

**For discussion  
on 29 February 2008**

**Legislative Council Panel on Security**

**Police's Handling of Reports or Complaints About Press Articles  
Supplementary Information**

**Purpose**

This paper provides supplementary information in response to the requests made by Members during the discussion on the paper entitled "Police's Handling of Reports or Complaints About Press Articles" (LC Paper No. CB (2) 706/07-08(03)) at the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Security held on 8 January 2008.

**Background**

2. Members requested the Administration to provide the following information :

- (a) information about the case where three Police officers visited a media organization on 1 November 2007 –
  - (i) whether and, if so, when the three police officers concerned had read the press article in question before the visit to the media organization;
  - (ii) why it was necessary for the Police to visit the media organization and why three police officers were needed for the visit;
- (b) the Police's established procedures for handling reports or complaints about press articles; and
- (c) amendments, if any, made to such established procedures, after having regard to the views and concerns expressed by Members at the meeting on 8 January 2008.

### **Police's Established Procedures for Handling Reports or Complaints About Press Articles**

3. As stated in LC Paper No. CB (2) 706/07-08(03), the Police handle all reports and complaints received in accordance with the established procedures irrespective of the channel through which the report or complaint is received, or whether the person making the report or complaint is anonymous, or whether the complainant or complainee involved is a public figure. Under such procedures, upon receiving a report or complaint (including a report or complaint about press articles), the responsible police officer will carry out an initial assessment, and collect background information if necessary, before deciding whether and how it should be followed up. For instance, cases suspected to involve criminal content will be forwarded to the criminal investigation units for follow up. If a case involves a complaint against an individual police officer, it will be referred to the Complaints Against Police Office for handling. For cases falling outside the purview of the Police, they will be referred to other government departments for follow up where necessary. During the process, the Police will seek the advice of the Department of Justice if required.

### **Information About the Visit to a Media Organization by Police Officers**

4. Three police officers visited a media organization on 1 November last year. The purpose of the visit was to obtain the co-operation of the media organization in providing background information for an initial assessment on five complaints received in October last year about an article published in a publication of the organization on 9 August 2006 allegedly instigating violence.

5. Police officers usually operate in small teams when they perform duties outside their office, and the number of members in the team on each occasion is determined having regard to the prevailing manpower deployment situation or other circumstances. The number of police officers deployed on that day for the visit in question conformed with the usual arrangement of the Police for performance of duties outside the office.

6. Police officers should read information relevant to the case before they perform duties on individual cases. As a matter of fact, police officers who visited the media organization in this incident had read the relevant information beforehand, including the press article related to the complaints.

### **Improvement Measures**

7. Having carefully considered the views of the Panel, the Police concur that reports or complaints about media organizations need to be handled more prudently because they may be more sensitive in nature. Hence, starting from early January 2008, the handling of all reports and complaints about media organizations or press articles received by the Police is coordinated centrally. Regardless of whether the reports or complaints are made via letters, electronic mails, telephone, fax or in person to a police station, they will first be registered at the Criminal Records Bureau of the Police Headquarters and the Police will in the first instance ascertain whether the reports or complaints made are cases “being processed” by them. If so, they will be referred to the unit(s) handling the reports or complaints concerned for follow up. If the case is a new case, it must be submitted to the Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crime) for scrutiny, who will instruct officers of the appropriate unit for follow up. This central coordination arrangement also makes it more convenient for an individual who has made a report or complaint or a complainee to enquire about the progress of his/her case.

**Security Bureau  
Hong Kong Police Force  
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