

Speech by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Management) Oscar Kwok Yam-shu at the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 9, 2020

Madam President,

I'm Deputy Commissioner Oscar Kwok of the Hong Kong Police Force. I'd like to make a statement in response to the earlier comment about Hong Kong by an NGO.

Hong Kong used to be one of the safest cities in the world, an ideal place to work and live in. Crime rates were extremely low by any international standards. Anyone, even children, young women and the elderly, can venture outside at night without having to worry about being robbed or molested.

All of that changed since June 2019 when a series of public protests turned into rioting across the city. For 8 months, Hong Kong has been held hostage by the rioting mobs with their brand of activism, characterised by their intolerance for views different from their own, and their trademark response to any disagreement -- violence. Mobs have vandalised shops, banks, restaurants, train stations and traffic lights, set fires to buildings, attacked police officers with bricks, petrol bombs and even genuine firearms. They viciously assaulted innocent citizens who opposed them, even proudly showing the attacks online to intimidate the population. Their atrocities now include detonating IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) in public places; setting a man who confronted the vandals on fire; and killing a 70-year-old cleaner with a brick simply because he had the audacity to video them.

This was the nature of the horrible menace that faced innocent Hong Kong citizens, and it was the Hong Kong Police which had the unenviable task of preserving their rights and freedoms which are no less worthy of protection than those claimed by the protestors. In doing so, we became the only force that physically stood in the way of those who sought to extort their demands from the government through mob violence. This was the real reason they are relentless in accusing the police of brutality, as part of a comprehensive effort to vilify the Hong

Kong Police, with the aim of removing it from the equation so that the extortion could be successful.

These violent criminals preached to their followers that "the end justifies the means; that breaking the law to achieve their goals was a noble cause. Police officers are not there to judge whether their proclaimed cause is a just one, or if it even makes sense. We don't have to. We are police officers. Our one and only mission is to find out whether anyone has committed a crime. If someone breaks the law, it is our lawful duty to stop him and arrest him. Whether a cause is altruistic or in fact self-serving is completely irrelevant to us. The law demands that we arrest them. The basic premise of the rule of law is that. No one is above the law. This is why I and the other 30,000 members of the Hong Kong Police have all taken the solemn oath to serve as police officers, without fear of or favour to any person and with malice or ill-will towards none. This is the truth about Hong Kong. Thank you Madam President.

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