

Secretary for Justice on court prosecutors

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, at a media session this afternoon (August 28):

Reporter: How do you respond to the previous Director of Public Prosecutions that the Magistrates' Courts are becoming a training ground for very new, green lawyers, rather than the DoJ (Department of Justice) hiring more court prosecutors?

Secretary for Justice: I'm not so sure that is a fair observation. I think, perhaps, a few points. Every court would have newly qualified lawyers. That happens in the Magistrates' Courts, that happens in the District Court, that happens in the High Court. When I was a junior, I appeared in all levels of court as well, and that happens to every junior. Insofar as the Magistrates' Courts are concerned, of course we pay special attention to the quality of people doing prosecutions, whether those are court prosecutors of the DoJ or the Government Counsel of the DoJ, or those who are private practice and prosecuting on fiat. But for those who come from private practice, before we allow them to prosecute on fiat, he or she would have to go through special training. In fact, for the past few years, there has been a programme jointly organised by the Law Society, the Bar Association as well as the Department of Justice, which is specially tailor-made for junior lawyers, for junior barristers, for junior solicitors, so that they would be properly trained, properly briefed before they will be allowed to do cases before the Magistrates' Courts. I should add that after the training, they are also being assessed before they would be allowed to do prosecutions.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Ends/Friday, August 28, 2015