

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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2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

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24 January 2025

Clerk to Panel on Security  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
Ms Maisie LAM

Dear Ms LAM,

**Request raised by Hon TANG Ka-piu and Hon Dennis LEUNG Tsz-wing to  
discuss follow-up relating to human trafficking incident  
at the Panel on Security of the Legislative Council**

Your letter of 17 January 2025 to the Security Bureau (SB) is well received and our response is as follow.

The SB has always attached great importance to cases where Hong Kong residents are suspected of being lured to Southeast Asian countries and detained to engage in illegal work, and has established a dedicated task force in August 2022 to co-ordinate follow-up work on the cases by relevant law enforcement agencies (LEAs), including the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) and the Immigration Department (ImmD), with a view to providing all practicable assistance to assistance seekers. In view of recent developments, the Under Secretary for Security led members of the dedicated task force from the SB, the HKPF and the ImmD to Bangkok, Thailand on 12 January 2025 to further follow up on the cases.

While in Thailand, the dedicated task force called on the Minister of the Chinese Embassy in the Kingdom of Thailand (the Embassy), Mr Wu Zhiwu. The Embassy showed deep concern over the cases and would continue to follow up and provide appropriate and practicable assistance. The dedicated task force was also received by senior officials from the Thailand authorities, including the Minister of Justice (MoJ) of Thailand, Mr Tawee Sodsong, who is a member of the Anti Trafficking-in-Persons Committee chaired by the Prime Minister of Thailand, and

the heads of the enforcement departments under the MoJ (including the Department of Special Investigation (the department dedicated to combating human trafficking activities), the Office of the Justice Affairs and the Office of the Narcotics Control Board), Thailand's Senior Inspector General Mr Thatchai Pitaneelaboot and Deputy Commissioner General (Crime Prevention & Suppression) of the Thai National Police, Mr Prachuab Wongsuk, Thailand's Vice Minister For Tourism and Sports, Mr Jakkaphon Tangsutthitham, and the Commissioner of the Tourist Police Bureau, Mr Saksira Pheuak-um.

The dedicated task force reflected the situation regarding relevant assistance cases, exchanged intelligence and discussed strengthening future follow-up work, with a view to assisting assistance seekers in returning to Hong Kong safely as soon as possible. The Thailand authorities demonstrated great importance to the assistance cases and offered positive feedback. Moreover, the Thailand authorities expressed that they would further strengthen the prevention and combat of transnational crimes, and exchanged views in-depth on further strengthening co-operation and jointly combating cross-border crimes such as telecommunications and online fraud as well as human trafficking. The dedicated task force will maintain close contact with relevant parties and continue to proactively follow up on relevant cases.

Since 2024, the LEAs have received a total of 28 requests for assistance in relation to Hong Kong residents alleged to have been detained in Southeast Asian countries and not being able to leave. Among them, 17 have already returned to Hong Kong, and one has been rescued and is now safe in Thailand. The dedicated task force is now discussing with Thailand authorities striving to assist the assistance seeker to return to Hong Kong as soon as possible. As for the remaining 10 cases, the dedicated task force will continue to follow up and provide appropriate advice and practicable assistance to the assistance seekers or their families. Moreover, the SB will continue relevant follow-up work in the following five aspects, including:

#### **1. Commit to rescuing those detained persons**

With a view to strengthening future communication and intelligence exchange, the dedicated task force has established direct contacts with relevant Thailand authorities to follow up on the cases more effectively. Moreover, the ImmD will continue to maintain close contact with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the Chinese diplomatic and consular missions there to proactively follow up on the cases.

#### **2. Investigate suspected deception cases and enforcement**

The Hong Kong LEAs will continue to investigate the suspected deception cases in order to find out whether criminals are involved in illegal activities in Hong Kong, and to take enforcement and arrest

action when necessary.

### **3. Strengthen publicity**

The Government will strengthen publicity to remind residents of the prevalent modus operandi of scams and to exercise caution in order to avoid those scams, including promotion on social media platforms, distributing the “anti-scam” leaflets to travellers heading to Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia at the departure level of the Hong Kong International Airport, and through media reports, etc.

### **4. Strengthen liaison with relevant local Consulates-General**

The SB met with the Consul-General of Thailand in Hong Kong and the Consul-General of Myanmar in Hong Kong on 16 and 17 January 2025 respectively to exchange views, share information and discuss strengthening future follow-up work. The SB received positive feedback from the Consuls-General during the meetings with all parties expressing hope to assist more assistance seekers in returning to Hong Kong safely as soon as possible.

### **5. Review Outbound Travel Alert for relevant country/territory**

Having regard to the latest situation of relevant countries, the SB on 17 January 2025 raised the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) level for south-eastern regions of Myanmar, including Myawaddy district, Hpapun district, Hpa-An district and Kawkareik district, to red, while maintaining an amber OTA for the rest of the country. The SB also updated the OTA webpage on the same day regarding supplementary information for Cambodia with a view to reminding residents to exercise caution and beware of overseas job scams.

As regards Thailand, as revealed from available information, among those assistance cases received by the LEAs since 2022, no one was taken away while travelling in Thailand or randomly on the streets. All cases involved pre-scheduled work or meeting arrangement. The amber OTA issued by the SB for Thailand is still in effect. The SB will continue to closely monitor the situation and development in Myanmar, Cambodia and Thailand. Any updates will be issued through the media, the SB’s mobile app and the OTA webpage

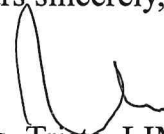
The HKSAR Government has all along been making proactive and multi-pronged efforts in the fight against trafficking in persons (TIP), and has injected an enormous amount of resources into combatting TIP. Currently, our legislative framework comprises over 50 legal provisions against various TIP conducts, including crimes such as fraud, physical abuse, false imprisonment, and criminal intimidation, with some resulting in penalties of up to life imprisonment.



This arsenal of legislation provides a comprehensive package of safeguards. The LEAs may make use of powers and rely on offences provided in different statutes in the course of their investigation, enforcement and prosecution, so that they can cover all nature of crimes involved, subject to details and evidence in each case. There is no indication to suggest that the effectiveness of our anti-TIP efforts has in any way been undermined without composite trafficking legislation. As a matter of fact, with respect to cases in 2022 wherein Hong Kong residents were suspected of being lured to Southeast Asian countries and detained to engage in illegal work, after investigating the case based on information and intelligence provided by the victims, the relevant LEA prosecuted two people for fraud, and they were respectively sentenced to 56 and 36 months imprisonment thereafter.

The Government will continue to closely monitor trends in TIP-related cases so that timely action can be taken in response to any changes in the crime situation and criminals' modus operandi, and would review the effectiveness of its measures on a regular basis. Further, the Government will continue to provide comprehensive and humanitarian protection, support and assistance to victims of trafficking and will, depending on the circumstances of individual cases, provide them with shelter, psychological support and counselling and legal support, etc., as well as support for them to act as witness in legal proceedings.

Yours sincerely,



( Miss Trista LIM )  
for Secretary for Security