

(Translation)

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香港特別行政區政府
保安局



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Security Bureau

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8 October 2021

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

Dear Miss Ma,

Combating sea smuggling crimes

I refer to your letter of 29 September 2021 to the Secretary for Security. I am authorised to reply as follows.

Anti-smuggling strategies and measures

The Government puts great emphasis on stemming smuggling, and has been preventing and combating smuggling activities through a robust legal framework, cross-departmental and cross-regional collaboration, as well as manpower and equipment support.

Hong Kong's law enforcement agencies, including the Customs and Excise Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Marine Department, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, etc., have been combating smuggling of various kinds in different areas through multi-faceted and cross-departmental collaboration. Law enforcement agencies adopt an intelligence-driven strategy to keep abreast of the latest smuggling situation, carry out assessment and make appropriate deployment for enforcement operations to curb smuggling.

Regarding smuggling on the sea, it is now more common for smuggling syndicates to use high-powered speedboats to pick up goods on the seashore or from barges moored near Hong Kong's sea boundary, and then head to

Mainland waters at high speed. Law enforcement agencies have stepped up patrols and deployment at sea smuggling black spots and mounted cross-departmental joint operations in relevant waters.

Smuggling is by nature illegal cross-boundary activity. As such, apart from cross-departmental operations, local law enforcement agencies have been working closely and exchanging intelligence with their Mainland, other regional and international counterparts to jointly combat smuggling syndicates. Late last month, the Commissioner of Police had an in-depth working meeting with officers of the Guangdong Provincial Public Security Department and the Guangdong Coast Guard regarding both sides' anti-smuggling efforts. Both sides agreed that strategically, they would jointly study the enhancement of safety of officers, the efficacy of equipment, exchanges and training, as well as operational efficacy. They also agreed that tactically and operationally, both sides would enhance co-operation and intelligence exchange, further step up enforcement and conduct joint operations to take down criminal syndicates on all fronts. They will also take strong actions against the recruitment of syndicate members, the alteration of vessels and the storage of frozen meat, trace the source of funding and criminal proceeds of criminal syndicates, and speed up the handover of seized smuggling vessels and tools.

Manpower, training and equipment of law enforcement agencies

The work of disciplined services officers is unique and challenging by nature. They are often exposed to unpredictable risks whilst on duty. As such, the Government has always been very concerned about the safety of frontline law enforcement officers in their execution of duties, and has attached great importance to the matter. Apart from providing proper equipment to them, law enforcement agencies also arrange suitable training and drills to their staff on a regular basis.

In discharging their duties, law enforcement agencies will conduct risk assessments and take corresponding safety measures having regard to the uniqueness of each case. In light of the recent unfortunate incident, law enforcement agencies will actively review their arrangements on manpower, training and equipment to ensure the safety of their officers in marine operations and to effectively combat various types of crimes.

Yours sincerely,

(Joceline Chui)
for Secretary for Security