

**For information
on 13 May 2004**

Legislative Council Panel on Security

Intimidation or violence against public figures and civil servants

Purpose

This paper sets out, in response to the Panel's request, information on intimidation or violence against public figures and civil servants.

"Public Figures"

2. The Police do not have a separate classification of "public figures" in our crime database. Nonetheless, through an extensive search of our records, we have identified a total of 15 reported cases of "well-known personalities" subject to intimidation or violence in 2002 and 2003. In the absence of clear definitions, this search is no more than a best endeavour exercise and of necessity has been guided by a commonsense approach. Well-known personalities in this context include such personalities as Legislative Council Members, public affairs commentators and social activists.

3. As with other criminal intimidation or assault cases, the Police have looked into the causes for the intimidation or assault in all these 15 cases. In most cases, however, the motive behind the intimidation or violence could not be ascertained or substantiated by evidence. There is no clear evidence to suggest that the intimidation or violence has arisen from these personalities' public comments.

Civil Servants

4. In 2001 to 2003, the total number of cases of criminal intimidation, and those cases against civil servants related to their performance of duties, are set out in the table below.

	2001	2002	2003
Total reported cases of intimidation	888	845	933
Cases of intimidation against civil servants in relation to their performance of duties	23	21	30

5. As many different offences may involve violence, the Police do not have readily available statistics on cases involving violence against civil servants. Nevertheless, the Labour Department keeps statistics on occupational injuries involving workplace violence for civil servants. The figures are as follows:

	2001	2002	2003
Injuries involving workplace violence for civil servants¹	197(1)	232	263

Procedures for case handling and protection of victims

6. On receiving a report of intimidation or violence, irrespective of whether the case involves a well-known personality, a civil servant or otherwise, the Police will conduct a thorough investigation into the case. This involves taking statements from relevant parties, locating witnesses, gathering evidence at scenes of crime, establishing the culprits' profiles, analysing their modus operandi, etc. Depending on the evidence available and subject to legal advice, the Police may arrest and lay charges against the persons concerned.

7. The Police are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of witnesses and victims of crimes. Should there be indications or suggestions that there is a threat of injury to a witness or victim, his family and/or his properties, the Police will assess the threat and take appropriate actions commensurate with the assessed threat level. These actions include, for example, arresting the offender (if known), providing protection, and enhancing patrol at the residence and work place of the witness or victim. Where the witness or victim is subject to a real and

¹ Workplace violence includes assault, deliberate kicks, bites, punches, pushes, homicides, etc. during course of employment. Figures in brackets denote the number of fatalities, and figures not in bracket give the total number of occupational injuries resulting in over 3-day sick leave.

prolonged threat of serious physical injury, he would be offered protection under the Witness Protection Programme as necessary in accordance with the Witness Protection Ordinance (Cap. 564).

Conclusion

8. Hong Kong accords the utmost importance to the rule of law. The Government is fully committed to maintaining a free and open society where freedom of expression and freedom of the press are guaranteed. The Police are committed to protecting the safety and property of every member of the community, and maintaining Hong Kong as one of the safest cities in the world. Acts of violence, damage of property and criminal intimidation will not be tolerated. The Police will continue to investigate into all such cases, and offer appropriate protection to the witnesses and victims.

Hong Kong Police Force
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