

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  
Wall Street Journal Online

17<sup>th</sup> August 2019

Dear Sir,

I refer to an opinion article by Jillian Kay Melchior published on August 17 headlined “Hong Kong Authorities Seem to Want an Ugly Sunday; Police make it impossible to hold a protest that is both lawful and large. Is it a pretext for a crackdown?”

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.

The offence of rioting is not unique to Hong Kong and the elements to meet the threshold of such an offence are critically examined, independently, by the Department of Justice. Your accusation that the Police are making unjustified arrests is without foundation, as is your suggestion that there is an abuse of process in issuing Letters of Objection. If organizers disagree with a Police Letter of Objection, they may take the matter forward for independent scrutiny by the Appeal Board.

When deciding whether to issue a Letter of No Objection, 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 102 Letters of No Objection in response to 125 notifications. This means that in more than 80 per cent of such cases, organizers have been able to go ahead with their intended demonstrations.

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. We appeal to all members of the public to restore peaceful, rational and orderly participation in public meetings and processions.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TSE Chun-chung', written over a horizontal line.

( TSE Chun-chung )

Chief Superintendent of Police  
Police Public Relations Branch