

Secretary for Justice on comments on judge expressed in social media

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, at a media session on comments on judge expressed in social media after the Legislative Council meeting today (February 17):

Reporter: ...Is it a contempt of court case for anyone to call a judge a "dog"..... insult....?

Secretary for Justice: : As I was saying in Cantonese just now, it would not be appropriate for me, at this stage, to comment on any specific incident or any specific speech or conduct of any individual. But if I may stress again that, as I said at the Opening of the Legal Year, that it would be the liberty of people of Hong Kong and their right as guaranteed under the constitution to comment on the verdicts and judgment made by judges and the court. But such constitutional right has to be exercised within the limit. As I was quoting the speeches of the former Chief Justice, Mr Andrew Li, he was saying that in exercising such constitutional right, people should do it responsibly. And I was saying just now and also on previous occasions that, in order to exercising this right responsibly, one would have to be doing it rationally, fairly and not beyond the limit permitted by the law. And therefore we would urge people that in discussing whatever decisions by the court or the verdict by the court, and irrespective of one's views on the decisions, one should follow the rules as laid down by the law and do it responsibly. Otherwise it would not be conducive to constructive discussions of the cases as decided by the judge. As you would have appreciated from the news yesterday, the Judiciary has expressed serious concern about certain people's speeches and conduct through the social media, and the Judiciary has already referred the case to the Department of Justice. Yesterday

afternoon I can confirm that we have already received the relevant document from the Judiciary. We would follow up on the matter conscientiously. If necessary and where appropriate, we would have no hesitation in commencing the necessary proceedings, including judicial or legal proceedings.

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

Ends/Friday, February 17, 2017