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GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
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(Total : 2 pages)

1 September 2009

Mr Raymond Lam
Clerk to Panel on Security
Legislative Council
3rd Floor, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Lam,

Installation of Closed-Circuit Television Cameras in Public Places

At its meeting held on 2 June 2009, the LegCo Panel on Security (the Panel) discussed the installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras by the District Council (DC) at the Mong Kok Pedestrian Precinct (MKPP). Some members raised a few more general questions. Based on the contributions from the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Police, we set out below a consolidated response to the issues raised during the discussion.

The Police's consideration of employing CCTV systems to address the problem of objects being thrown from height in MKPP

2. There is the general consensus that installation of CCTV systems in public places has implications on personal privacy and need to be justified and handled with care. At present, the Police have not installed any CCTV systems in public places (including pedestrian precincts) on a permanent basis for the purpose of maintaining public order.

3. The Yau Tsim Mong District Council (YTMDC) started to operate a CCTV system in MKPP on 8 June 2009 to follow up on the previous incidents of corrosive fluid being thrown from height therein and the Police have provided required input on such installation and operation from a crime prevention angle since its preparatory stage. In fact, after the incidents, the Police have stepped up patrols in the vicinity of the crime scenes, and have been investigating the cases intensively through various channels including the analysis of images captured by the CCTV system installed in MKPP. The Police will continue with their vigorous criminal investigation and at the same time work with the DC closely with regard to the follow-up work.

Guidelines on the installation of CCTV systems in public places for use by all DCs

4. The CCTV system in MKPP is a district-based project initiated by the DC having regard to previous and repeated incidents of corrosive fluid being thrown from height. So far, we are not aware of another DC planning to initiate similar projects in other districts. Should there be any, HAD would share with the interested DCs the operational guidelines and experience of YTMDC so that standard practices would be adopted across-the-board as far as practicable.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Emily Mo)
for Secretary for Security

c.c. District Officer (Yau Tsim Mong) (Attn.: Mrs Vicki Kwok)
Commissioner of Police (Attn.: Mr Ng Sai-kuen
Mr Alan Yu)