

香港特別行政區政府
保安局



The Government of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Security Bureau

香港添馬添美道 2 號

2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

本函檔號 Our Ref.: SBCR 7/3221/15

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

Clerk to the Panel on Security of the Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Betty Ma)

29 December 2017

Dear Ms Ma,

Panel on Security
Joint letter from Hon LEUNG Che-cheung,
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT and Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan

I write in response to the captioned letter dated 6 November 2017.

Overall strategy of handling non-refoulement claims

2. To address the influx of non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants (“NECIIs”) and the significant increase of non-refoulement claimants since 2014, the Government launched a comprehensive review of the strategy in handling non-refoulement claims (“NRCs”) under the unified screening mechanism (“USM”) in early 2016. The review addresses matters on arrival prevention, screening procedures, detention, enforcement and removal. Various measures introduced or being implemented since commencement of the comprehensive review have shown positive results –

Year	NECIIs (monthly average)	New non-refoulement claims made (monthly average)
2015	318	421
2016	185 (-42%)	320 (-24%)
2017 (Jan to Oct)	75 (-59%)	164 (-49%)

3. As at end October 2017, 6 828 claims were pending determination by Immigration Department (“ImmD”), reduced by almost 40% since the peak in March 2016. Despite that, we will continue to sustain our efforts on arrival prevention and expediting screening, and to step up efforts to expedite the removal of rejected claimants, study detention measures, and step up enforcement targeting unlawful employment and other criminal offences. We will also put forward proposals for amending the Immigration Ordinance, Cap.115 to improve the screening procedures for non-refoulement claims and related matters.

4. It is our main policy objective and strategy to continue to reduce the overall number of claimants in Hong Kong, so as to tackle all related issues at root (including crimes and impact on society).

Combatting crimes at district level

5. The Police have always been concerned with the situation of non-ethnic Chinese (“NEC”) persons committing crimes in Hong Kong. To study the problem in a focused manner, formulate relevant strategies and coordinate combating operations, the Police set up the “Crime Wing Working Group on NEC Involvement in Organized Crime and Triad Activities”, chaired by the Chief Superintendent of Police of the Organized Crime and Triad Bureau (“OCTB”) and consisted of representatives from the Criminal Intelligence Bureau and Crime Formations of all Regions.

6. In 2017, OCTB launched new strategies to tackle NEC involvement in crimes with emphasis on four aspects, namely training, intelligence gathering and sharing, multi-agency cooperation and enhanced enforcement action.

7. To minimize the economic attraction to claimants of NRCs by taking up unlawful employment, ImmD has continued to step up targeted inspection and intelligence gathering against venues like factories, restaurants, food processing industries, premises under renovation, recycling centres, container depots and warehouses in these districts and conduct raids (including joint operations with other law enforcement agencies as necessary). In the first ten months of 2017, ImmD conducted 639 targeted operations against NEC illegal workers, a 34% increase over the same period of 2016. At the same time, ImmD will continue to enhance publicity to remind employers that employing unemployable persons is a serious offence for which they are liable to immediate imprisonment.

Strengthening control over humanitarian assistance offered to Claimants of NRCs

8. Through tendering exercises, the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) commissioned the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch (“ISS-HK”) to provide humanitarian assistance (including temporary accommodation, basic utilities allowance, food, clothing, basic necessities, appropriate transportation allowance and counselling service) to claimants of NRCs who are deprived of basic needs during their presence in Hong Kong. At the same time, we need to ensure that such humanitarian assistance will not create a magnet effect which may have serious implications for the sustainability of our current support systems and for our immigration control.

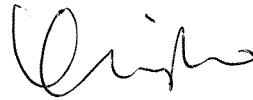
9. To improve management, food provision has been provided by means of Electronic Token (“E-token”) starting from 1 March 2017. In addition to overseeing ISS-HK’s delivery of the assistance, SWD has required the food contractor to assign a unique service number on each of the E-tokens that can be used to print and display the name of the E-token’s user, to include the user’s personal photo image and signature on the E-token, in order for the food contractor to check the authenticity of the E-token when it is being used.

10. In the light of recent reports, SWD has reminded the food contractor of the need to check more closely the said information above. In case of doubt, the food contractor should alert SWD and ISS-HK immediately for assistance. ISS-HK will investigate into each case of suspected abuse, and will suspend the provision of E-tokens to those having misused them (and provide them with in-kind food assistance

instead). So far, around 90 E-token users have been suspended service because of suspected abuse of the system. ISS-HK will report cases of suspected crimes to the Police.

11. Please contact the undersigned at 2810 2676 should there be any questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Billy Woo', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

(Billy Woo)
for Secretary for Security