

(Translation)

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香港特別行政區政府
保安局



The Government of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Security Bureau

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17 July 2020

Miss Betty MA
Clerk to Panel on Security
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Miss MA,

Police's dispersal operations towards reporters on 1 July 2020

I refer to your letter dated 3 July 2020 to the Secretary for Security. Having consulted the Hong Kong Police Force, I am authorised to reply as follows.

According to section 10 of the Police Force Ordinance (Cap. 232), the Police have the statutory responsibility to take lawful measures to maintain public safety and public order. The Police will, in light of the circumstances at the scene, make assessments and exercise professional judgement to take appropriate actions, including using the necessary force, to ensure public safety and public order.

The assembly at Hong Kong Island on 1 July 2020 was an unauthorised assembly, which had gradually developed into an unlawful assembly. Participants might have violated the relevant provisions in the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245). Starting from noon that day, a large number of demonstrators gathered unlawfully at Causeway Bay and Wan Chai, clamouring and walked out of the road, some rioters even blocked the road and set fires with debris. Many public facilities and shops were maliciously damaged. These violent acts not only undermined the public safety and public order, but also seriously affected the daily lives of the public. In this regard, the Police issued multiple warnings at the scene, asking the crowd to leave peacefully and return to the footpath. However, some rioters refused to follow

Police's instructions, and rushed out of the road and blocked multiple lanes. In order to restore the public order, the Police needed to disperse the crowd and took arrest actions, and used the minimum force required to stop the violence.

The use of the specialised crowd management vehicle is one of the Police's operational options. It is used by the Police to stop acts which seriously jeopardise public safety and public order, as well as create a safe distance between protesters and police officers to reduce their chance of injury. If members of the public could conduct public order events in a peaceful, lawful and orderly manner, there would be no need for the Police to use any force.

We understand that the media would need to carry out reporting activities. During operations and where circumstances permit, the Police will endeavour to facilitate the work of the media, for example by deploying Force Media Liaison Cadre at the scene to provide assistance, so that both sides can perform their respective functions on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. On the premise of not affecting police operations, the Police have facilitated media reporting as far as practicable. During operations, the Police will continue to remind reporters that they should pay attention to police instructions and maintain appropriate distance from the police officers to ensure the safety of both sides.

Anyone who is dissatisfied with the enforcement actions of the Police can lodge a complaint with the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO). CAPO will investigate and handle each complaint in a fair and just manner.

Yours sincerely,

(Joceline CHUI)
for Secretary for Security

c.c.

Commissioner of Police

(Attn: Chief Superintendent, Police Public Relations Branch
Superintendent, Operations Wing)