hong Kong's platform as an international financial and trade centre to explore overseas and Mainland markets, achieving mutual benefits, he added.

