

Press release

The IPCC's Serious Complaints Committee will follow up on complaints resulting from Occupy Central and its related activities

(HONG KONG – 15 October 2014) The Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) has understood that there is a video clip captured by the media which appears to show a number of police officers allegedly assaulting a protestor. Due to the high level of public attention on this incident which involves serious allegations, the IPCC has decided to pass any related Reportable Complaints arising from this matter to its Serious Complaints Committee to follow up.

Mr Larry Kwok, Chairman of the IPCC, stated that “IPCC’s main functions are to scrutinize Reportable Complaints fairly and impartially on the basis of evidence, to identify faults or deficiency in police practices and procedures related to any particular Reportable Complaint, and to provide recommendations when appropriate. We have been notified by the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) that they have officially received complaints relating to some police officers allegedly assaulting a protestor. At this stage, our understanding of the incident and our information on the police’s handling of Occupy Central and its related activities are primarily from what has been reported in the media. In order to maintain our impartiality when scrutinizing the related complaints, it is not appropriate for us to express any views or comments about this incident before we have received the complete investigation reports. Nevertheless, if Reportable Complaints do arise from the activities relating to Occupy Central, including this particular incident, the IPCC will scrutinize the investigation reports in a meticulous and thorough manner in accordance with the evidence to ensure fairness and justice to both the complainant and the complainee.”

Mr Larry Kwok continued that “The IPCC has been closely following the developments of Occupy Central and its related activities. The Council also held a special in-house meeting last Wednesday to discuss the particulars of the follow-up work. During the meeting, some Council Members who have been on-site at Occupy Central and its related activities shared their observations. The Council Members understand that the public is deeply concerned with the complaints arising from Occupy Central and its related activities and that some complaints involve serious allegations. Therefore, the IPCC has decided that all Reportable Complaints arising from this incident will be reviewed and monitored by the Serious Complaints Committee. The IPCC will closely follow up the progress of the investigations with the Police with a view to ensuring a thorough, fair and expeditious investigation of the complaints.

Unlike normal complaint cases where CAPO submits an investigation report to the IPCC after their investigation has been concluded, CAPO must report to the IPCC on the progress of their investigations of complaints that are handled by the Serious Complaints Committee on a monthly basis. After receiving the investigation reports relating to such complaints, the Vetting Team of the IPCC Secretariat and the Serious Complaints Committee of the IPCC will both review and monitor the cases at the same time. Accordingly, complaints that are handled by the Serious Complaints Committee are handled more expeditiously than normal cases, which must first be reviewed by the IPCC Secretariat's Vetting Team before being sent to the Council Members for consideration. Additionally, the IPCC will request CAPO to establish a special team to handle all cases under this category, and if necessary, to allocate extra manpower to assist with the handling of these cases.

Due to the large amount of information and video clips being shared in the public domain, the IPCC has recommended CAPO to consider appealing to citizens who possess such information and video clips to provide the materials to CAPO in order to assist with their investigations into such cases. These materials will also assist the IPCC when reviewing the related investigation reports.

He concluded, "Finally, I hope that things will be back to normal soon, and that police officers, protestors, and citizens will all stay safe."

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Notes to editor:

About the Independent Police Complaints Council

The Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) is an independent body established under the Independent Police Complaints Council Ordinance (IPCCO) (Cap. 604) to observe, monitor and review the handling and investigation of reportable complaints (RCs) against the Police by the Commissioner of Police (CP). The IPCC has become a statutory body since the commencement of IPCCO on 1 June 2009.