

## **IPCC Adheres to Impartiality Principle Commences Review Work Related to the Recent Public Order Events**

(Hong Kong – June 25, 2019) The Administration’s proposed amendments to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and related legislation has given rise to widespread concern. Several large-scale Public Order Events (POEs) were organised during which participants had voiced their views and aspirations. The Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) took note that during the POEs on 9 and 16 June, participants have displayed quality citizenship by expressing their views in a peaceful and rational manner; while the Police have also maintained law and order professionally.

At the end of the POEs, however, conflicts broke out between the Police and some members of the public. The IPCC was very concerned about these incidents and immediately instructed its Serious Complaints Committee (“SCC”) to take up the monitoring and reviewing of all complaint investigation reports stemming from these incidents. The Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) is required to submit to the SCC regular updates on the progress of its investigations. When CAPO conducts meetings and collects evidence, the IPCC will arrange for the attendance of Members and Observers to ensure that the case investigations are conducted in a timely and fair manner.

Meanwhile, the IPCC Secretariat has promptly established a Special Task Force. Led by the Deputy Secretary-General (Operations), the Special Task Force comprises an Assistant Secretary-General and a number of Senior Vetting Officers with extensive experience in handling complaints arising from POEs. At the working meeting held earlier, the Special Task Force has requested the Police to provide detailed information such as guidelines on the use of force and the use of weapons; requirements related to the uniform of Special Tactical Squad; as well as the collection, safekeeping and submission of the deployment records of concerned police officers. The IPCC will also exercise its powers conferred by the IPCC Ordinance to request police officers of various ranks, witnesses, experts or Complainants to attend IPCC interviews to provide detailed information and make clarifications with a view to ascertaining relevant facts to facilitate the review of complaint investigation reports submitted by CAPO. In addition, IPCC Chairman has written to the Police Management urging the Police to investigate into the display of officers’ identification insignia and to review existing related guidelines.

As at 25 June 2019, 49 Reportable Complaints and 46 Notifiable Complaints were either received directly by CAPO or referred to them via IPCC. The IPCC has set up a dedicated webpage on its official website to update the public on the number of complaints received and the progress of review. In addition to reviewing the complaint investigation reports, the IPCC will also examine the incident holistically having regard to issues of public concern, and report its findings in due course.

Members of the public may support CAPO's investigation work by providing documentary information and evidence related to the complaints. Upon receipt of complaints and enquiries from the public, IPCC will also file and refer them to CAPO for follow-up actions.

In considering whether to take part in on-site observations of public gatherings and events, IPCC will give due regard to the following factors:

- All participating Members and Secretariat staff who have witnessed incidents giving rise to complaints would be categorised as witnesses and connected parties. They must abstain from the discussions or reviewing of such complaint cases;
- If the timing and locations of events are unclear, it would be difficult for IPCC to conduct a comprehensive observation and obtain useful information for future review of complaint cases;
- On-site observations require Police to deploy additional staff to guide the Members and ensure that they carry out their work in a safe environment.

In consideration that the Police is deploying their finite resources to protect the safety of the public, to maintain law and order, and to ensure that frontline officers are properly supervised, IPCC Members and the Secretariat have been closely monitoring the development of these incidents and keeping abreast of the latest situation through established channels and media platforms.

The IPCC appeals to the public and frontline law enforcement officers to exercise restraint and empathy, and adopt a peaceful and non-violent approach in their endeavours with a view to avoiding conflicts or casualties.

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