

Secretary for Justice on violent acts in Mong Kok

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, at a media session this morning (February 12):

Reporter: Mr Yuen, do you think that this so-called "Fishball Revolution" is a challenge to Hong Kong's rule of law? And secondly, what's the difference between riot and unlawful assembly in legal terms?

Secretary for Justice: I think just to deal with the last question, as I was just saying in Cantonese, riot has been defined quite clearly in the Public Order Ordinance. So if you are interested, you can see the definitions in the Public Order Ordinance yourself.

Back to the first part of your question, you mentioned the expression "Fishball Revolution". If I may also take this opportunity to perhaps clarify a few points. I've seen reports both in Chinese as well as in English and I've seen local and also international media describing this event as "Fishball Revolution" or in similar expressions. And there are also suggestions that the whole incident was caused by the activities of regulating illegal hawking. I'm afraid this may not be a very accurate way of describing the incident. I think you would have recalled (the Secretary for Food and Health) Dr Ko Wing-man has already mentioned and explained in public that in fact on that occasion, it was because of certain colleagues dealing with illegal hawking got injured and that's why they called for police assistance. So it's got nothing to do with the operations concerning illegal hawking. And in any event, as I was stressing earlier in Cantonese, that the court has set it very clearly, including our Court of Final Appeal, that irrespective of your political motive, irrespective of your political opinion, the way to express your views, the way to express your political opinion has to be lawful. And I think everyone would agree

that unlawful violence would not be the appropriate way to express one's political demand and political motive.

And therefore I would also make use of this opportunity to make an appeal to everyone in Hong Kong that I think the majority of people in Hong Kong would love to have a peaceful Hong Kong and I don't think anyone in Hong Kong would love to see such kind of violent act. And that's why, as I was saying in Cantonese just now, the Department of Justice takes this matter very seriously. We will work closely with the Police, we will scrutinise the evidence and we would decide whether there are other charges that we need to consider from now until the 7th of April. As I was saying just now, we do not exclude the possibility that we might need to add further charges to those defendants. Thank you.

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

Ends/Friday, February 12, 2016