

CHAPTER 12**INCIDENT DAY – SATURDAY 31 AUGUST 2019****Introduction**

12.1 This Chapter deals with the events that happened inside Prince Edward Station on the night of Saturday 31 August, which is widely known as the Prince Edward Station Incident and continues to be an assertion for staging Public Order Events (POEs). That night, police officers, with the use of OC Foam and batons, subdued and arrested 52 persons inside Prince Edward Station.¹ News footage captured some of the Police action. After the operation, a special train conveyed 45 Arrested Persons (APs), among whom seven were injured, to Lai Chi Kok Station, where they were then taken to Princess Margaret Hospital, Caritas Medical Centre and Kwai Chung Police Station respectively. Some members of the public were highly critical of the Police action that night, condemning the Police for using force indiscriminately inside Prince Edward Station. There were claims on websites popularly visited by protesters that the Police had killed several people inside Prince Edward Station and that the authorities had covered it up.

12.2 In this Chapter, the IPCC will examine what happened that night. The events which happened throughout the day of 31 August attracted four Reportable Complaints (RCs) and 19 Notifiable Complaints (NCs) (see paragraphs 12.36 – 12.38 below for details). These complaints are investigated by CAPO and each RC will be monitored by the IPCC assigning observer(s) to attend interview(s) and observe the collection of evidence conducted by CAPO. The purpose of this Chapter is to enable the IPCC to inform itself of the facts of the incidents giving rise to these complaints and the context under which these complaints took place, so that the IPCC is in a better position to undertake its function under section 8(1)(a) of the IPCC Ordinance in monitoring and reviewing the investigations of the individual complaints by CAPO. At the same time, the opportunity is taken to make recommendations to the Commissioner of Police (Commissioner) under section 8(1)(c) of the IPCC Ordinance so that complaints from future Police operations may be prevented.

POEs Leading to the Events on Saturday 31 August 2019

12.3 Following the incidents on Sunday 11 August, the protests continued to rage on with increasing levels of violence as time went on.

¹ The Government (2019-11-13). Legislative Council's reply on 831 incident. Retrieved from <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201911/13/P2019111300525.htm?fontSize=1>

12.4 The incident on 11 August which was accorded the most prominence in media reports and traffic on the internet was the incident in which a female sustained injuries in the eye allegedly caused by the Police outside Tsim Sha Tsui Police Station on the night of 11 August. The female, however, refused to cooperate with the Police to investigate what caused her eye injury and even refused to let the Police have sight of her medical report. As a result, the Police obtained the document by means of a search warrant. Following the court ruling over her judicial review application against Police action, on 22 January 2020, the female filed an appeal. As at 29 February 2020, a hearing date has yet to be fixed.

12.5 Also, on 12 August, thousands of protesters gathered at the Hong Kong International Airport (Airport) alleging “police brutality”, with signs proclaiming “Evil Police - An Eye for An Eye” alleging the female’s injured eye was caused by the Police.² They swamped the Departure Hall, blocking passengers’ access to the departure gates, resulting in cancellation of all remaining departing and arriving flights after 16:00 that day.

12.6 Other reported incidents on 11 August propelled further protest action. On 12 August, about a hundred people gathered in Tai Koo Station to vent grievance against police operation at the station on 11 August. They surrounded station staff and control room of the station to demand for explanation as to MTR Corporation Limited (MTRC)’s handling of the incident during and after the event.

12.7 Each POE was widely reported in the media (both press and internet) and there was much internet traffic discussing the incidents, condemning the Police, and calling for protest action.

12.8 On 13 August, some protesters gathered at the Airport and blocked the passageways to the restricted area.³ Passengers were unable to go through the immigration procedures. The Airport Authority suspended all check-in service for departure flights after 16:30. As there were many protesters and passengers in the Departure Hall, disputes between them arose. In the evening, some protesters even tied up a male passenger whom they suspected to be an undercover police officer. Around 23:00, the Police accompanied a number of ambulance officers to go inside the Airport to take the male to hospital. After the ambulance officers had rescued the male, many protesters attacked the police officers guarding at the airport entrance. The officers defended themselves with OC Foam and batons. One officer was so fiercely

² HK01 (2019-08-12). 機管局與航空公司將視情況於明早 6 時重編航班. Retrieved from <https://www.hk01.com/社會新聞/362757/機場集會-直擊-機管局與航空公司將視情況於明早 6 時重編航班>

³ Airport Authority Website (2019-08-13). Check-in Service for Departure Flights Suspended due to Public Assembly at HKIA, Retrieved from https://www.hongkongairport.com/en/media-centre/press-release/2019/pr_1348

assaulted with his baton snatched. He pulled out his revolver to ward off the protesters attacking him.⁴ Shortly after, a reporter was seen being beaten and tied up by protesters at the Airport. On the following day, the Airport Authority said it had been granted an interim injunction order from the High Court (on 13 August) for restraining protesters from attending any protests or public events outside areas designated by them.⁵

12.9 Reaction within the medical profession to the alleged shooting of the female in the eye was strong. On 12 August, over one hundred medical staff at Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital held a peaceful rally to protest against police “use of excessive force”.⁶ On 13 August, health care staff in seven other hospitals held another rally. They wore black masks and bandaged their right eye. On 14 August, the staff of two other hospitals joined the demonstration. On the same day, protesters gathered outside Police Stations in Sham Shui Po, Tai Po and Tin Shui Wai to mark the Ghost Festival, burning joss paper (used in offerings to the dead) and shone laser beams at these stations. The protest in Sham Shui Po led to police firing tear gas for dispersal.

12.10 On 17 August, Hong Kong Professional Teachers’ Union launched a rally at Chater Garden and a procession covered by a Letter of No Objection (LoNO) from there to the Government House⁷, to support students and protesters arrested by the Police.⁸ On the same day, another group of protesters took to the street to “Reclaim Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan”, where they deviated from the approved route and occupied roads along their way in Hung Hom to Mong Kok. Protesters blocked Nathan Road and laid siege to Mong Kok Police Station. Some protesters on a footbridge near Mong Kok Road hurled miscellaneous objects at police officers and police vehicles underneath, including a litterbin.

⁴ RTHK (2019-08-13). Police storm airport as protesters hold ‘suspects’. Retrieved from <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1474483-20190813.htm>

⁵ RTHK (2019-08-14). Airport Authority confirms injunction order. Retrieved from <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1474538-20190814.htm>

HK01 (2019-08-14). Continuation of the interim injunction order, as varied, was granted to Airport Authority on 23 August until trial or further order of the court. 與示威者爆衝突 警擊左輪佩槍解圍 首現致命武器. Retrieved from <https://www.hk01.com/突發/363494/機場集會-與示威者爆衝突-警擊左輪佩槍解圍-首現致命武器>

⁶ HK01 (2019-08-13). 東區醫院逾百醫護靜默抗議 批警使用過度武力. Retrieved from <https://www.hk01.com/社會新聞/362819/811 衝突-東區醫院逾百醫護靜默抗議-批警使用過度武力>

⁷ Hong Kong Professional Teachers’ Union. 「守護下一代 為良知發聲」教育界 817 大遊行 和平表達訴求. Retrieved from <https://www.hkptu.org/61744>

⁸ Ming Pao (2019-08-17). 教師遮打花園遊行至禮賓府 教協:2.2 萬人參與 警:高峰 8300 人. Retrieved from <https://news.mingpao.com/ins/港聞/article/20190817/s00001/1566016420127/>【逃犯條例】教師遮打花園遊行至禮賓府-教協-2.2 萬人參與-警-高峰 8300 人

12.11 On Sunday 18 August, Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF) organised a procession from Victoria Park.⁹ According to CHRF, 1.7 million people took part but the Police had a lesser count of 128 000 at peak time.

12.12 On 20 August, about a hundred people gathered in Tai Koo Station to again vent grievance against police operation at the station on 11 August. They surrounded station staff and control room of the station to demand for explanations as to MTRC's handling of the incident during and after the event.¹⁰

12.13 On 21 August, about a thousand protesters assembled at Yuen Long Station to protest in commemoration of the Yuen Long Incident on 21 July.¹¹ The POE started with a silent sit-in inside the station. Smaller groups of protesters went out to set up barriers on roads outside the station. When police officers took action to clear away the barriers, these protesters retreated into Yuen Long Station. The Police formed a cordon line at a distance from the station, while protesters barricaded station entrances with objects including metal fences and rubbish bins and let down the roller shutters to bar entry. Inside Yuen Long Station, some protesters discharged foam from fire extinguishers, while others used a firehose to wet the floor and poured liquid soap on the floor, which would cause obstruction to the Police's entry to the station. They sprayed paints on walls and on CCTV cameras inside the station. They removed the stands and bins inside the station and damaged other amenities including an escalator, before they took special trains arranged by MTRC to leave Yuen Long Station while the Police was on guard outside the station.

12.14 From nighttime of 22 August till early hours on 23 August, about 200 protesters assembled in Kwai Fong Station to protest, again in apparent commemoration of the use of tear gas at Kwai Fong Station on 11 August. Some of the protesters verbally abused some MTR station staff and shone laser lights at them, sprayed graffiti both inside and outside the station. MTRC stopped train service at Kwai Fong Station at around 00:30 on 23 August. The protesters eventually left in the early morning of 23 August.

12.15 On 23 August, the MTRC announced that “[a]s there will be upcoming protest activities, depending on the actual circumstances, the Corporation will make necessary

⁹ HK01 (2019-08-19). 維園一帶有 170 萬人 警高峰期 12.8 萬. Retrieved from <https://www.hk01.com/政情/365191/818 集會-民陣-維園一帶有 170 萬人-警-高峰期 12-8 萬>

¹⁰ Hong Kong Economic Journal (2019-08-21). 逾百市民太古站內聚集 促港鐵交代警方站內執法情況. Retrieved from <https://www2.hkej.com/instantnews/current/article/2226091/逾百市民太古站內聚集+促港鐵交代警方站內執法情況>

¹¹ Ming Pao (2019-08-21). 防暴警元朗站外佈防 西鐵安排特別車載乘客離開元朗站. Retrieved from <https://news.mingpao.com/ins/港聞/article/20190821/s00001/1566388054020/【元朗襲擊-多圖-短片】防暴警元朗站外佈防-西鐵安排特別車載乘客離開元朗站>

*regulations on station and train operations. If fights, vandalism or other acts of violence occur, and under high risks or emergency situations, train service to and from the concerned stations may be stopped immediately, and / or the station may be closed, with little or no prior notice. The Police may need to enter stations to take suitable law enforcement action when necessary.”*¹² At around 22:00 on the same day, MTRC announced that they had obtained an interim injunction order¹³ to restrain people from obstructing or interfering with the operation of the railway, damaging any property at any station or using any threatening language or behaving in a riotous or disorderly manner at any station.¹⁴

12.16 On Saturday 24 August and Sunday 25 August, public meetings and processions with LoNO were held in Kwun Tong District and Kwai Tsing District respectively. On 24 August, large numbers of protesters walked in Kowloon Bay area to protest against the installation of smart lampposts which they believed to be used for covert surveillance.¹⁵ Some protesters used an electric saw to pull down a smart lamppost before others proceeded to Ngau Tau Kok Police Station, outside which they clashed with some police officers. Since then protesters dubbed MTRC the “Railway of the Communist Party”, accusing it of taking sides to help suppress protesters travelling on MTR on protest days.

12.17 On 25 August, a large crowd of protesters took part in a march from Kwai Chung to Tsuen Wan¹⁶, with some protesters setting up barricades with water-filled barriers and bamboo sticks to block various roads in Tsuen Wan. Some protesters threw petrol bombs, bricks and other hard objects at police officers who in return fired tear gas to disperse them. For the first time, the Police used the Specialised Crowd Management Vehicle (SCMV), but whilst it had some temporary effect in dispersing the crowd, the violent protests continued. At nightfall, some protesters attacked shops and a mahjong house in Yi Pei Square, Tsuen Wan, where protesters attacked police officers with long metal poles. At this point, these protesters were violent and outnumbered the police officers at the scene. They were about to attack the officers with various kinds of self-made weapons when, to protect themselves, several police

¹² MTRC (2019-08-23). Condemnation of Vandalism at MTR Stations. Retrieved from https://www.mtr.com.hk/archive/corporate/en/press_release/PR-19-049-E.pdf

¹³ Stand News (2019-08-23). 葵芳站今晚九時關閉 市民圍堵 港鐵獲禁制令. Retrieved from <https://www.thestandnews.com/politics/葵芳站今晚九時關閉-港鐵-針對有人損車站罷員工-考慮申禁制令/>

MTRC. Interim injunction order to restrain unlawful and wilful acts on the railway. Retrieved from <http://www.mtr.com.hk/en/customer/main/interim-injunction-order.html>

¹⁴ Continuation of the interim injunction order, as varied, was granted to MTRC on 30 August until trial or further order of the court.

¹⁵ The Government. “Multi-functional Smart Lampposts” Pilot Scheme. Retrieved from https://www.ogcio.gov.hk/en/our_work/strategies/initiatives/smart_lampposts/

¹⁶ Epoch Times (2019-08-25). 荃葵青遊行 港人冒雨上街頭. Retrieved from <https://hk.epochtimes.com/news/2019-08-25/87025041>

officers drew their revolvers. One of them fired a warning shot into the air, enabling him and his colleagues to make an escape from the scene. That night, persistent violent protests spread to different locations including Kwun Tong, Sham Shui Po, Tsim Sha Tsui and Wong Tai Sin. On that day, the Police fired 145 tear gas rounds and 50 rubber rounds.

12.18 Unlike previous occasions, MTRC decided to close stations and stop services in advance of the public meetings in East Kowloon on 24 August and in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Fong area on 25 August after communication with the Government and the Police.

12.19 Starting from 25 August, hundreds of protesters surrounded Shum Shui Po Police Station for five consecutive days.

12.20 In this atmosphere, the events of 31 August unfolded. A Chronology of the POEs of this day appears as Annex to this Chapter.

General Picture of the POEs on Saturday 31 August 2019

12.21 On 31 August 2014, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress made a Decision Concerning the Election of the Chief Executive and Legislative Council (LegCo) of the HKSAR.¹⁷ The Occupy Movement in 2014 followed this Decision.

12.22 In commemoration of the 2014 POEs against this Decision, CHRF planned to organise an assembly at Chater Garden on the afternoon of 31 August to be followed by a march to Liaison Office of the Central People's Government (LOCPG). For public safety reasons, the Police refused CHRF's applications for LoNO. The refusal of the LoNO was widely publicised in the media. Nonetheless, the Police found on the internet that the protesters would proceed despite police objection and the internet traffic suggested attacks on police officers and damage to different Government premises with a high level of violence. According to a news article¹⁸, democratic LegCo Member(s) asked citizens to "Be Water" and to avoid being arrested by the Police.

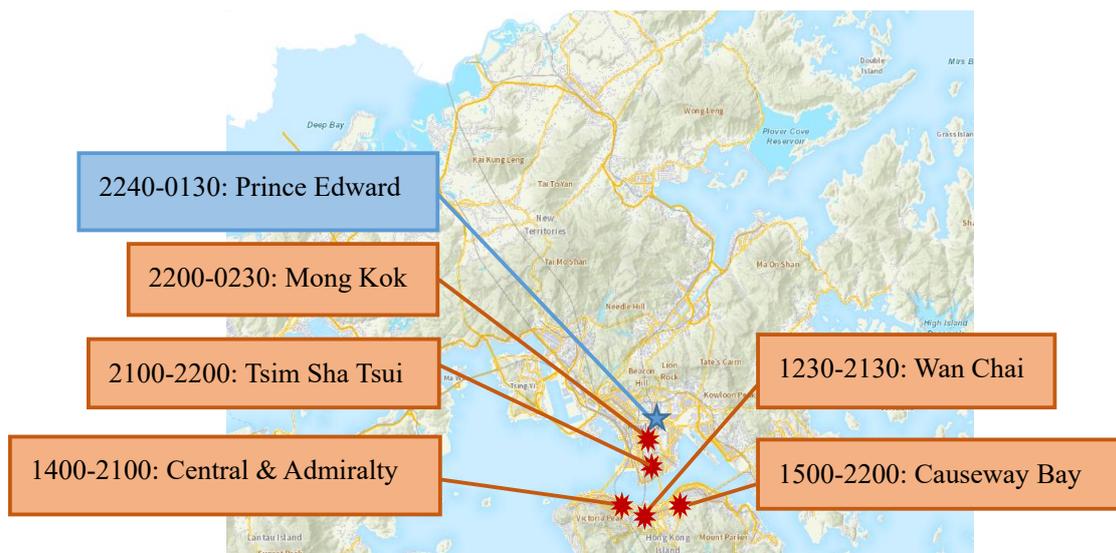
12.23 On 31 August, the Police assigned 262 officers to defend Central Government Complex (CGC) and 4 287 officers to respond to contingencies in multiple locations (see Map

¹⁷ Hong Kong Legal Information Institute. Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.hklii.org/eng/hk/legis/instrument/A212/decision.html>

¹⁸ CitizenNews (2019-08-13). 「網民 831 自由行、祈禱遊行 警：按環境執法 泛民：Be Water」, Retrieved from https://www.hkcnnews.com/article/23223/831-泛民-反對通知書-23228/網民_831_自由行_祈禱遊行-警%EF%BC%9A按環境執法-泛民%EF%BC%9Abe-water

12-1). In the morning, they put up water-filled barriers around CGC and closed Connaught Road West, Des Vieux Road West and other major roads on Hong Kong Island. SCMV's were prepared for deployment and a number of plainclothes officers were tasked for arrest action against violent protesters.

12.24 There were violent protests in multiple locations on 31 August.



Map 12-1: Multiple confrontations on 31 August
(Source of base map: Lands Department)

12.25 After 12:00 on 31 August, over a thousand protesters gathered at Southern Playground in Wan Chai and assembled at Chater Garden in Central. Around 14:00, those at Chater Garden marched off to the LOCPG, while some 100 protesters gathered outside Police Headquarters, setting up barricades on Arsenal Street and Lockhart Road. At 15:00, the protesters at Southern Playground walked towards Central, occupying Connaught Road and Hennessy Road of Wan Chai section. By this time, some protesters had already blocked Hennessy Road in Causeway Bay with traffic cones, rubbish bins, mills barriers and other large objects.

12.26 At around 17:30, thousands of protesters occupied Harcourt Road in Admiralty. Some of the protesters used mills barriers and dismantled railings to block the road while others threw bricks and petrol bombs at the police officers and set off fires at the water-filled barriers outside CGC.¹⁹ The Police fired tear gas to disperse the crowds and deployed an SCMV to discharge water with blue dye from behind the water-filled barriers. The clashes in Admiralty

¹⁹ RTHK (2019-08-31). 示威者多次投擲汽油彈 警方水馬陣內帳篷一度著火。 Retrieved from <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/ch/component/k2/1477996-20190831.htm>

were intense and violent. Such protests subsequently spread in the direction of Causeway Bay and Tin Hau on Hong Kong Island and Tsim Sha Tsui and Mong Kok in Kowloon. In the late evening, violent protesters set fire to objects they had heaped on Hennessy Road outside SOGO Department Store.²⁰ Around 21:00, dozens of protesters confronted several plainclothes police officers in Victoria Park and assaulted them with iron rods and umbrellas, even attempting to snatch their revolvers. As a result, two plainclothes officers fired two warning shots to stop the violent protesters.²¹ Eight people were arrested in that incident.

12.27 In Kowloon, the situation in Tsim Sha Tsui deteriorated from around 21:00 onwards. Some protesters caused obstruction at Canton Road, set fire at different spots along Nathan Road and threw petrol bombs at the police cordon line near Humphreys Road.²² The Police responded with tear gas rounds in attempts to drive the protesters off Nathan Road. Some protesters fled to Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok, continuing to cause obstruction along Nathan Road. Some of them entered Mong Kok Station to damage the facilities inside with iron bars and hammers. By the time the Police arrived, some of them had already left by train or different exits. The Police believed that some of them had fled to Prince Edward Station.

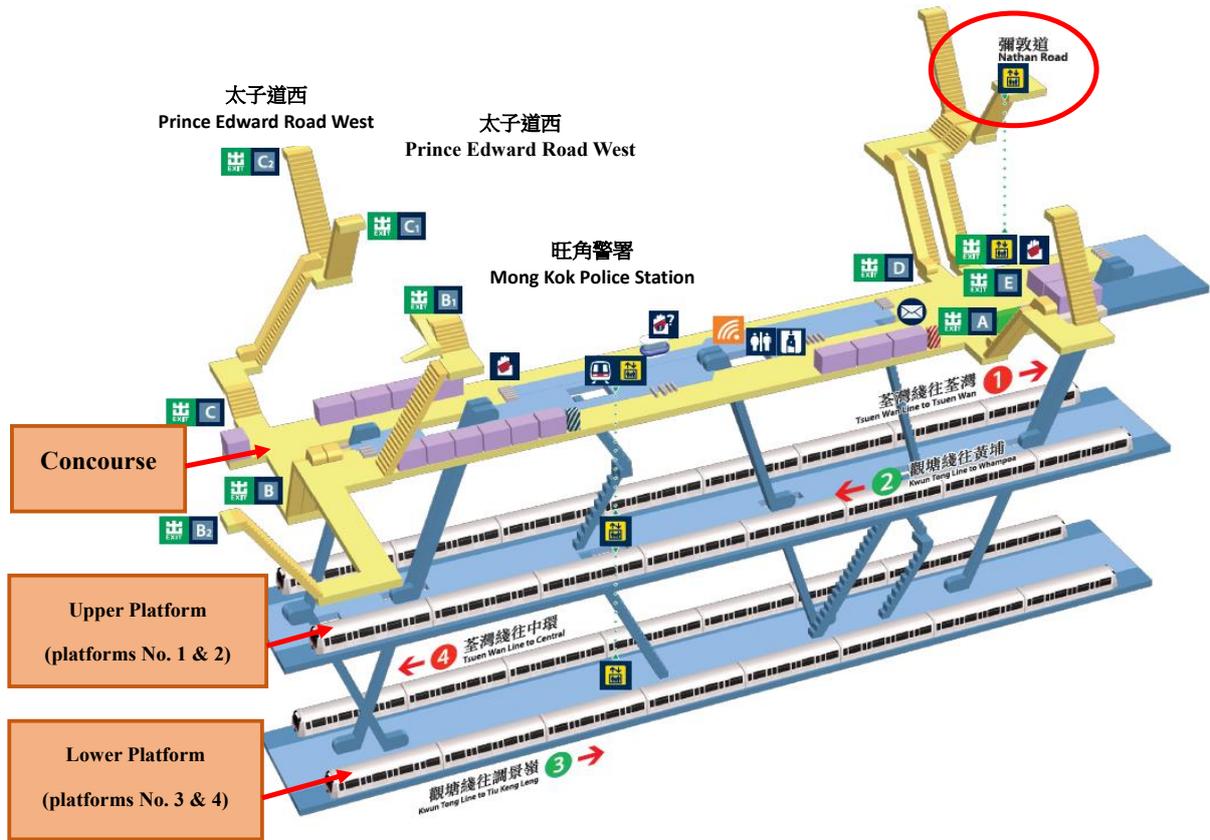
12.28 It was in this context that the Prince Edward Station Incident took place.

12.29 Prince Edward Station is underground at the junction of Nathan Road and Prince Edward Road where Mong Kok Police Station, which had been a frequent target of attack by the protesters, is located. It has seven exits, two of which, Exits B1 and E, were pertinent to the incident that night. Exit B1 is at the corner of Nathan Road and Prince Edward Road right outside the main entrance of Mong Kok Police Station. Exit E, installed with a lift going directly down to the concourse, is about 400 meters from Exit B1 diagonally north across Nathan Road, on Playing Field Road, west of Nathan Road. The station being a cross-platform interchange point on the Kwun Tong Line and the Tsuen Wan Line has three levels underground. The concourse is on the first level, No. 1 and 2 platforms are on the second level known as the Upper Platform and No. 3 and 4 platforms on the third level known as the Lower Platform. The events on 31 August mainly took place on the Lower Platform. The trains on platform No. 3 heading to the direction of Tiu Keng Leng and the trains on platform No. 4 heading to the direction of Central (see Graphic 12-1 and Map 12-2).

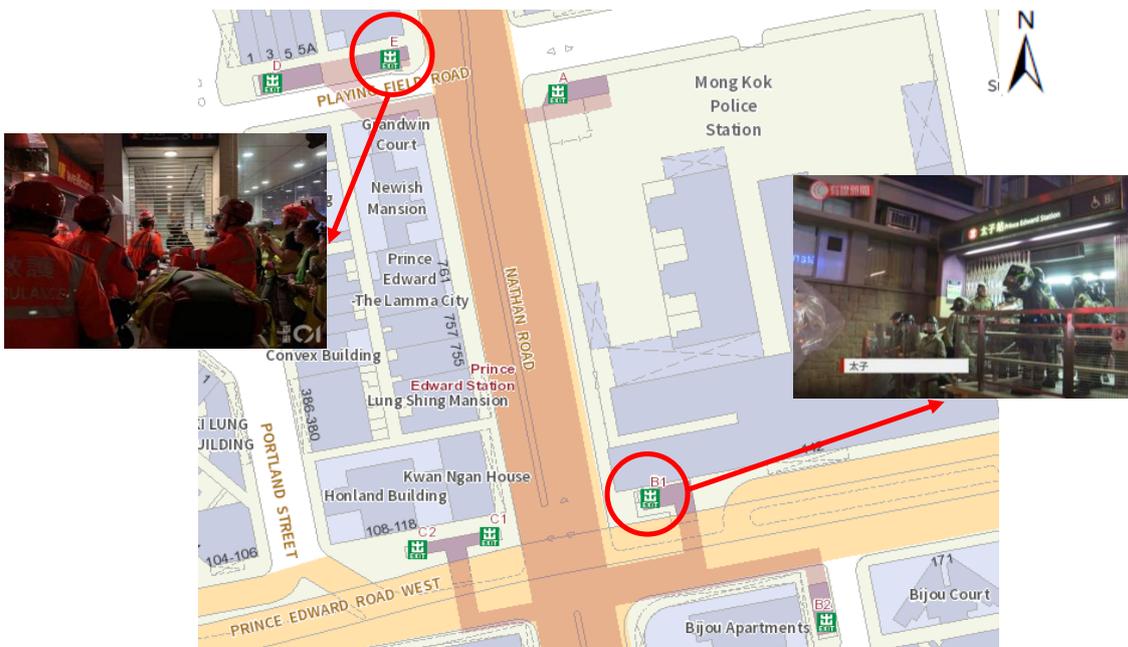
²⁰ HK01 (2019-08-31). 【8.31 遊行·全日總覽】警方：港經歷浩劫 太子站行動屬適當武力。 Retrieved from http://www.hk01.com/政情/369452/8-31_遊行-全日總覽-警方-港經歷浩劫-太子站行動屬適當武力

²¹ Ming Pao Daily News (2019-08-31). 【逃犯條例·831 銅鑼灣·短片】消息：警維園開兩槍實彈維園地面遺彈殼。 Retrieved from <https://news.mingpao.com/ins/逃犯條例/article/20190831/special/1567232542076>

²² Sing Tao Daily (2019-08-31). 【逃犯條例】速龍小隊廣東道推進 示威者擲燃燒彈。 Retrieved from <http://std.stheadline.com/instant/articles/detail/1081064/即時-香港-逃犯條例-速龍小隊廣東道推進-示威者擲燃燒彈>



Graphic 12-1: Layout of Prince Edward Station
(Source of base graphic: MTRC)



Map 12-2: Map showing all exits of Prince Edward Station
(Source of base map: Lands Department) (Source of image: (left) HK01 and (right) Cable TV)

12.30 Around 22:45, 999 Console received reports from individuals of a dispute between a group of protesters and some passengers on a train that had stopped at platform No. 3 of Prince Edward Station. Soon afterwards, MTRC made another report to 999 about smoke seen coming out from the train. The Police immediately deployed officers to go into the station. The Police took arrest action inside the station. At 23:14 and 00:09, two batches of ambulance officers were seen outside the Exits B1 and E. Ambulance officers did not enter the station until 23:30 and 00:23 respectively, apparently after discussions with the Police, as police officers were seen guarding Exits B1 and E. Within hours of this event, the internet was flooded with rumours that the Police had killed people inside the station and then disposed of the bodies. These accusations were accompanied by rumours, also on the internet, that the number of casualties had been improperly altered to hide the alleged killings. Large numbers of protesters then gathered outside the station, calling for the MTRC to publish CCTV footage inside the station, and some called for the appointment of an independent inquiry. Many others began to mourn with flowers and various traditional Chinese offerings. A shrine of sorts was established outside the station and continued to be in place from time to time.

12.31 On 31 August, a total of six police officers were injured. The Hospital Authority (HA) at various hospitals treated a total of 46 persons related to the incidents on 31 August.

12.32 As at 29 February 2020, the Police had arrested 69 persons (58 male and 11 female) in connection with the incidents on 31 August 2019 for various offences, including “Unlawful Assembly”, “Possession of Offensive Weapon” and “Unlawful Detention”. Among them, two persons had been charged in Court pending trial, 67 were still under police investigation.

12.33 The Police action in the news footage inside Prince Edward Station, especially the use of force in effecting arrests, attracted widespread criticism of the Police for its use of force. What was reported by the media and alleged on the internet traffic to have happened inside the Prince Edward Station on 31 August has given rise to the following concern:

- (a) Police entering Prince Edward Station to take enforcement action;
- (b) Police and MTRC closing Prince Edward Station Exits;
- (c) Police enforcement and arrest action inside Prince Edward Station;
- (d) Police request for a special train to take APs to Lai Chi Kok Station;
- (e) Police communication and coordination with Fire Services Department (FSD); and
- (f) Police handling of rumours and speculations.

Sources of Information

12.34 For the purpose of its study of the events of 31 August, the IPCC has scrutinised the following materials:

- (a) Documents provided by the Police in respect of police deployment and operation, prior intelligence received, police weapons used and casualties involved on 31 August;
- (b) Footage recorded by the Police pertaining to the operation on 31 August. A total of three video clips of 38 minutes;
- (c) News reports and news footage produced by different television companies, newspapers and media outlets. A total of 252 news reports²³ and 112 video clips of 117 hours;
- (d) Photos and footage provided by the public in response to the IPCC's appeal;
- (e) Information provided by MTRC²⁴, including 107 CCTV footage clips of 161 hours, and 27 audio recording of 20 minutes;
- (f) MTRC press releases on the events on 31 August;
- (g) Information provided by FSD;
- (h) Information provided by FSD in a press conference held on 12 September in relation to the Prince Edward Station Incident;
- (i) Records of LegCo Meeting held on 13 November relating to the Prince Edward Station Incident; and
- (j) Information provided by the HA on the number of persons receiving medical treatment as a result of the incident on 31 August.

²³ This figure counts the paper media, while the IPCC has also viewed mainstream online media/sources including but not limited to HK01, Stand News, Hong Kong Free Press, and Hong Kong In-media etc.

²⁴ On 18 Mar 2020, the High Court ordered the MTRC to hand over CCTV footage from Prince Edward and Lai Chi Kok Stations to a student who sought damages from the Police for alleged assault. Retrieved from <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2020/03/18/breaking-court-rules-mtr-must-release-cctv-footage-student-caught-prince-edward-station-police-raid/>

The Events

12.35 What happened at Prince Edward Station on 31 August and the subsequent events may be described in five parts, namely:

- (I) Prior events at Mong Kok Station and Prince Edward Station;
- (II) Police action inside Prince Edward Station;
- (III) Fire officers and ambulance officers entering Prince Edward Station;
- (IV) Arrangement of a special train to Lai Chi Kok Station; and
- (V) Police handling of rumours and speculations.

Part I – Prior Events at Mong Kok Station and Prince Edward Station

Mong Kok Station

Two Separate Incidents Happened inside this Station:

Occupation of the Station by Protesters Who Then Fled

- At 22:05, some violent protesters stormed Mong Kok Station and damaged the facilities there by tearing off cable, smashing CCTV cameras and windows of the control room and even breaking into the office of the station. At 22:06, about 100 protesters gathered at Mong Kok Station (source: HKPF). The protesters also damaged the CCTV cameras with umbrellas, and smashed the glass panel of the control room (see Image 12-1 and 12-2) and ticketing machines. They eventually stormed into the control room. (source: media reports). At 22:30, MTRC requested police assistance. When police officers arrived, the protesters had already left the concourse. Some of the fleeing protesters (unknown in number) left by train (source: HKPF). It should be noted that the station right after Mong Kok on Kwun Tong Line heading Tiu Keng Leng direction is Prince Edward.



Image 12-1 and 12-2: Protesters broke Mong Kok Station Control Room glass panel
(Image source: TVB)

Activities in Platforms No. 3 and 4 of Prince Edward Station Arising from Incoming Train from Mong Kok

- From 22:42 to 22:53, protesters on board a Tsuen Wan bound train at Prince Edward Station disputed with several passengers in a train compartment at platform No. 3 (source: HKPF). The train doors could not be closed after passengers alighted and boarded the train (source: MTRC).
- Media footage also showed the situation on board the same train coming in from Mong Kok Station. On the train, for unknown reason, there was a dispute between a middle-aged male passenger and some protesters. When the train was approaching Prince Edward Station, a protester slapped that male passenger on his face (see Image 12-3). The brawl continued when the train reached Prince Edward Station. The protesters got

off the train and stayed close to the train door apparently to argue with that male passenger and a few other middle-aged male passengers inside the train compartment. After a while, some protesters went into the compartment and attacked the male passengers with umbrellas (According to the Police, the violent protesters assaulted the passengers with sticks, umbrellas, sling shots and fire extinguishers). Those male passengers fought back. One of the male passengers took out and swung a hammer, and then the protesters came out of the train compartment and threw water bottles and umbrellas at male passengers inside (see Image 12-4). The fight stopped for a brief moment. Later, several protesters dashed into the train compartment and attacked the male passenger who had been slapped and was now being targeted. That male passenger fought back but he was outnumbered by the protesters. The protesters came out of the train compartment. Someone (believed to be one of the protesters) discharged a fire extinguisher into the train compartment from the platform. That train compartment was then filled with smoke (source: media reports).



Image 12-3: A protester slapped a male passenger on his face inside a train compartment

(Image source: SocRec)



Image 12-4: Protester throwing an umbrella into the train compartment

(Image source: SocRec)

- The media footage also showed that a lady standing on the platform recorded the incident and the acts of the protesters with her phone. There is no indication that she was involved in the dispute or the fight. She was however also assaulted by the protesters (source: media report).
- According to the Police, the violent protesters assaulted the passengers inside the train compartment with umbrellas, iron poles and a fire extinguisher. The incident subsequently developed into a fight (source: HKPF).
- At 22:44, at Prince Edward Station, the driver of the train which was about to depart platform No. 3 noticed that he could not close the train doors. He then noted that there

was a dispute between two groups of people in a train compartment. At 22:45, MTRC made a report to the Police. At 22:47, the passenger alarm on the train was activated (source: MTRC).

- Between 22:49 and 23:15, 999 Console received over 50 reports about what had happened inside Prince Edward Station, including the assault incident, protesters throwing smoke bombs, protesters besieging the control room at the platform and chaos inside Prince Edward Station (source: HKPF). MTR staff also noticed smoke emitting from the train (It is believed that the smoke was discharged by the protesters from the fire extinguisher). Someone also activated the alarm on another train that had stopped at platform No.4 on the other side. The trains at both platforms No.3 and 4 remained at the two platforms without departing the station (source: MTRC).
- At around 22:50, media footage captured a large group of protesters coming out from a compartment of the train from Mong Kok and began taking off their black clothing and changing into clothes of different colours (see Image 12-5 and 12-6) at the far corner of the platform, disguising themselves as ordinary passengers. Some people held open umbrellas to shield the protesters taking off their clothes (source: media reports).



Image 12-5 and 12-6: Some protesters were changing clothes on the platform of Prince Edward Station (Image source: TVB)

Part II – Police Action inside Prince Edward Station

- At 22:50, the Police deployed officers to go into Prince Edward Station (source: HKPF). Between 22:50 to 22:52, 999 Console received reports from citizens about seeing smoke coming out from a train compartment and people being injured (source: FSD). Around the same time, the Police requested MTRC to suspend all trains at Prince Edward Station. At 22:53, MTRC decided to evacuate Prince Edward Station and broadcast an announcement asking all passengers to leave immediately (source: MTRC). The Police requested all reporters to leave the station for the reason that it was a crime scene where the Police had to take investigative action (source: media reports).
- At 22:53, police officers entered Prince Edward Station via Exit C2 (source: MTRC). Around 200 police officers commanded by a senior superintendent were deployed to deal with the incident inside the station (source: HKPF).
- Some of Police action and protesters' acts inside Prince Edward Station were recorded on media footage as follows:

Police Chasing after Protesters and Making Arrests

- (a) At 22:56, police officers arrived at the Lower Platform and carried out operations on both trains (see Image 12-7) (source: MTRC). Some police officers chased after a few protesters on platform No. 4 and in the train compartments (see Image 12-8). The police officers subdued a number of protesters on the platform. One protester was seen trying to escape, and ran past some police officers, but was finally subdued onto the ground by the police officers with the use of batons (source: media reports).



Image 12-7: Police officers arrived at platform No. 3 and 4
[The CCTV cameras at platform No. 4 were damaged starting from 22:52]
(Image source: MTRC CCTV)

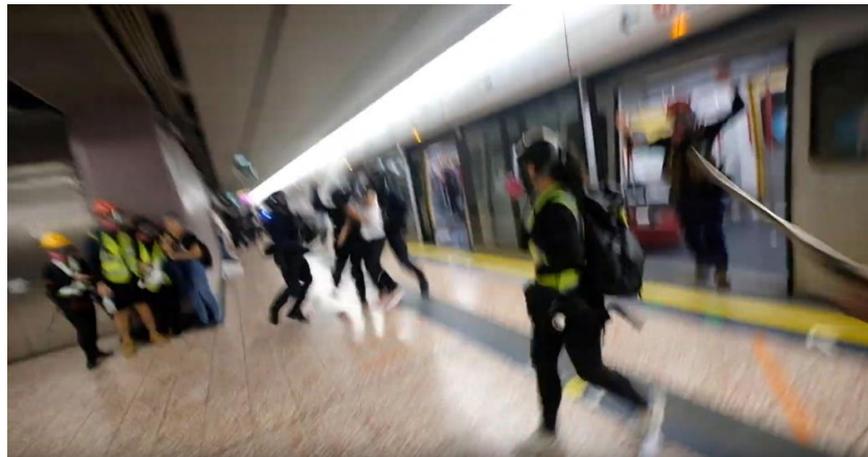


Image 12-8: Police officers were chasing protesters, who kept running away
 and putting up resistance
(Image source: Pakkin Leung@Rice Post)

- (b) The police officers arrested a number of people, some of whom wore black T-shirts and protective outfits with protective pads on shoulders, elbows and other body parts. Some people had sustained injuries, some with bleeding (source: media reports).
- (c) Police officers on arrival at the Lower Platform spotted some protesters in the train compartment. The officers asked them to leave the train but the protesters did not comply (see Image 12-9) (source: media reports).



Image 12-9: Police officers asked some of the protesters to come out from the train compartment but those protesters did not comply
(Image source: Pakkin Leung@Rice Post)

- (d) There were other people on the platform and the train at platform No. 3 was full of people. Some people dressed like reporters (with reporter helmets, light reflection vests and cameras) also appeared on the platform taking photos or videos. The police officers did not use force on any of these people (source: media reports).

Protesters Helping an Arrested Protester to Escape on Platform No. 4

- (a) After a number of protesters had been subdued onto the floor by the police officers, a female walked to those protesters and asked them one by one for their names and HKID Card numbers. They accordingly gave her their particulars. It is believed the information would help identify who had been arrested so that assistance could be made available to them. It is not known who that lady was because she did not appear on the footage. Only her voice could be heard on the video (source: media reports).
- (b) A male in black shirt who was being subdued on the ground tried to put up resistance before police officers could secure his hands behind his back with a plastic zip tie. He jumped up and ran (see Image 12-10 and 12-11). Some police officers tried to stop him. Almost at the same time, a person in green shirt who also wore a black mask hit the police officers with an umbrella to stop them from getting hold of that male (see Image 12-12). Another person pushed the police officers away. The police officers reacted with their batons, but he

jumped onto a nearby stationary escalator crowded with people (some of whom with masks) and disappeared (see Image 12-13). The person in green shirt then ran off down the platform. During the chaotic situation, the male in black shirt also ran away to a direction that could not be captured by the camera. Police officers used OC Foam and batons in the episode (source: media reports).



Image 12-10 and 12-11: A male already subdued on the ground took the opportunity to escape when a lady asked for his name and HKID Card number
(Image source: SocRec)



Image 12-12: A male in green shirt hit the police officer with an umbrella
(Image source: SocRec)



Image 12-13: A male jumped onto a stationary escalator crowded with people
(Image source: SocRec)

Police's Search on People Believed to Be Protesters

- (c) One of the compartments of the train at platform No. 3 was crowded with passengers. Several police officers spotted among the passengers, four persons wearing helmets, masks, light reflection vests, black T-shirts and black trousers, and carrying backpacks. The police officers repeatedly asked them to get off the train but they did not do so. The police officers did not get on the train to take action but waited on the platform. There was a brief moment of stand-off. Eventually, the four persons came out from a train compartment (see Image 12-14). The police officers then conducted a search on them. It is not known whether the police officers took any arrest action afterwards (source: media reports).



Image 12-14: Police officers requested four persons who were believed to be protesters to get off a train for a search
(Image source: SocRec)

Handling APs at Platform No. 3

- A group of APs, most of them young people, were detained at the bottom of an escalator at the far end of platform No. 3. There were many of them. Some squatted on the floor facing the wall or the side of the escalator. Some held their hands on the top of their heads and a few had their hands tied behind their back with plastic zip ties (source: media reports). All APs were then arranged to the end of platform No. 3 near the first train compartment heading towards Tiu Keng Leng direction (source: HKPF).

Police Action inside Train Compartments

- (a) Police officers attempted to take enforcement action inside a train compartment at platform No. 4. One police officer pointed a rubber baton launcher at the train compartment and another police officer discharged OC Foam into it. Some protesters inside the compartment opened umbrellas to cover themselves (see Image 12-15). Some pointed their umbrellas at the police officers. Despite Police action, the protesters did not leave the train (source: media reports).



Image 12-15: Police officers instructing the protesters to come out from the train compartment

(Image source: Pakkin Leung@Rice Post)

- (b) In another episode, several police officers entered the train compartment at platform No. 4 to take enforcement action (see Image 12-16). Some protesters resisted, striking the police officers with their umbrellas and the officers used batons and OC Foam. The scene was quite chaotic (source: media reports). More than ten violent protesters attacked the officers with umbrellas and other

sharp objects (source: HKPF).

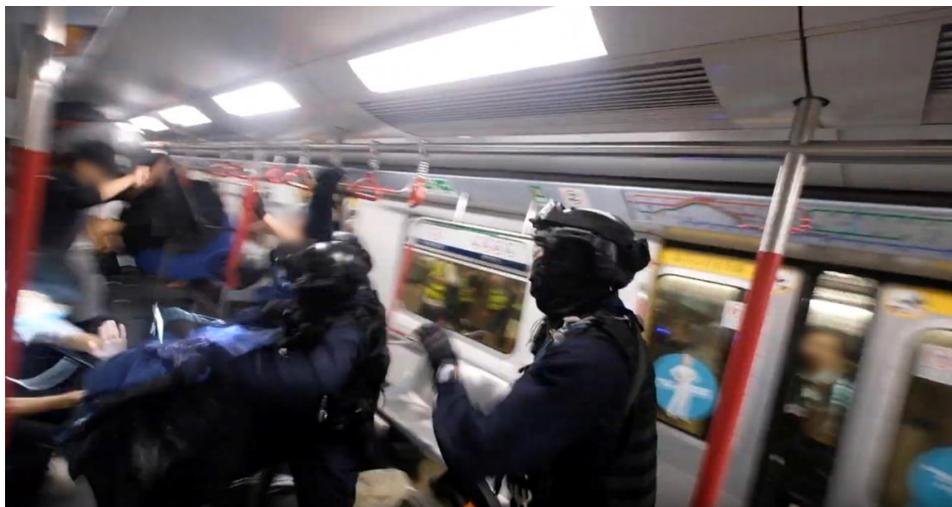


Image 12-16: Police officers taking enforcement action inside the train compartment

(Image source: Pakkin Leung@Rice Post)

- (c) Many of the protesters retreated to the end of the train compartment and opened their umbrellas to form a barrier, while the clash between some of the protesters and a few police officers was taking place. Two young men and two women in masks, who were in close proximity to the protesters, were cowering on the ground (see Image 12-17), apparently in a state of panic under the chaotic situation. At one time, the police officers discharged OC Foam into the train from outside the train compartment. The man in front put up his hands. The police officers did not arrest them or any person but instead got off the train. It could be seen that the train doors closed and opened several times, suggesting that the train was about to depart. Eventually the train doors were closed. The police officers remained on guard at the platform whereas some people inside the train pointed their fingers at them seemingly scolding them (source: media reports²⁵).

²⁵ CCTV footage provided by the MTRC did not capture the Police's use of force / how the protesters were subdued on the platform clearly, and the situation inside the train compartments at the material time. Some CCTV footage was not available because the CCTV cameras were not functioning at that time.

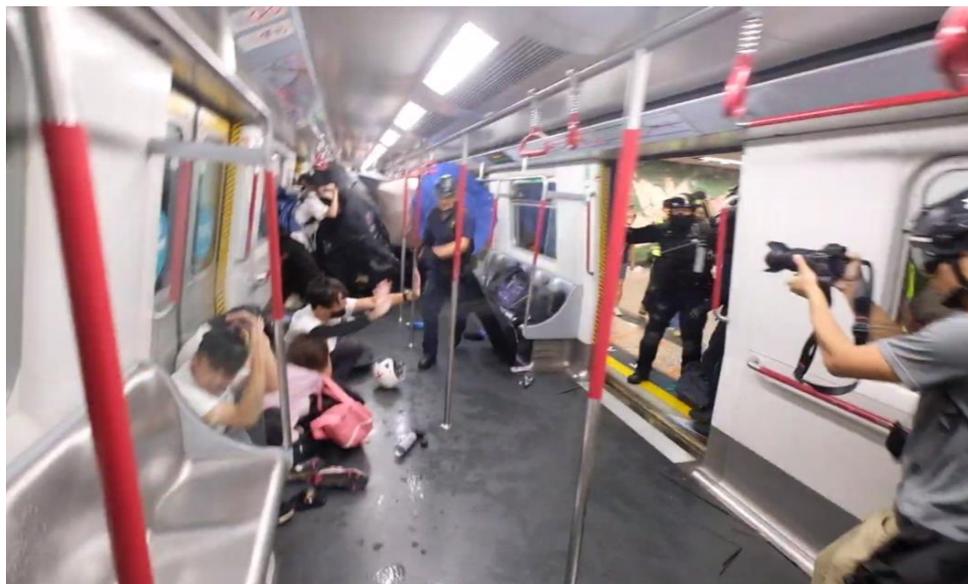


Image 12-17: Two young men and two women were covering on the ground inside a train compartment

(Image source: Pakkin Leung@Rice Post)

- (d) According to the Police, while conducting sweeping at platforms No. 3 and 4 of Prince Edward Station, the officers exercised observation and professional judgement and successfully located some mobsters, who disguised themselves as ordinary passengers and scattered around the MTR platforms, including some hiding inside the train compartments at platform No. 4 (Tsuen Wan Line to Central), i.e. opposite to platform No. 3. The police officers were immediately attacked by more than ten violent protesters with umbrellas and sharp-edged objects. In response, the Police used minimum force necessary to control and subdue them, including the use of police batons and OC Foam. During the confrontation, officers successfully put a couple (a male and a female) under control inside a train compartment at platform No. 4. However, two other violent protesters (a male and a female) were spotted hiding behind the couple and strongly resisted arrest with force. Officers thus used minimum force necessary to control those two protesters. However, at that juncture, the doors of the train began to close unexpectedly. Police officers would be outnumbered by the protesters if they were trapped in the compartment. The officers therefore immediately retreated from the train compartments for their safety. The train doors then closed. Subsequently, the train departed the platform (source: HKPF).
- According to MTRC, at 23:04, the train doors eventually closed and the train at platform No. 4 departed in the direction of Yau Ma Tei (source: MTRC). [According to the

Police, the train departed at 23:02]

- At 23:05, the Police requested MTRC to stop the train from departing Prince Edward Station. They had requested MTRC earlier at 22:52 to stop the train service at the station but MTRC did not do so (source: HKPF).
- At 23:09, the train which carried some of the protesters skipped Mong Kok Station (upon police request) and arrived at Yau Ma Tei Station (source: HKPF). At 23:10, MTRC suspended the train services on the Kwun Tong Line and the Tsuen Wan Line (source: MTRC).
- By the time police officers reached Yau Ma Tei Station, most of the passengers and protesters had left the train. Police officers eventually arrested ten persons on the train including a couple cowering on the train floor as seen on the news footage (source: HKPF).
- According to the Police, at 23:41, more than a hundred people were gathering outside Prince Edward Station. At 23:45, over 200 protesters with gear were going to Mong Kok Police Station from the junction of Nathan Road and Argyle Street. At 00:36, about 800 violent protesters had gathered near Prince Edward Station (source: HKPF).
- Police arrest action continued inside Prince Edward Station until 00:55. During the incident, the Police arrested a total of 63 persons, including one in Mong Kok area, 52 in Prince Edward Station and ten in Yau Ma Tei Station. Petrol bombs, laser pointers, catapults, steel marbles, helmets, respirators and other equipment were found on them (source: HKPF).
- Police arrested the protesters at different locations inside Prince Edward Station. For the purpose of easy handling and treatment by ambulance and police officers, the Police arranged for all the APs to stay at the end of platform No. 3 heading Tiu Keng Leng direction (see Image 12-18 and 12-19) (source: HKPF).

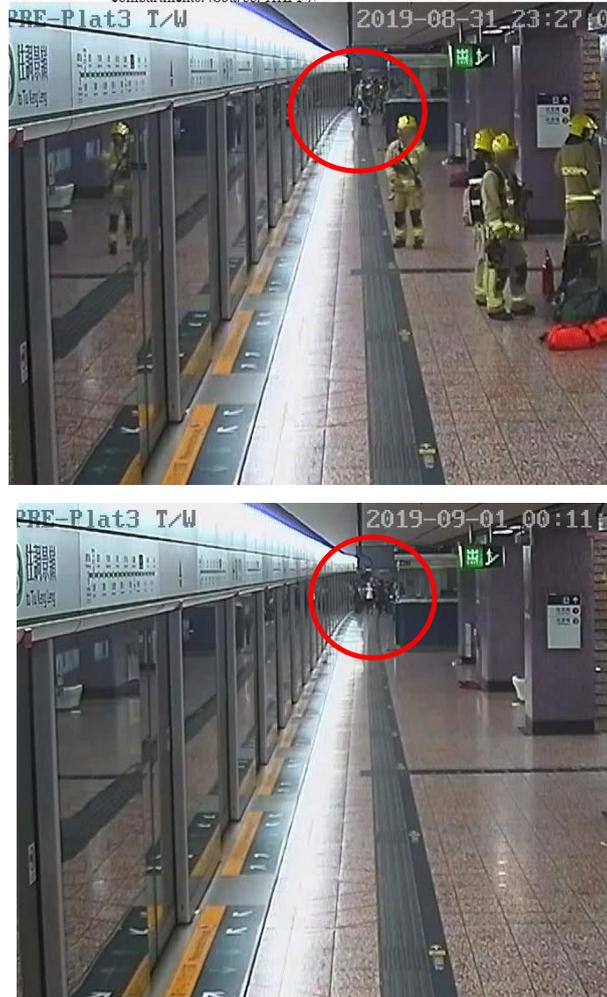


Image 12-18 and 12-19: Police arranging the APs to the end of platform No. 3
(Image source: MTRC CCTV)

Part III – Fire Officers and Ambulance Officers Entering Prince Edward Station

Exit B1 – First and Second Batch of Fire Officers Entered

- At 23:01, in response to a citizen report that smoke was seen inside the station, the first batch of fire officers arrived at Exit B1 (source: FSD).
- According to the CCTV footage at Exit B1, some police officers arrived at Exit B1 almost at the same time as the fire officers. The gate was closed at that time and no one was guarding at the exit (source: MTRC CCTV). It was believed that the gate was actually locked, because according to FSD, they had to cut the lock in order to enter (source: FSD).

- According to the CCTV footage at Exit B1, at 23:06, the gate of Exit B1 opened and 13 fire officers entered the station (More than 20 police officers entered the station as well) (source: HKPF and MTRC CCTV).
- At 23:12, fire officers inside Prince Edward Station reported to FSD Console that there was no fire (source: FSD).
- According to the CCTV footage at Exit B1, at 23:20, another six fire officers entered the station via Exit B1 (source: HKPF and MTRC CCTV). By then, a total of 19 fire officers were inside the station. According to FSD, the fire officers had the “First Responders” (先遣急救員) qualification and could provide first aid to the injured persons. Their mission was to provide prompt basic life support to patients before the arrival of ambulance officers to increase their survival rate (source: FSD). Some police officers closed the gate and stood guard at the exit after the entry of the fire officers (source: MTRC CCTV).

Exit B1 – A Probationary Ambulance Officer (PAO) Entered

- According to FSD, at 23:14 (8 minutes after the fire officers entered), in response to a report from Police Console that people were injured inside the station, the first batch of ambulance officers (one PAO and his team) arrived at Exit B1. According to the FSD, the police officers on guard at Exit B1 told the PAO that no one had been injured inside the station (source: FSD and media reports).
- The PAO stayed at Exit B1 and was seen communicating with a police officer at Exit B1 (see Image 12-20) (source: FSD and media reports). According to FSD, at 23:30, the PAO entered the station by himself (see Image 12-21) (source: FSD). The CCTV at Exit B1 captured the moment (time of the MTRC CCTV is 23:35) when the PAO entered Exit B1 (source: HKPF and MTRC CCTV).



Image 12-20: PAO communicated with a police officer at Exit B1
(Image source: RTHK)



Image 12-21: PAO entered the Station via Exit B1
(Image source: RTHK)

- After entering the station, the PAO conducted a brief headcount of the injured persons inside the station. At 23:46, he reported to FSD Console that there were about ten to 15 injured persons. At 00:01, the PAO revised the number of casualties to nine. At 00:15, he further changed it to ten. At 01:02, he gave a final count of seven, all APs. According to the information given by FSD at a press conference on 12 September, the PAO revised the number a few times because the situation inside the station was chaotic and the injured persons were not found or kept at the same location, but spotted at different places (source: FSD).

Exit E – Three Ambulance Officers Entered

- At 23:17, in response to a call made by a citizen to the FSD Console that some people had been assaulted inside Prince Edward Station, three ambulance officers arrived at Exit E (source: FSD). The CCTV at Exit E captured at 23:20 the ambulance officers entering the station with a stretcher before MTR staff closed the gate at Exit E (source: FSD and MTRC CCTV).
- According to the CCTV footage at Exit E, at 23:34, 17 minutes later, the three ambulance officers appeared inside Exit E with a female on the stretcher, accompanied by four police officers. MTRC staff opened the gate for the departure of the fire officers with the female on the stretcher (source: HKPF and MTRC CCTV).

Exit E – Third Batch of Four Fire Officers Entered

- At 23:34, the third batch of fire officers (four in total) entered the station, just as the three ambulance officers came out with a female on the stretcher from Exit E (source: HKPF and MTRC CCTV).

Exit E – 19 Ambulance Officers Entered

- According to FSD, ambulance officers proceeded to Exit E and tried to enter because there was a lift located in that exit (source: FSD).
- According to the CCTV footage at Exit E, at 00:09, a number of ambulances arrived at Exit E where the gate was closed (source: MTRC CCTV). According to FSD, media reports and news footage, at 00:15, ambulance officers at Exit E were told by a police officer that no one was injured inside the station (see Image 12-22) (source: FSD and media reports). At one point, a fire officer came up from the station and told the ambulance officers outside the gate that there were injured persons inside (see Image 12-23) (source: media reports).



Image 12-22: Ambulance officers outside Exit E of Prince Edward Station
(Image source: HK01)



Image 12-23: A fire officer told two ambulance officers that there were injured persons inside Prince Edward Station
(Image source: RTHK)

- From the CCTV footage, a police officer intermittently appeared at the gate and communicated with a MTR staff there (source: MTRC CCTV). At 00:23, the MTR staff opened the gate for 19 ambulance officers to enter the station (source: HKPF and MTRC CCTV).

Part IV – Arrangement of a Special Train to Lai Chi Kok Station

- The Police arrested a total of 52 persons at Prince Edward Station. Around 23:20, the Police escorted seven of them directly to Kwai Chung Police Station by police vehicles (source: HKPF).
- According to the Police, at 00:36, about 800 violent protesters had gathered outside Prince Edward Station. The Police assessed that it was unsafe to take APs out of Prince Edward Station, and so decided to ask MTRC to arrange a special train to take the remaining 45 APs, seven of whom were injured, to Lai Chi Kok Station, where they could escort the APs respectively to hospitals and a police station (source: HKPF).
- At 00:54, MTRC arranged a special train on police request to run from Prince Edward Station to Lai Chi Kok Station (source: MTRC). At 01:23, a special train carrying 45 APs, seven of them injured, left Prince Edward Station for Lai Chi Kok Station (source: MTRC and HKPF).
- At 01:28, the special train arrived at Lai Chi Kok Station (source: MTRC). From 01:35 to 01:55, the seven injured APs were escorted to Princess Margaret Hospital and Caritas Medical Centre respectively, and the 38 others to Kwai Chung Police Station (source: MTRC, FSD and HKPF)

Part V – Police Handling of Rumours and Speculations

- While the Police was still taking enforcement action inside Prince Edward Station, posts and messages began to appear on the internet, such as LIHKG, HKGOLDEN, DISCUSS and YouTube, claiming that the Police had indiscriminately used force on people inside the station. Starting from the small hours on Sunday 1 September, speculations that someone might have been killed inside Prince Edward Station started sprouting on the internet. Netizens queried the genuineness of the number of casualties inside the station given by FSD. From then on, allegations that people had been killed by the Police in Prince Edward Station began to burgeon on the internet and in the days that followed, these allegations seemed to have taken root, as people began to believe them and started bringing flowers and various traditional Chinese offerings to a shrine of sorts outside Exit E at Prince Edward Station. The following is a chronology of the

appearance of some of the posts and messages on various internet platforms and how the Government, the Police, FSD and MTRC responded to those messages, some of which were unsupported claims.

31 August

- At 22:59, a television station had a live broadcast of what was happening inside Prince Edward Station (see Image 12-24) (source: media reports and live video footage). Posts and messages began to appear on the internet.



Image 12-24: Live broadcast showing police officers taking enforcement inside train compartment

(Image source: TVB)

- At 23:01, while the Police was still taking action inside the station, a post entitled “cls 黑警走左入太子站列車 見人就打” on LIHKG (Translation: Crazy, after getting into Prince Edward Station, police officers hit whoever they saw.). In the messages that followed this post, some netizens criticised the Police for using excessive force and beating people indiscriminately on the platform and inside the train compartment similar to the attack by those people dressed in white in 721 Yuen Long Incident (see Image 12-25) (source: LIHKG).

Translation

7. Police officers assaulted and arrested civilians inside Mong Kok (sic) MTR Station, which was violent and an abuse of power.

8. Police officers rushed into the train compartment to hit people vigorously, like what the people dressed in white had assaulted others in the 721 Yuen Long Incident.

Image 12-25 (Image source: LIHKG)

- At 23:18, a post entitled “太子站 警察發動恐襲 必要向國際求救” appeared on LIHKG (Translation: The Police launched terrorist attack in Prince Edward Station. Must seek international assistance.) (see Image 12-26).

Translation

Right away! Seek international assistance immediately. Uniformed police officers attacked citizens in the MTR indiscriminately. Hong Kong is in an inhumane condition. Must let everyone know about this.

Image 12-26 (Image source: LIHKG)

Sunday 1 September

- At 02:19, a posts entitled “太子站啲傷者係咪仲未出黎” (Translation: Have the injured persons still not come out from Prince Edward Station?) appeared on LIHKG (source: LIHKG). The post creator commented that “無記者影入面做咩左都無人知” (Translation: No reporter video recorded or took photos inside the station. No one would know what had been done inside.). At 02:21, a netizen put up a message to this post saying “現場有傳打死左人，

未FC！！！！！” (Translation: People at the scene claimed that someone had been beaten to death. Haven’t fact checked yet.)” (see Image 12-27). This was the first time speculation of people might have died inside Prince Edward Station emerged on the internet.



Image 12-27 (Image source: LIHKG)

- Around 03:00, the Police (Police Public Relations Branch (PPRB)) held a stand-up briefing to give an overview of the POE situation on 31 August. Regarding Police action inside Prince Edward Station, the police representative stated that officers had used their professional judgement to distinguish protesters from regular passengers. The PPRB officer did not give details of the casualties inside Prince Edward Station (source: media report). The Police did not say whether anyone had died in the station. Nor did the reporters ask about it.
- At 08:16, a post entitled “政府唔好再包庇黑警濫用暴力，應該盡快拉晒呢班黑警去坐監” (Translation: The Government should no longer allow the Police to use violence, should take the triad police officers to jail as soon as possible) appeared on the DISCUSS forum. The post creator claimed that the police officers were terrorists and assaulted the people inside the train (source: DISCUSS).
- At 16:37, a post entitled “冇人覺得封太子站好奇怪？” (Translation: Anyone felt the closure of Prince Edward Station strange?) appeared on LIHKG. The post creator commented that “琴晚傷者冇人知去左邊,依家仲要封埋站,入面 0 消息,難道真係有人死左?” (Translation: Last night, no one knew where the injured had been taken to. Now, the station is even closed. No news from inside. Is it really that someone had died?) In the messages that followed this post, some netizens suspected that the Police had killed people inside the station, saying “似打死人” (Translation: Seems people were beaten to death), “我信死左人” (Translation: I believe that someone has died) (source: LIHKG). More speculation of people being killed came to light.
- At 17:15, a post entitled “封站係因為黑狗太子恐襲 死左幾個市民 依加要執手尾” (Translation: The reason for closing station was that the Police had killed

several citizens, so the Police had to tidy up the scene) appeared on LIHKG. The post creator stated that “若果不能毀滅 就開始整理現場 想造成死者係因為自己失誤或被示威者襲擊而身亡” (Translation: If the evidence could not be destroyed, the scene had to be tidied up to create an impression that the deceased died of their/his own mistakes or attacks by protesters.) (source: LIHKG). This appears to be the first time bare speculative allegations with no factual support affirming that people were killed appeared on the LIHKG. LIHKG postings were heavily watched and it would not be surprising that this posting would have gone viral on the internet web very quickly.

- Around 18:00, Kowloon West Region (Crime) of the Police gave a briefing to the media regarding the arrest operations mounted inside Prince Edward Station on 31 August. There was no mention whether any person had died during police enforcement (source: media report).
- At 20:19, a post entitled “嚴重懷疑尋晚太子死咗人” (Translation: Seriously suspecting that someone had died at Prince Edward last night) appeared on LIHKG. The post creator stated “結果封站封一日。真毀屍滅跡” (Translation: The station ended up being closed for one day. Undoubtedly destroying evidence) (source: LIHKG).
- In the afternoon, the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) and the Hong Kong Photographers Association issued a statement condemning the Police for obstructing news coverage inside Prince Edward Station. According to the statement, “...many reporters and photographers were expelled during their reporting and filming without any reasonable explanation. The closing of the Prince Edward Station barred any members of the press from entering the station for reporting, hence the lack of media monitoring on the police conduct inside the station.” (source: HKJA).

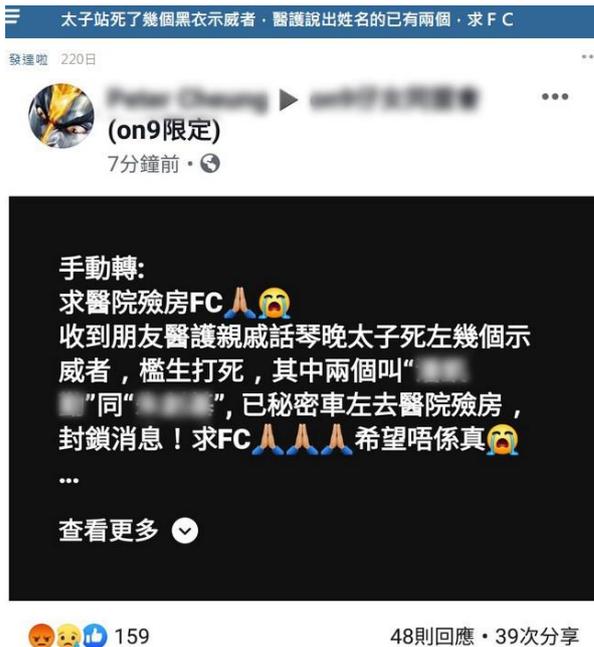
2 September

- At 01:29, a post entitled “正式宣佈八月三十一日，一位香港人被黑警活生生打死” (Translation: Formally announce that a Hong Kong person was beaten to death by police officers on 31 August.) appeared on LIHKG. The post creator, referring to a live broadcast video (see Image 12-28), claimed that a protester was unconscious when being subdued by a police officer on the platform and said that the protester was actually dead at that time (source: LIHKG).



Image 12-28 (Image source: LIHKG, the video was originally from Apple Daily)

- At 02:26, a post entitled “太子站死了幾個黑衣示威者，醫護說出姓名的已有兩個，求 FC” (Translation: Several protesters in black outfits died inside Prince Edward Station. Health care workers gave the names of at least two people. Please fact check it) appeared on HKGOLDEN. The post creator showed a screen capture of a Facebook page (see Image 12-29), which stated that two persons (with two Chinese names given) were killed inside Prince Edward Station and their dead bodies had been sent to mortuary (source: HKGOLDEN).



Translation

“Please check with the mortuary of the hospital.

My friend’s relative, a medical worker, claimed that several protesters were beaten to death in Prince Edward Station Incident last night. Two of them named “XXX” and “XXX” (Name deleted by the IPCC) had been sent to the mortuary. The news are blocked. Please do a fact check. Hope this is not real.”

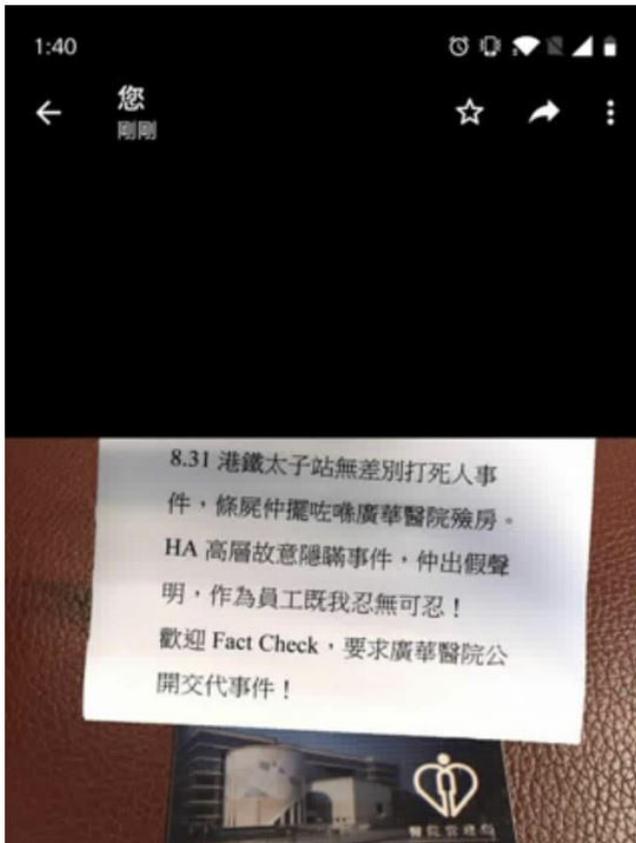
Image 12-29 (Image source: HKGOLDEN, originally from Facebook)

- In the morning (on 2 September), the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS), together with the Secretary for Security, the Secretary for Transport and Housing, and the Secretary for Education held an inter-departmental press conference in relation to the POEs that happened over the weekend on 31 August and 1 September. A reporter asked CS to comment on the action of the Police in Prince Edward Station and to respond to the alleged death incident inside the station. CS replied that there was no death report in connection with the incidents on 31 August according to the information from HA (source: The Government). This was the first occasion that a Government official rebutted the claim that someone had died in the Prince Edward Station Incident.
- At 12:19, a post entitled “幫手出:831 前線救護爆料” (Translation: Help to disseminate: 831 frontline medical staff give information) appeared on LIHKG. The post creator claimed that he was an ambulance officer who was on duty on 31 August and went to Prince Edward Station. He had heard that the number of casualties that initially reported to FSD control room was ten. However, only seven injured persons were sent to the hospitals at the end. In the messages that followed this post, some netizens queried why three injured persons were missing. Had these three injured persons died? “點解有三個消失”, “消失咗 3 個去咗邊 係咪死咗?” (Translation: Why did three people disappear? Where were they taken to? Are they dead?) (source: LIHKG).
- At 13:46, a post entitled “831 太子站死人消息” appeared on LIHKG. (Translation: Information on those dead at 831 Prince Edward Station) The post creator posted a photo with a message. A person who claimed to be an HA staff (not named) said that a dead body in connection with the Prince Edward Station Incident had been located at Kwong Wah Hospital (see Image 12-30) (source: LIHKG).

← 831太子站死人消息

#1 · 7個月前

相入面唔係我黎，
有人冇幫手check到？
急呀大佬



Translation

“...The corpse is now at the mortuary of Kwong Wah Hospital...the HA senior management issued a false statement to cover up the incident...Welcome to do a fact check on it...”

Image 12-30 (Image source: LIHKG)

- At the regular Police press conference at 16:00, a police spokesman stated that on 31 August, the police officers had taken enforcement action inside Prince Edward Station based on their intelligence and their professional judgement at the scene. He added that when police officers took enforcement action inside the station, they were attacked by protesters with umbrellas and hard objects. In response, the officers used proportionate force in defence. He said that there was no instance of death that night (source: media report). This was the first time that the Police refuted the claim that someone had died on 31 August. A FSD representative who was present at the press conference provided an overview of their operations on 31 August and stated that seven injured persons were sent to the hospitals, but did not say whether the number of casualties had been revised over time.

3 September

- At 12:35, another post update on “831 太子死亡事件整合(3.9.2019) 及行動討論” (Translation: 831 Prince Edward death incident and operational discussion.) appeared on LIHKG. The post creator posted a “Missing Person Notice” on LIHKG purporting to look for missing persons (see Image 12-31). The messages stated that the two persons did not leave the Prince Edward Station that evening, and asked people to provide more information on the whereabouts of the two missing persons. Messages following the post claimed that some APs had died (source: LIHKG).



Translation

“ *Missing Person*

The person in this picture lost consciousness after being beaten by police officers. The Police then requested to cordon off the station and expel reporters and medical workers therefrom. No injured person was seen leaving the station afterwards...”

Image 12-31 (Image source: LIHKG)

- At 16:00, the Police stated at a regular press conference that there was no case of death in the Prince Edward Station incident.

4 September

- A netizen uploaded a video clip entitled “跟進 831 太子站懷疑警方打死人事件” (Translation: Follow up on 831 Prince Edward Station Incident, suspecting that the Police had killed someone.) onto YouTube. The video contained media footage, which covered the Prince Edward Station Incident. The person who made the video added textual descriptions, including that (i) there was proof that someone had been killed inside the station; (ii) the Police did not allow ambulance

officers to enter Prince Edward Station; (iii) some netizens demanded MTRC to release the complete CCTV footage to uncover the truth; and (iv) the Police had unreasonably beaten protesters.’ (source: YouTube).

5 September

- At the 16:00 regular Police press conference, reporters questioned why police officers used batons and OC Foams on innocent citizens inside train compartments. A police representative replied that reporters should not only focus on a clip that had lasted for several seconds, and reiterated that the officers were taking enforcement action in response to the violence at the material time. He repeated that no protesters had been beaten to death in the Prince Edward Station Incident (source: media report).
- At 23:13, a post entitled “831 太子站極可能真係有人死 絕非坊間流言” (Translation: Very likely that someone had died inside Prince Edward Station on 831. It is not a rumour) was created on HKGOLDEN. It was mentioned in the post that according to a Chief Inspector of Police (CIP), one protester was dead inside the Prince Edward Station that evening (see Image 12-32) (source: HKGOLDEN).



Translation

“...A CIP revealed that a protester was confirmed dead on the spot ...”

[Note: no CIP has so far come forward to confirm this]

Image 12-32 (Image source: HKGOLDEN)

6 September

- At 01:58, a post entitled “太子站一共有 6 人死 全部死於斷頸” (Translation: Six people had died inside Prince Edward Station, all died of broken necks.) appeared on LIHKG. It claimed that police officers had broken the necks of six people and killed them. The post, however, did not give any details of these six people (see Image 12-33) (source: LIHKG).

Translation: “...A neighbour came to say that his friend, a staff of mortuary, told him that six persons had died at Prince Edward MTR Station and all of them died of broken necks. It was the police officers who twisted their necks to 90 degrees. His friend asserted that it was true, and that the medical workers and police officers knew about it. The information on the internet was disseminated by police officers. However, whether the dead body which was found floating in Sai Kung is related to this incident is not known.”

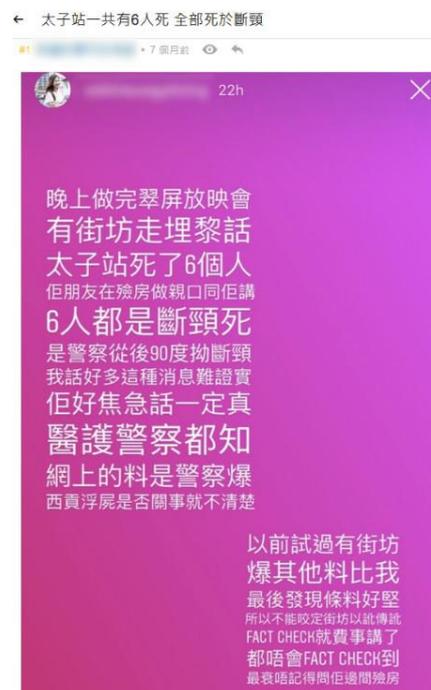


Image 12-33 (Image source: LIHKG, originally from Instagram)

- At 20:12, in response to the rumour that FSD had concealed the actual number of casualties inside Prince Edward Station, FSD issued a press release which stated:
 - (a) the situation in the station was chaotic and the injured persons were dispersed at different locations and they moved around on the platform. Some injured persons may have been repeatedly counted at the initial headcount by the ambulance personnel;
 - (b) when handling incidents with multiple casualties, the officer at the scene would firstly conduct a brief headcount of casualties and report the preliminary estimation to the Fire Services Communications Centre for its prompt dispatch of additional resources and manpower in order to enhance the efficiency of the rescue operation; and

- (c) the number of casualties initially counted would be updated from time to time (source: FSD).

7 September

- At 17:09, the Government issued a press release, stating that there were no death cases over the past 3 months caused by law enforcement agencies during operation. The Government rejected the rumour that there was death in Prince Edward Station Incident (source: The Government).

9 September

- FSD officers joined the regular Police press conference at 16:00. FSD representatives rebutted the rumours that FSD officers had deliberately altered the number of casualties on 31 August in the Prince Edward Station Incident, and explained FSD practice for counting the number of casualties (source: HKPF).

10 September

- In the morning, the Police, FSD, HA and MTRC held a joint press conference for the first time in response to the Prince Edward Station Incident. Spokespersons from the Police, FSD, HA and MTRC asserted that no one had died inside Prince Edward Station. A police representative reiterated that the so-called death incident inside Prince Edward Station was a malicious and groundless rumour. The Police had not received any missing person report stemming from the Prince Edward Station Incident (source: media report).

11 September

- At 16:00, a LegCo Member held a press conference. She showed FSD internal records on the counting of casualties on 31 August and queried why FSD changed the number of casualties several times. (It is not known how the LegCo Member had got the information.) (source: media report).
- At 21:48, a news article was released (see Image 12-34). The article stated that the ambulance officer inside Prince Edward Station had amended the number of casualties on his own, and questioned why a male patient in coma was taken out of the station by FSD at an earlier time (source: media report).



Translation

“An officer in charge had changed the number of injured persons on his own. Did FSD take the unconscious man away before counting the number of injured?”

Image 12-34 (Image source: From Stand News Facebook public page)

12 September

- In the small hours, netizens spread information on Facebook and LIHKG that MTRC had closed the Prince Edward Station to perform a funeral ceremony for the deceased inside the station. A netizen, after seeing the information on the internet, went to the vicinity near the station and conducted a live broadcast on the internet. The 122- minutes long live broadcast video captured the vicinity of the Prince Edward Station, mainly near Exit E. At that time, the station, as well as the gates of the various exits, had already been closed after service hours. The netizen taking the video walked around the station and talked to passers-by. Some passers-by indicated that they came to check if any funeral ceremony was taking place. However, no such ceremony could actually be seen throughout the broadcast video. At 20:22, a media reported on the internet that around 120 000 persons had watched the video after it was made available online for 11 hours and the video was subsequently shared by 700 persons with more than 1 000 comments received [As at 6 March 2020, there are over 189 000 had viewed this video] (source: media report).
- In the afternoon, FSD held a press conference to address the concern over the counting of casualties. FSD spokesperson reiterated the clarification given in their press release on 6 September and confirmed that there was no death case at all in the Prince Edward Station Incident (source: media report).

17 September

- At 15:00, another LegCo Member held a press conference and showed FSD incident log records. (It is not known how the LegCo Member obtained those incident log records.) He queried why FSD amended the incident log records

in relation to (i) counting the number of casualties and their injury conditions (amended on 3 September); and (ii) the Police taking the injured persons to Lai Chi Kok Station (amended on 10 September) (source: media report).

19 September

- In the afternoon, FSD held another press conference. FSD stated that it was a common practice to amend the incident log records after reviewing the information following an incident. There was a possibility that the PAO may have double-counted injured persons during the initial assessment (source: FSD and media report).

From 30 September Onward

- Between September 2019 and January 2020, on the last day of each month, i.e. on 30 September, 31 October, 30 November, 31 December and 31 January 2020, some people continued to place flowers outside Prince Edward Station (see Image 12-35 and 12-36) (source: media reports).



Image 12-35 and 12-36: People placed flowers at Exit B1 of Prince Edward Station, blocking the entrance

(Image source: (left) *Epoch Times* and (right) *Now TV*)

- On 29 February 2020, protesters gathered again to commemorate the 31 August event. Protesters chanted slogans and placed flowers at different Exits of Prince Edward Station (see Image 12-37). Some of them pointed laser beams at police officers on guard nearby, and built barricades and set fires on roads. The Police fired tear gas to disperse the crowd, and took arrest action in the evening (source: media report).



Image 12-37: People placed flowers at Prince Edward Station on 29 February 2020 and MTRC closed the exit
(Image source: HK01)

Complaints against Police

12.36 The 31 August incidents gave rise to four RCs and 19 NCs.

12.37 Out of the four RCs received, one RC was related to the Prince Edward Station Incident. The case was about police's handling of a reporter inside Prince Edward Station. The other RCs related to an arrest action in Wan Chai, police's failing to facilitate reporters in Mong Kok area, and police's firing of tear gas in Central.

12.38 The nature of the NCs is as follows:

- One NC raised by 25 complainants against officers for inappropriate use of force inside Prince Edward Station;
- One NC raised by 24 LegCo Members against police's handling inside Prince Edward Station;
- Six other NCs raised about police's handling inside Prince Edward Station such as hindering ambulance officers' access to the station, excessive use of force on the platform and altering the number of casualties; and

- 11 NCs about matters which took place in other locations, namely Yau Ma Tei, Wan Chai, Admiralty and Causeway Bay.

Police Response

12.39 In response to the events of this day, Police Management has made various observations to the IPCC, as set out below:

Police Closing of the Station Exits

12.40 At 22:05, some mobsters stormed Mong Kok Station and damaged the facilities there by tearing off cable, smashing CCTV cameras and windows of the control room and even broke into the office of Mong Kok Station. At 22:06, about 100 protesters gathered at Mong Kok Station. At 22:30, MTRC requested police assistance. Police officers shortly entered the station but the mobsters had already left by train or different exits. Between 22:42 and 22:53, mobsters on board a Tsuen Wan-bound train in Prince Edward Station disputed with several passengers in a train at platform No. 3. They later assaulted the passengers with sticks, umbrellas, sling shots and fire extinguishers. The train was stopped by MTRC at Prince Edward Station due to the emergency situation. At 22:44, around 100 protesters were getting off at Prince Edward Station. Some mobsters left the train compartment and changed into different clothing at the platform to disguise themselves as ordinary passengers.

12.41 Between 22:49 and 23:15, Police 999 Console received 18 fighting and one dispute reports between violent mobsters and other passengers inside the train compartment at Prince Edward Station (out of over 50 odd 999 reports, such as “assault”, “mobsters throwing smoke bomb”, “mobsters besieging MTRC platform control room” and “chaos inside Prince Edward Station”, that the Police had received in relation to the incident in this period). In view of the situation, police officers were re-directed to Prince Edward Station in order to stop the fight and effect arrest as appropriate including those who had vandalised Mong Kok Station.

12.42 During the incident, the commanders took steps to stop the violence inside Prince Edward Station, arrest the perpetrators who had vandalised Mong Kok Station or involved in the fighting inside Prince Edward Station, and preserve the crime scene for evidence gathering.

12.43 The whole was not a pre-planned operation but an instant response towards the emergency encountered with very fluid operational environment both inside and outside the Prince Edward Station.

12.44 After the incident, the Command Post directed police officers to close all exits of Prince Edward Station in order to contain the crime scene and ensure the safe control of the

substantial number of APs.

12.45 There was no relevant police records as to whether any reporters had requested to go into the station but were refused by the officers on guard.

Police Enforcement Action and Arrest Action

12.46 While conducting sweeping at platforms No. 3 and 4 of Prince Edward Station, the officers exercised observation and professional judgement and successfully located some mobsters, who disguised themselves as ordinary passengers and scattered around the MTR platforms, including some hiding inside the train compartments. When police officers entered the train compartments at platform No. 4 (Tsuen Wan line to Central), i.e. opposite to platform No. 3, they were immediately attacked by more than ten violent mobsters with umbrellas and sharp-edged objects. In response, the Police used minimum force necessary to control and subdue them, including the use of police batons and OC Foam.

12.47 During the confrontation, officers successfully put a couple (a male and a female) under control inside a train compartment at platform No. 4. However, two other violent mobsters (a male and a female) were spotted hiding behind the couple and strongly resisted officers' arrest with force. Officers thus used minimum force necessary to control those two violent mobsters. However, at that juncture, the doors of the train began to close unexpectedly. Police officers would be outnumbered by the radical mobsters if they were trapped in the compartment. The officers therefore immediately retreated from the train compartments for their safety. The train doors then closed and the train departed the platform.

12.48 Despite first police request at 22:52 to stop all trains at Prince Edward Station, a train at platform No. 4 still managed to leave Prince Edward Station at 23:02. At 23:05, the Police requested MTRC to stop that departing train again. As arranged by MTRC, the train skipped Mong Kok Station and arrived at Yau Ma Tei Station at 23:09, waiting for police's arrival. At 23:18, police reinforcement reached Yau Ma Tei Station and located the subject train for enquiry. However, most of the passengers and mobsters had departed the train and left the Station. After enquiry, police officers arrested ten persons on the train including the couple who were previously controlled by officers in the train compartment at Prince Edward Station.

12.49 Throughout the incidents at the stations, the Police had arrested a total of 63 persons, including one person in Mong Kok area, 52 persons in Prince Edward Station and ten in Yau Ma Tei Station. Petrol bombs, laser pointers, catapults, steel marbles, helmets, respirators and other equipment were found on the APs.

12.50 The Police Senior Management's view was that the incident was a response to an emergency arising from the violent mobsters' assault on other passengers inside the confined MTR train compartment. The objective of deployment was to stop the fight and effect arrest as appropriate, including those who had vandalised Mong Kok Station. When police officers arrived at the Prince Edward Station platform, they exercised observation and professional judgement and successfully located some mobsters, who disguised themselves as ordinary passengers and scattered around the MTR platforms and the train compartments. The violent mobsters then attacked officers with umbrellas and sharp-edged objects and put up strong resistance upon arrest. As a result, the officers had to use minimum force necessary, including baton and OC Foam, to subdue and arrest them.

Management of the Scene inside the Station

Counting and Handling of Casualties

12.51 The APs were at first arrested at different locations inside Prince Edward Station. For the purpose of easy handling and treatment by ambulance officers and police officers respectively, all APs were then arranged to the end of platform No. 3 near the first train compartment heading towards Tiu Keng Leng direction.

Arranging a Special Train to Lai Chi Kok Station

12.52 That evening, 52 persons were arrested in Prince Edward Station. At around 23:20, the first batch of seven APs were escorted to leave Prince Edward Station who were to be sent to Kwai Chung Police Station. At 23:41, there were around 100 violent mobsters proceeding to Mong Kok Police Station from Nathan Road near Argyle Street.

12.53 At 23:45, the tension outside Prince Edward Station kept escalating such that over 200 mobsters with gear were proceeding to Mong Kok Police Station from the junction of Nathan Road and Argyle Street. At 00:36, there were about 800 violent mobsters gathering outside Mong Kok Police Station. At 00:38, after coordination with the FSD, all 45 APs at Prince Edward Station, including the seven injured APs, were sent to Lai Chi Kok Station. This was to facilitate further delivery of uninjured APs to Kwai Chung Police Station and injured APs to hospitals as it was unsafe to leave from the exits of Prince Edward Station with the presence of a large number of violent mobsters who might snatch the APs from the Police. At 01:23, seven casualties were escorted to Lai Chi Kok Station via a specially arranged empty MTR train and were sent to Princess Margaret Hospital and Caritas Medical Centre by ambulance.

Police Communication with FSD

12.54 According to live news broadcast and CCTV footage at Prince Edward Station, there was no evidence showing the Police had deliberately delayed ambulance officers from entering Prince Edward Station on the night of 31 August. Instead, the police officers at Exits B1 and E were trying to clarify with other police officers inside the station about the situation at the platforms before facilitating the safe entry of ambulance officers.

12.55 At 23:34, a senior police officer reported to the Command Post inside Prince Edward Station that some ambulance officers outside Exit B1 were inquiring about the situation inside the Prince Edward Station and whether they could go in. After coordination between the senior police officer and the Command Post, the PAO entered Exit B1 at 23:35 (according to the time on the CCTV footage of MTRC). In the meantime, according to the media footage, some ambulance officers, who could be the PAO's teammates, were setting up triage outside Exit B1 including a large triage mat. In this regard, the ambulance officers might not have been delayed from entering the station since their reported arrival time at 23:14, instead they might actually be working on the preparation of the triage outside Exit B1 to receive injured persons. However, such plan was disrupted later due to the escalating tension.

12.56 Regarding the situation at Exit E at around 00:10, police officers were actually making efforts to facilitate the entry of ambulance officers at Exit E since 00:09. The process was interrupted due to misunderstanding that MTRC staff had once informed police officers that there were only police and MTRC staff at the platform. Around 80 violent mobsters were surrounding Exit E with some of them hitting the metal gate of Exit E that also escalated the situation. After confirming that the passage was safe, the ambulance officers entered the station at 00:23.

12.57 Besides, the Police had in fact planned to escort the APs to leave Prince Edward Station from Exit B1, which was eventually aborted due to the significant threats to safety later presented by the violent mobsters in the vicinity of Prince Edward Station.

12.58 As such, it can be observed that police officers did not willfully obstruct the ingress of ambulance officers into the Prince Edward Station.

12.59 There was an ambulance officer stationed at Kowloon West Command Post for facilitating communication and resources coordination between both departments. On the other hand, the Regional Command and Control Centre of Police also maintained the usual communication mechanism by telephone hotline with Fire Services Communications Centre of the FSD.

Police Handling of Speculations

12.60 The Force Public Relations Strategy has been in place with the objectives of (i) proactively enhancing the reputation of the Police; (ii) maintaining public confidence in the Police; and (iii) leveraging support among the public and gaining public support for policing activities.

12.61 During the recent public disorder, many rumours and false accusations against the Police have been spreading around. To proactively address identified issues and seek clarification, the Police has adopted a proactive approach to disseminate vetted facts via different channels.

IPCC Observations

12.62 After 11 August, protesters continued to step up the scale and frequency of their protests and used urban guerillas tactics to cause disturbances and “Be Water” tactics to evade arrest. They kept escalating their use of violence to create disorder. In addition to blocking roads and throwing petrol bombs at police officers, they paralysed the Airport and the Cross Harbour Tunnel, vandalised station facilities, attacked police officers who had wandered loose from his team, and set fires on Chinese banks or shops connected to the Mainland. By way of “vigilantism” (私了) some violent protesters beat up people who did not agree with their opinions or actions or people who just took photos or videos of them. In many of the vigilante incidents, violent protesters often acted in a pack so that they could outnumber the victims they beat up. They used weapons to attack the target victims and even tied them up and humiliated them. These happened territory-wide and not uncommon during protests. On 31 August, territory-wide violent protests took place. That evening, when the Police took action against some of the protesters in Mong Kok Station, they fled to Prince Edward Station. The public raised a number of issues in relation to Police action in Prince Edward Station. Regarding these issues and other matters stemming from the incident, the IPCC has the following observations.

Police Entering Prince Edward Station to Take Enforcement Action

12.63 What happened in Prince Edward Station was not an isolated incident. It was part of police enforcement action against those violent protesters who had caused disturbances throughout the territory. Before fleeing to Prince Edward Station, the protesters had severely damaged the facilities inside Mong Kok Station. At 22:05, they caused serious damage to the CCTVs, ticket issuing machines and the control room inside Mong Kok Station. When police officers arrived at Mong Kok Station upon MTRC’s report of their criminal acts, some of the protesters had taken the MTR to go to Prince Edward Station.

12.64 Since early August, the protesters had used urban guerilla tactics in their violent protests, taking advantage of the MTR line to go to different places to create disorder and to hide when the Police took dispersal and arrest action. This is very clear from what happened at Kwai Fong Station and Tai Koo Station on 11 August, already examined in the previous Chapter. The protesters did the same on 31 August. They used MTR lines for logistical purposes and MTR stations became their safe haven. Live broadcast by a television station captured images of many of the protesters taking off their black outfits and gear and putting on clothes in other colours to disguise themselves as ordinary passengers after they had arrived at Prince Edward Station. The live television news broadcast covered only one spot on the platform. There could be other spots where protesters changed clothes. From what can be seen on the news footage on what happened in Prince Edward Station subsequently there were many other people inside the station wearing masks, helmets and holding umbrellas. Many of them could be protesters. They certainly were a threat to law and order in the station.

12.65 Given what the protesters had done to Mong Kok Station and the fact that many of them had fled to Prince Edward Station, it was necessary for the Police to take timely and decisive law enforcement action against the protesters to stop them from committing further violence. Otherwise, the protesters would vandalise the facilities inside Prince Edward Station and hurt innocent people, after which they could move on to other stations to commit the same crime, or go up to the ground level to block roads outside Prince Edward Station, set fire at different places and besiege Mong Kok Police Station, causing widespread disturbances as before. In fact, the protesters did carry out further violent acts inside Prince Edward Station when they arrived there. As a result, police officers were deployed to enter Prince Edward Station.

12.66 Before the protesters arrived at Prince Edward Station, they had already attacked people on the train. While on the train, they entered into a fierce argument with a few middle-aged male passengers. Suddenly one of the protesters slapped a male passenger on his face. When the train arrived at Prince Edward Station, the brawl turned into a fight. The protesters, who outnumbered the middle-aged male passengers as in other vigilante incidents, attacked the male passengers with umbrellas. As the train arrived at Prince Edward Station, the fight stopped for a brief moment as the protesters got off the train, but six to seven protesters suddenly rushed back into the train compartment and fiercely attacked with umbrellas a middle-aged male passenger, who was staying put inside the train compartment. As the male passenger refused to leave the train compartment, the protesters discharged smoke from a fire extinguisher into the train compartment. They even attacked a lady standing on the platform using her mobile phone to record what happened and snatched her mobile phone. The protesters were extremely ferocious. Even though the place was a station full of people, they displayed no restraint, despite dangers to other passengers. The disorderly situation at Prince Edward

Station demanded the Police immediate law enforcement action. The Police stated that in view of the situation, the police officers were re-directed to Prince Edward Station in order to stop the fight and effect arrest as appropriate including those who had vandalised Mong Kok Station.

12.67 The acts of the protesters, attacking people on the train and on the platform and discharging smoke from a fire extinguisher, paralysed the operation of Prince Edward Station. The driver of the involved train could not close the train doors, as a result of which the train could not depart from Prince Edward Station. Someone had also activated the passenger alarm on the train. MTRC made a report seeking police assistance and asked people to leave the train at the platform. Between 22:49 and 23:15, the Police 999 Console received over 50 reports about the assault incident, a protester throwing smoke bombs, besieging the control room on the platform, chaos inside Prince Edward Station and so on. At 22:53, MTRC declared evacuation of the station. At 23:10, MTRC suspended all services on the Kwun Tong line and the Tsuen Wan line. The activities of the protesters created disorder inside Prince Edward Station, which is a major station. A stampede with disastrous consequences could have happened after the protesters discharged smoke from a fire extinguisher as people could mistake the smoke for a fire. In fact, FSD did receive reports of fire. Fortunately, the incident took place at around 23:00 when Prince Edward Station was not so crowded. Police prompt enforcement action was indispensable to restore law and order in the station.

Police and MTRC Closing Prince Edward Station Exits

12.68 According to the Police, the Command Post of the Police directed officers to close all exits of the station in order to contain the crime scene and to ensure the safe control of the substantial number of APs. Since many protesters changed their clothes to disguise themselves as ordinary passengers and some others also hid among ordinary passengers inside train compartments.

12.69 Enquiry had to be made to identify protesters inside the station. There was a chance that these protesters would leave the station. Closing the exits set up an effective barrier to stop protesters, many of them in disguise themselves as ordinary passengers, from leaving whilst police officers took enforcement action or made enquiry inside the station.

12.70 It can clearly be seen from some of the news footage that many of the protesters tried to run away to evade arrest, as a result of which some police officers had to chase after them. Even when stopped by the police officers, some of the protesters still put up strenuous resistance to free themselves. One news footage recorded a protester escaping after being subdued on the floor. The protesters were desperate not to be arrested by the Police. Closing the exits could prevent these protesters from leaving the station.

12.71 The Police arrested a total of 52 protesters in Prince Edward Station that evening. According to the Police, while the officers were taking enforcement action inside the station, violent protests were still going on in the streets. At 23:45, over 200 protesters dressed in protective gear and equipped with umbrellas and various weapons proceeded from the junction of Nathan Road and Argyle Street to Mong Kok Police Station where Prince Edward Station was located. By 00:36, about 800 protesters had gathered near the Prince Edward Station.

12.72 The IPCC notes that prior to 31 August, there were instances of protesters making attempts to snatch APs from the Police. Closing the exits was a practical measure to stop other protesters from entering Prince Edward Station: (1) to reinforce those protesters whom the Police was trying to arrest, (2) to launch attack against the police officers who were taking enforcement action inside the station, and (3) to cause further damage to the facilities of the station, which would make controlling the situation inside the station very difficult, if not impossible. Given the chaos inside the station and the fact that MTRC had declared evacuation of Prince Edward Station at 22:53 and suspended all train services on the Kwun Tong Line and Tsuen Wan Line at 23:10, no ordinary person would want to enter the station. The decision to close the exits appears to the IPCC as justifiable under these circumstances.

Police Enforcement Action and Arrest Action inside Prince Edward Station

12.73 The Police did use force in their arrest action inside the station. It may be seen from some news footage that some protesters attempted to run away. Hence, police officers gave chase. Some protesters put up resistance to evade arrest and even used umbrellas to hit the police officers. In response, the police officers used batons and OC Foam to subdue them. Even after being subdued by the police officers, some protesters put up a fierce struggle to try to escape. A news footage captured images of a protester who had been subdued onto the ground successfully escaping up an escalator full of people. When he absconded, other protesters attacked the police officers trying to get hold of him. Despite the use of force, that protester still successfully ran away.

12.74 According to the Police, the action was a response to an emergency arising from the violent protesters' assault of other passengers inside the confined MTR train compartment. The objective of deployment was to stop the fight and effect arrest as appropriate, including those who had vandalised Mong Kok Station. When police officers arrived at the platforms of Prince Edward Station, they exercised observation and professional judgement and successfully located violent protesters, who disguised themselves as ordinary passengers and scattered around the MTR platforms and the train compartments. The violent protesters then attacked officers with umbrellas and sharp-edged objects and put up strong resistance upon arrest. As a result, the officers had to use minimum force necessary to subdue and arrest them.

12.75 The IPCC notes that Police action inside a train compartment was widely discussed by the public and the Police was criticised for excessive use of force. Whilst it is not the purpose of this Report to make any judgement on any particular incident or action taken by individual officers that may give rise to complaints, the IPCC notices that while the police officers took action inside the train compartment, the train doors kept closing and opening. The police officers on the platform asked the officers inside the train compartment to leave the train. After the police officers had left the train, they remained on guard at the train doors. The train doors eventually closed and the train departed the station in the direction of Mong Kok. Upon police request, the train skipped Mong Kok Station and stopped at Yau Ma Tei Station. When the Police arrived, they managed to arrest ten persons, including a couple who were seen sitting on the floor of the train when police officers used force in the train compartment at Prince Edward Station.

12.76 Regarding the confrontation in the train compartment, the Police explained that while conducting sweeping at platforms No. 3 and 4 of the Prince Edward Station, the officers exercised observation and professional judgement and successfully located violent protesters, who disguised themselves as ordinary passengers and scattered around the MTR platforms, including some hiding inside the train compartments at platform No. 4 (Tsuen Wan line towards Central), i.e. opposite to platform No. 3. When the police officers entered the train compartments at platform No. 4, they were immediately attacked by more than ten violent protesters with umbrellas and sharp-edged objects. According to the Police, in response, the officers used minimum force necessary in order to control and subdue them, including the use of police batons and OC Foam. During the confrontation, officers successfully put a couple (a male and a female) under control inside a train compartment at platform No. 4. However, two other violent protesters (a male and a female) were spotted hiding behind the couple and strongly resisted officers' arrest with force. Officers thus controlled those two protesters. However, at that juncture, the doors of the train began to close intermittently. The Police is of the view that police officers would be outnumbered by the protesters if they were trapped in the compartment. The officers therefore immediately retreated from the train compartments for their safety. The train doors then closed, and the train departed the platform.

12.77 As to whether the level of force used by police officers when effecting arrest is justified, the IPCC observes that according to the police latest guidelines on the use of force, the appropriate level of force that can be used depends on the level of resistance put up by the subject. When an officer encounters active resistance (i.e. physical action to prevent control which might cause injury to oneself or others), he could consider using irritant agent devices such as OC Foam. In the face of aggressive assault (i.e. physical assault to cause or likely to cause bodily injury), the use of less lethal weapons, including baton, is an option. To control a subject effectively, the officer is justified to use a level of force greater than the resistance of

the subject.

12.78 It is subject to the officer's own judgement based on his knowledge and understanding of Police guidelines from training, and that officer will be held accountable for his own action. The use of force is, therefore, under the current legal regime, a matter of personal responsibility of each police officer who is held accountable to uphold the law and the rules of the Police on the use of force.

12.79 It is a practice of the Police to conduct a review after each deployment to ensure that all officers abide by the relevant guidelines and procedures, and to learn from the experience. It is therefore expected that the Police will review all incidents and, if justified, to bring to book any officer who did not follow Police guidelines and the law in their handling of the POEs. If the Police finds any officer having exceeded the bounds imposed by the law and Police regulations, the IPCC, and indeed the community, would expect the Police to take necessary action to prosecute or discipline the officer concerned. On 2 and 7 March 2020, the Commissioner disclosed publicly that the Police Management had taken immediate action to admonish 21 officers for probable misconduct in the handling of these POEs against the Fugitive Offenders Bill. The Commissioner had further stated this did not mean that no further investigation would be undertaken.

Police Request for a Special Train to Lai Chi Kok Station

12.80 According to the Police, they arrested a total of 52 persons in Prince Edward Station that evening. Around 23:20, the Police escorted seven of them to Kwai Chung Police Station by police vehicles. At 23:45, the tension outside Prince Edward Station kept escalating such that over 200 protesters with gear were proceeding to Mong Kok Police Station from the junction of Nathan Road and Argyle Street. At 00:36, about 800 violent protesters had gathered near the Prince Edward Station. The Police assessed that it was unsafe to take the APs out of Prince Edward Station. Hence, they requested MTRC to arrange a special train to carry the remaining 45 APs, seven of whom were injured to Lai Chi Kok Station. At 01:23, the special train departed Prince Edward Station. The seven injured APs were escorted to Princess Margaret Hospital and Caritas Medical Centre, whereas the remaining 38 were taken to Kwai Chung Police Station.

12.81 The IPCC notes that the Police had conducted risk assessment before requesting MTRC to arrange for the special train. There had been violent situations in which some protesters tried to snatch APs from police custody. It happened at the airport on 13 August. In addition to the consideration of the gathering of protesters outside the station, the IPCC notes the facts that the roads in the vicinity of Mong Kok Police Station where Prince Edward Station were a common scene of protests and frequently blocked by protesters. Furthermore, before

31 August, Mong Kok Police Station had been a target of attack by protesters. Had the Police escorted the APs by police vehicles and ambulances and the protesters chose to block the roads there, the police vehicles and ambulances would have been stuck on the road. The safety of the APs and the escorting officers would be a concern. Treatment of the injured APs would also be delayed. Obviously, MTR is the fastest means to escort the APs out of Prince Edward Station to Lai Chi Kok Station which is close to Kwai Chung Police Station and Princess Margaret Hospital and Caritas Medical Centre. The decision to arrange a special train was prudent and sensible although it was one of the factors that provided fuel to the spread of the unsupported death rumour.

Police Communication with FSD

12.82 According to FSD records, the first batch of ambulance officers (the PAO and his team mate) arrived at Exit B1 at 23:14. A police officer at the gate told the PAO no one was injured inside. After communication, the PAO entered the station at 23:30 (16 minutes later) (CCTV footage of MTRC showed that the entry time was 23:35 but the footage did not show the time the PAO arrived at Exit B1. The times from FSD records are, therefore, used in the Report). Before the PAO entered the station, 19 fire officers were already inside the station, providing first aid to the injured persons inside. 13 fire officers entered the station at 23:06 and another six at 23:20.

12.83 According to CCTV footage at Exit E, a number of ambulance vehicles arrived at Exit E at 00:09. A police officer at the gate also told the ambulance officers that no one was injured inside. According to some news footage, a fire officer came up to the exit gate and told the ambulance officers that there were injured persons inside. An MTR staff was also seen near the gate in discussion with police and ambulance officers. After this communication, the MTR staff opened the gate and the ambulance officers entered at 00:23 (14 minutes later).

12.84 According to the Police, at 23:34, a senior police officer reported to the Command Post that some ambulance officers outside Exit B1 were inquiring about the situation inside the Prince Edward Station and whether they could go in. After coordination between the senior police officer and the Command Post, the PAO entered Exit B1 at 23:35. In the meantime, according to some media footage, some ambulance officers, who could be the PAO's teammates, set up triage outside Exit B1. The Police explained that the ambulance officers might not have been delayed from entering the station as they were actually preparing for the triage outside Exit B1 to receive injured persons. However, such plan was disrupted later due to the escalating tension.

12.85 Regarding the situation at Exit E, the Police clarified that police officers had made efforts to facilitate the entry of ambulance officers at Exit E since 00:09. The process was

interrupted due to misunderstanding that MTRC staff had once informed the Police that there were only police and MTRC staff at the platform. Around 80 violent protesters were surrounding Exit E and hitting the metal gate of the exit. After confirming that the passage was safe, the ambulance officers entered the station via Exit E at 00:23. The Police stressed that the police officers did not willfully obstruct the ingress of ambulance officers into the Prince Edward Station. They were ensuring safety for their entry.

12.86 The IPCC notes that based on FSD records, it took the PAO at Exit B1 16 minutes and the ambulance officers from the five ambulance vehicles at Exit E 14 minutes to gain entry into the station. It does not appear from the chronology of what happened inside Prince Edward Station that the Police would deliberately disallow the ambulance officers to enter the station. Some ambulance officers did do some preparatory work outside the exit for receiving injured persons as the Police explained. Before the PAO and the ambulance officers from the five ambulance vehicles entered the station, 19 fire officers were already inside the station, handling the fire and smoke reports and treating injured person. With the presence of the fire officers, there should not have been any delay in the treatment of the injured persons even without the ambulance officers. In fact, three ambulance officers entered the station at 23:20 via Exit E and came out of the same exit at 23:34 with a female on a stretcher. Had the Police had any intention to prevent ambulance officers from entering the station, the fire officers and the three ambulance officers would not have been allowed entrance in the first place. It appears from the chronology that as soon as coordination work was effected, the ambulance officers were allowed in. Certainly, it would be ideal that the ambulance officers were allowed into the station as soon as they arrived at the gate. Certainly, the information initially provided by the police officer that no one was injured inside the station was not correct.

12.87 The situation inside Prince Edward Station at that time was chaotic and the station is big. 200 police officers were deployed and a number of protesters were arrested. The exit gates were closed to stop protesters inside the station from escaping and those outside entering. Before allowing any person to enter, the police officers on guard at the gates had to seek instruction from their supervisors and the Command Post. The arrest operation was not planned. According to the Police, an ambulance officer stationed at Kowloon West Command Post was designated to facilitate communication between the two departments. The Police Regional Command and Control Centre also maintained communication by a telephone hotline with Fire Services Communications Centre. From what transpired, communication and coordination among the police officers and with the FSD were ineffective.

Police Handling of Rumours and Speculations

12.88 The rumour on the internet of people being killed inside Prince Edward Station developed and spread very quickly. From a mere speculative comment at the start, it rapidly

transformed into a rumour and then into what purported to confirmation, without any evidence in support at any stage of this transformation. The following critical events and messages on the internet give an overview of how such an unsupported allegation developed:

31 August

- At 22:53, police officers entered Prince Edwards Station.
- At 22:59, there was a live broadcast of Police action by news media.
- At 23:01, messages criticizing the Police for excessive use of force appeared on the internet.

1 September

- At 02:19, messages speculating death in the station surfaced.
- At 17:15, speculation about several people being killed emerged.

2 September

- At 01:29, a post on LIHKG formally announced that a person had been killed by the Police in the incident, with no supporting evidence.
Remark : Formal announcement was claimed.
- At 02:26, a post on HKGOLDEN quoted unknown health care workers' confirmation of two persons being killed, without naming the workers, and providing no evidence. The post claimed several people had died.
Remark: Unnamed health care workers were quoted. No one has so far come forward.
- At 12:19, a post on LIHKG further claimed that a health care worker gave information about three persons disappearing (apparently from FSD counting of casualties).
Remark: The health worker was not named and no one has come forward. FSD counting of the casualties was mentioned.
- At 13:46, a person claiming himself to be an HA staff said the body of a person who had been killed was in the mortuary of Kwong Wah Hospital.
Remark: HA staff was unnamed and never came forward, dead body and Kwong Wah Hospital Mortuary were used.

4 September

- Someone uploaded a video clip onto YouTube with clips of news footage showing Police use of force inside Prince Edward Station. The narrative said

there was proof that someone had been killed inside the station and the Police did not allow ambulance officers to enter the station.

Remark: Ambulance officers not immediately entering the station upon arrival at the gates was mentioned. News footage of Police use of force was also used.

5 September

- At 23:13, a post on HKGOLDEN quoted information from a CIP claiming that death in the incident was definitely not fake but it was not the Police who had killed that person.

Remark: CIP was unnamed and no one has come forward.

6 September

- At 01:58, a post on LIHKG claimed six persons died of broken neck in the incident, again with no supporting evidence at all.
- Remark: Number of alleged death exaggerated. Cause of death given.

12.89 It can be seen how the messages claiming police killing of persons at the Prince Edward Station on the internet had quickly escalated from speculation, to rumour and then to purported confirmation, all without any factual support at any stage of this transformation. Carl Sagan, the cosmologist, is credited with popularising a standard for examining extraordinary claims, called ECRREE, which in long form, is “Extraordinary Claims Require Extraordinary Evidence”. This is, of course, not new. It is simply a statement of the scientific method for the layman, reflecting no more than the common-sense notion that whoever makes extraordinary claims bears the burden of providing extraordinary evidence to support the claims.

12.90 The claim that the Police had killed someone in Prince Edward Station and then had the event covered up is, on any view, an extraordinary claim. The perpetrators of this allegation did not offer any evidence to support this claim. Instead, they resorted to speculation, rumour and then, purported confirmation by persons said to be a health care worker, an HA staff and even a CIP. None of these persons was named and none has subsequently come forward. The fact that the Police closed all the exit gates and the fact that injured persons were not seen being taken out from the station, were clearly exploited to fuel the allegation that officers did not allow entry to the station so that the Police could cover up the alleged killing. Discrepancies in the FSD record keeping could also have fueled the rumours.

12.91 It may be noted that there were reporters inside the station and they recorded the Police action in Prince Edward Station before the Police asked them to leave. There were passengers on both the platforms and on the train at platform No. 3. None of them reported any

incident that people had been killed or so seriously injured that would lead to death.

12.92 Hong Kong is one of the world's most densely populated cities and people live in close proximity to one another. If people had been killed inside the station, relatives of the deceased would soon report them missing and would come forward to tell the public. Equally, a person who has no relatives would be called upon either to pay rent or management fees and their being missing would soon become a matter for concern. Further, employers would likewise be concerned. However, no one reported anyone as having been missing on 31 August in connection with the incident. The Police has confirmed that they have carefully gone through missing persons reports and found no such connection.²⁶

12.93 Spokespersons from the Police, HA, FSD and MTRC have all refuted the rumours that someone had died or been killed inside the station. Even the CS confirmed that no one had died in the incident. Had any of them not told the truth, the staff from FSD, HA and MTRC and officers in the Police would certainly have come forward to expose the lie. To conceal even one death in a public place in densely populated Hong Kong requires collusion of so many parties, departments and institutions that it is well-nigh impossible, let alone multiple deaths with broken necks, as claimed by one post. The claim that someone had died in the station by the hand of the Police and was then covered up, is an extraordinary claim completely unsupported by evidence and therefore, devoid of credence. However, the virulence of the propagation of this wholly unsupported claim and its continuing use as a rallying call by protesters despite the total lack of supporting evidence is a matter which should concern right thinking members of the community. The making of such unsupported claims poisons the legitimacy of peaceful POEs and abuses the freedom of expression we hold dear in our community. It also unjustifiably erodes the trust which the Police has earned over the years. It is also a disservice to the Police as an efficient force underpinning the foundation of any law-abiding society. These rumours would strike at the foundation of law and order and should not be allowed to prevail.

12.94 According to the Police, in response to the speculations, rumours or false accusations, the Force Public Relations Strategy has been in place with the objectives of (i) proactively enhancing the reputation of the Police; (ii) maintaining public confidence in the Police; and (iii) leveraging support among the public and gaining public support for policing activities. During the recent public disorders, many rumours and false accusations against the Police have been spreading in different media. The Police proactively identifies these issues, seeks clarification and adopts a proactive approach to vet facts and disseminates information via different channels.

²⁶ Metroradio News (2019-09-10). 警稱沒收過涉 831 失蹤人口報告. Retrieved from <https://www.metroradio.com.hk/news/live.aspx?NewsID=20190910135437>

12.95 The response from the Police, FSD, HA and MTRC to refute the unsupported claims, however, was not quick enough. The Police did not make use of the two stand-up briefings at 03:00 and 18:00 on Sunday 1 September to rebut the untrue death rumours, allowing them to fester on the internet, as the rumours were just beginning to spread at that point. The first person to say that no one had died in the incident was the CS at the press conference on the morning of 2 September on a reporter's question. The Police rejected the claim at the Police press conference in the afternoon on the same day. By then, the untrue death rumours had already sprouted. At the Police press conference on 3 September, the police spokesperson firmly stated that the death rumour was fabricated. FSD did not timely explain how and why the number of casualties on FSD records changed from ten to seven. FSD only issued a press statement on 6 September. FSD, HA or MTRC did not hold any joint press conference or issued any press statement to explicitly say that no one had died in the incident. It was not until 10 September did the Police, FSD, HA and MTRC do so at a press conference to state together that the rumours was untrue. However, by then the rumour of the police killing several people inside the station had already gone viral on the internet and purportedly confirmed by unnamed persons. Had the Police acted promptly and taken the lead to organise the joint press conference to refute the rumours, there could have been a chance of stunting these rumours and preventing their spread on the internet, giving the protesters excuses to stage further protests. The protests have continued as a monthly ritual of violent protests outside Prince Edward MTR Station coupled with road blockages and attacks on Mong Kok Police Station.

Recommendations by the IPCC under Section 8(1)(c) of IPCC Ordinance

12.96 As pointed out in the previous Chapter, as protesters started to adopt urban guerrilla tactics by utilising the MTR network to access different locations across the city and block major traffic locations or cause damage to public infrastructure and transport facilities thereat and fled into MTR stations to evade arrest by the Police, it was inevitable that enforcement action would occur inside MTR stations. In the Prince Edward Station Incident, what the protesters had done, i.e. vandalising Mong Kok Station and subsequently engaging in a fight with MTR passengers using weapons, render it necessary for police officers to enter the station to take enforcement action. Nonetheless, it should be reasonably foreseeable by the Police that when an MTR station is closed, target persons are subdued onto the floor with force and arrested, and reporters are not allowed to conduct news coverage thereat, the passengers inside the station might panic, and the public would want to know what has happened inside. Unfounded speculations and rumours would emerge.

12.97 The IPCC is of the view that there are lessons to be learnt from the events of 31 August and recommends that the Police Management conduct the following reviews:

- (a) Review Police strategy on taking enforcement action that involve making a large

number of individual arrests with the use of force;

- (b) Review Police strategy on taking enforcement action inside MTR stations or premises crowded with people;
- (c) Review the coordination among the Police themselves and with other departments in major operations, especially where closure of entrances to a premises is involved, and devise procedures and clarify the chain of command to facilitate efficient communication and coordination work;
- (d) Devise means to enhance communications with the public about enforcement action that the Police has taken or is taking to increase transparency of Police work and to prevent unnecessary, unfounded or malicious speculations and rumours. In this regard, there should be more publicity and public education on Police procedures and practices for dealing with missing persons and death in Hong Kong;
- (e) Given the increase in the use and popularity of social media, enhance the ability of the responsible teams in the Police to monitor the social media and devise procedures and protocols to deal with public concerns and untrue or malicious messages promptly and effectively by using the same media to propagate rebuttal;
- (f) Review how to facilitate the work of reporters in a major operation without causing undue hindrance to Police enforcement action;
- (g) Review the mechanism for the Police to disseminate information to the public to enhance transparency, for instance, PPRB to make timely announcement and update to the public on the situation inside Prince Edward Station to ease public concern and quash speculations or rumours; and
- (h) Review the protocols for taking the lead to organise press conferences with other departments or institutions.

12.98 The above recommendations should be read in conjunction with the IPCC's recommendations in Chapter 6: Police Use of Force in Public Order Policing.