

Transcript of remarks by S for S at media session on Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media session at the Central Government Offices on Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019 today (May 20):

Reporter: Mr Lee, as you said, this is a very difficult decision to make. I understand you talked about the time issue. But with Taiwan already repeatedly saying that they would not accept surrendering or asking for the suspect under the current situation, why do you insist that there is such an urgent need to table the bill to the full Council next month? And my second question would be, are you basically ignoring all the opposition to this? Or are you actually taking the Liaison Office's open rallying for support of this bill as a backup that you have indeed actually the support of society at large for this bill to pass? Thank you.

Secretary for Security: I think I have repeatedly explained to you and members of the public about the legal vacuum regarding the law to deal with a request for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters or surrender of fugitive. Because the law at present does not apply to Taiwan, so simply we do not have any law to deal with the request, so what the proposal intends to do is to create the law so that we have a legal basis to go ahead, to try to make the suspect face the justice he deserves to face. We will be making every possible effort to let Taiwan understand that we have to create the law so that we can offer the assistance which they have asked for at a very early stage. We will do it with respect. We will only look at the case details and talk about the legal matters as well as the subsequent arrangements to hand over the person to Taiwan so that he will face the justice he should face.

I have also noted that the Taiwan side has indicated that they also believe that a suspect should face the justice that he should face. And also that the door is always open for negotiation for mutual legal assistance matters, so with that in mind and the aim of justice are being one of the main reasons why we make the proposal. I want first of all to have the law to enable us to do it. And then we will be trying all our best to work towards the goal of ensuring that the suspect faces the justice he deserves.

We understand that on the government bill, different people have been expressing different opinions about the government bill. There are those who

support and there are those who disagree. I think it is every people's rights to express their view. And the Central Government of course has supported the Hong Kong SAR Government (HKSARG) to go ahead with matters that are in accordance with the laws of Hong Kong, so ensuring that things that need to be done should be done, and there is policy that needs to be made should be made, and there are laws that need to be created to be created. And it has often been the stated stance that the Central Government supports HKSARG to administer Hong Kong in accordance with the law.

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