

Prosecution Week 2013 to promote public awareness of rule of law (with photo)

The rule of law is one of the most important core values of our society and the cornerstone of our success as a safe, fair and just community, the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, said today (June 21).

Mr Yuen was officiating at the opening ceremony of Prosecution Week 2013, organised by the Prosecutions Division of the Department of Justice. The theme for this year is "ROLE", which stands for "Rule of Law Enforced". Its purpose is to promote community awareness of the rule of law in the context of the criminal justice system as well as to emphasise the role citizens can play in furthering the interest of criminal justice.

"Each of us should strive to uphold rule of law at all times and with firm commitment. Disrespect for the law is disrespect for our values, our way of life, our community and, most importantly, each other," he said.

Mr Yuen pointed out that Article 63 of the Basic Law provides that the Department of Justice "shall control criminal prosecution, free from any interference". In performing this very important role, prosecutors of the Department of Justice always use their best endeavours to ensure that justice is done, and is seen to be done, at all times.

"Prosecutions are handled in accordance with the established policy guidelines, namely 'the Statement of the Prosecution Policy and Practice'. Only cases with a reasonable prospect of success of conviction are placed before the court.

"Further, cases will only be proceeded with by way of

prosecution if it is in the public interest to do so. Prosecution decisions are always made and taken forward in a fair, independent and objective manner. The Department of Justice does not and will not allow any form of interference in the prosecution work." Mr Yuen said.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Kevin P Zervos, SC, said at the ceremony that it is important for the prosecution service to actively seek to increase the public's knowledge and awareness of the criminal justice system and the role and work of the prosecution service. "Taking the mystique out of the law and enabling the public to better understand it will go a long way to help the public feel assured about the criminal justice process."

Mr Zervos also highlighted the concept that "the law is for the people". "It is there to look after all our interests and to provide for a fair and just society for all of us. It therefore needs the respect and commitment of all of us in order to work," he said.

Prosecution Week 2013 runs from today until June 28. During the week, activities including guided visits to the Prosecutions Division, the Jockey Club Drug InfoCentre and High Court, school talks on criminal law justice, as well as photo and poster competitions, will be organised to promote better understanding of the rule of law among members of the public.

Among others, the Chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association, Mr Paul Shieh, SC, and Vice-President of the Law Society of Hong Kong, Mr Stephen Hung, also attended today's event.

Ends/Friday, June 21, 2013

