

香港警務處

警察公共關係科

香港灣仔軍器廠街



HONG KONG POLICE FORCE

POLICE PUBLIC

RELATIONS BRANCH

ARSENAL STREET,

WANCHAI, HONG KONG

本署檔號 Our Ref. :
來函檔號 Your Ref. :
電話號碼 Telephone : 2860 6133
圖文傳真 Fax No. : 2200 4300

The Editor
The Australian

26th August 2019

Dear Sir,

I refer to an opinion article by Jillian Kay Melchior published by the Wall Street Journal and carried by your newspaper on August 19 headlined “Demonstrations can no longer be large and lawful”

The Police respect all citizens’ right to assembly and to express their opinion freely. We continue to work with organizers to ensure public order events are able to proceed in an orderly and safe manner. However, it is clear that demonstrations in the past couple of weeks have turned into violent protests. Rioters have hijacked public order events and exploited them to commit violent acts including: assaulting police officers; attacking police stations and facilities; setting fire to material; damaging traffic lights; blocking main roads, harbour crossings and railways; and even hindering the ability of ambulances to respond to life-threatening calls. These disruptive and often violent acts pose a serious threat to public safety and public order. We strongly condemn them.

When deciding whether to issue a Letter of No Objection to organizer of a public event, the Police will conduct an independent safety risk assessment and consider a range of factors such as the proposed location and route, the expected size of the crowd, and whether the organizer has the ability to manage the gathering. Every application is considered on a case-by-case basis. Since June, Police have issued 141 Letters of No Objection in response to 163 notifications. This means that in more than 80 per cent of such cases, organizers have been able to go ahead with their intended demonstrations. The Police would object to applications for holding public order events because of concerns about “public safety”, “public order” and “protection of rights and freedom of others”.

Your accusations that the Police are “seeking to deprive the protest movement of momentum by heightening the legal risk and intimidating Hong Kong people into staying home” and with the “intent to use the lack of permit as an excuse for mass arrests” are totally

unfounded. It also impugns the integrity of officers who seek to ensure, with the assistance of organizers, that public order events pass off in an orderly and safe manner.

When facilitating public order events, it is the responsibility of the Police to ensure public order and public safety. The Police must also safeguard the rights and freedoms of others.

If protesters do not use violence, there would not be any necessity to resort to a lawful use of force to defend ourselves. If protesters are peaceful, rational and orderly, the Police will not and have no reason to intervene.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TSE Chun-chung', written over a large, light-colored oval shape.

(TSE Chun-chung)

Chief Superintendent of Police
Police Public Relations Branch