

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (January 12):

Reporter: Could you please clarify what you meant by adopting double standards by foreign countries when making remarks on the mass arrest, because in their joint statement, they accuse that the NSL (National Security Law) has been used to eliminate opposing political views? And can you make it clear here, will the authorities go after the ordinary citizens who voted in the unofficial primary? And the second question is regarding the case of the 12 Hongkongers, as the licence of the two lawyers helping some of them got revoked by the Chinese authorities, will the Hong Kong Government do anything on this? And the last question is that yesterday a judge took an unprecedented step of banning yellow masks in a courtroom. Do you think it's an inappropriate act? Thanks.

Chief Executive: If I may I will answer the second and third questions first because it's a very simple answer – I would not comment. I would not comment on how the legal system operates in another place. I would not comment on remarks made in Hong Kong's courts. That should be well understood.

The first question is a question that should be very obvious, having regard to the recent incidents that have happened in the United States. When we mention about double standards being adopted by overseas officials and politicians when they commented on incidents in Hong Kong, the first double standard is the importance of national security. Why should Hong Kong not have the safeguards on national security when jurisdictions all over the world have series of legislation to safeguard their own national security? Are they suggesting that the safety of Hong Kong people is of lesser significance and importance to the people of Hong Kong than the American citizen in an American society? The first double standard that they have adopted is they uphold their own national security but at the same time belittle the need for national security in the People's Republic of China, especially in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The second double standard is how one would see the rule of law. The rule of law requires enforcement of the law and the keeping of law and order in a city in order to safeguard the life and property of citizens. But since June 2019, everybody has seen what has happened in Hong Kong. We have rampant violence and riots undermining the safety of Hong Kong people, properties and businesses. But some overseas commentators or politicians were condoning or encouraging this sort of activities under the guise of democracy. When the same thing seemed to happen in their own country, they immediately took a very different approach to condemn the violence, and some said that this was verging on sedition in American society.

The third double standard is respect for the judicial system. I think all over the world, if we talk about the rule of law, one of the most important fundamentals is the courts, the independence of the courts as well as the quality of our judges. Hong Kong is very blessed to have a very distinguished judiciary supported by very distinguished judges. I would really appeal – especially we have a new Chief Justice installed yesterday – I would appeal to community at large to leave room for the courts to do their work, which is to uphold justice in Hong Kong without fear, favour, self-interest or deceit. Thank you.

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