Behind the Protests
The Truth of Hong Kong

A Special Edition published by the International Police Association (Hong Kong Section) in 2020
The International Police Association (IPA) is a friendship organisation for members of the police force, whether in employment or retired, and without distinction as to rank, position, gender, race, language or religion. We have around 360,000 members in nearly 70 nations or regions and are represented on 5 continents.

Our motto is 'Servo per Amikeco' - Service Through Friendship'

We are a non-governmental organisation with aims to create and strengthen bonds of friendship between members of the police service, promote international cooperation in social, cultural and professional fields, encourage peaceful co-existence between peoples and preservation of world peace, improve the public image of the police service and enhance recognition of the IPA by international bodies.

The content of this publication is strictly for the purpose of reporting current events and is not for any commercial purpose.
Hong Kong is facing an unprecedented challenge as anti-extradition bill protests have spiralled and resulted in the city’s worst social and political crisis in decades. Since June 2019, the people of Hong Kong have been living under the shadow of violent protests that have extended to almost every neighbourhood of the city. The Hong Kong Police Force has had to mobilise public order resources in order to maintain law and order. Most alarmingly, rioters have sought to escalate their violence through the use of firearms and home-made, yet sophisticated, remote controlled improvised explosive devices to launch life-threatening attacks on Police officers.
With the support of the Hong Kong Police, the International Police Association (Hong Kong Section) has compiled this special edition booklet in order to provide a fair and accurate overview of the ongoing situation in Hong Kong and the Force’s response, known as Operation TIDERIDER. Given the scope and volume of malicious misinformation circulated in the media and in online forums to discredit the Hong Kong Police and jeopardise operational capability, this booklet also serves to set the record straight and contribute to the effort of restoring public confidence, order and safety, a common purpose shared by all law enforcement agencies worldwide.
500+

INJURED POLICE OFFICERS
Rioters have attacked Police officers on and off duty with dangerous and even deadly weapons like bows, arrows, petrol bomb and corrosive substances.

1,000+ PROTESTS
Many public gatherings have descended into chaos and violence.

200+ DAYS
Social unrest has gone on in Hong Kong.
1,250+ DAMAGED SHOPS
Rioters have vandalised shops, restaurants and banks they deemed unsupportive of their own views.

2,000+ INJURIES
 Civilians, Police officers, reporters, and protestors suffered varying injuries.

150+ DAMAGED SUBWAY STATIONS
Rioters have wreaked havoc in mass transit railway (MTR) stations.
Starting from 9 June 2019, a series of large-scale public events were held in response to the now withdrawn extradition bill. Since then, over 1,000 protests, demonstrations and rallies have been held with many descending into chaos and violence, which can best be described as being nothing short of riots. These public events were triggered by the discontent of some sections of society over the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government’s proposed amendment of the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance in early 2019. In response to public sentiments, on 9 July 2019 the Chief Executive announced the stoppage of the proposed bill and in an address to the public stated that “the bill is dead”.

Despite this halting of the proposed amendment, protests against the government continued and the demands of protesters extended to include the resignation of the Chief Executive, unconditional release of arrested protesters, the cessation of any prosecution proceedings against them and the sanctioning of the Police for alleged use of excessive force to restore public order. The “battle cry” heard in all protests, and in graffiti plastered throughout the city now, is “Five Demands, Not One Less”, two of the five being the retraction of the classification of violent protests as "riots" and an amnesty for all arrested protestors.

The Chief Executive has repeatedly dismissed such demands as being unreasonable and detrimental to the rule of law and independence of the judiciary, core values that Hong Kong people have always taken pride in. Under the pretext of fighting for these demands, radical protesters resorted to violent and unlawful acts which were not only beyond the tenet of peaceful protests but also constituted a serious threat to the life and property of the general public.
On July 1, 2019, the anniversary of establishment of the HKSAR, hundreds of protesters stormed and ransacked the Legislative Council Complex.
Spreading Hatred

3,100+

POLICE OFFICERS AND THEIR FAMILIES DOXXED
Personal data has been maliciously leaked online, a practice known as “doxxing”

33 ARRESTS
Offenders are apprehended for incitement to commit various crimes online

100

REPORTED CASES
Disputes at “Lennon Walls” have descended into street fights and violent clashes with multiple injuries
INCITEMENT OF ANTI-POLICE HATRED

“Anti-Police hatred haunts Hong Kong”

Since June 2019, the internet has been filled with a huge amount of anti-Police hate messages urging netizens to launch vicious attacks on Police officers on and off duty. Telegram, an encrypted instant messaging mobile application, and LIHKG, a Hong Kong online forum often described as a local version of “Reddit”, have been used intensively and extensively to spread such messages of hate and to incite violence. For instance, it is not uncommon to see infographics and tutorials on how to inflict fatal attacks on Police officers and what kind of knife is the sharpest and thus most effective in slashing a Police officer. Worse still, there are also Telegram groups discussing and planning brutal attacks on Police officers and facilities. It is a common tactic used by those with ill intentions to fan hatred against the Police and apportion blame for the deteriorating socio-economic situation that is also developing on the actions of the Police. Anti-Police hatred haunts Hong Kong and has filled the minds of many youngsters.
Doxxing as a Psychological Weapon

Since the protests began, over 3,100 Police officers and their family members have fallen victim to the malicious leakage of personal data such as photos, identity card numbers, car registration numbers, home addresses and telephone numbers, in a practice known as “doxxing”. Such personal data has been widely circulated in anti-Police social media platforms and subsequently used by persons with ill intentions, for example, misusing personal data to apply for loans, order food delivery, and register for organ donations, etc. Numerous officers and their family members have been bullied on the internet, received nuisance calls and even death threats and in the “real world” have been harassed in person and had their property, including private cars, damaged.

On multiple occasions, Police married quarters were attacked by rioters who smashed windows with bricks and terrorized the families living there, many with young children at home during the attacks. As a result, many Police officers and their families were forced to move out of their homes and take refuge in temporary housing.

Police married quarters are sprayed with insulting words, “Curse your wife and children”, “Die”, and “Good men won’t be cops”.
“Sticky Note” Wall

As a prevalent means of expressing their opinions, many protesters paste sticky notes and propaganda onto the walls of public places like subways and footbridges. Such spaces are often referred to as “Lennon Walls”. While the Police respect those who express their views peacefully by writing and pasting removable notes, many ill-intentioned protesters have exploited these “Lennon Walls” and put up posters containing personal data of Government officials and Police officers in an attempt to incite harassment of the same. There have been as many as 100 reported cases where disputes between people with different political views have descended into street fights and even violent assaults. The Police have had to take law enforcement actions in order to combat the violence associated with these “Lennon Walls”. 
Escalating Violence & Taking The Law Into Their Own Hands

HK$ 40 million+
Estimated repair cost for the damaged Legislative Council Building

20,000+
METRES$^2$ ROADS
Bricks have been dug up from pavement, where rioters also set street fires

700+
SETS OF TRAFFIC LIGHTS
Rioters have inflicted extensive damage to road safety infrastructure

52,000
METRES RAILINGS
Roadside railings have been dismantled and removed by rioters

14 DAYS
A key harbour crossing connecting Kowloon and HK Island, Cross-Harbour Tunnel, was blocked as a result of serious wreckage
Escalating Violence

“Turning Dangerous Rhetoric into Reality”

SEVEN DETECTED CASES
Home-made bombs and dangerous explosives have been seized at various locations in the city.

THREE DETECTED CASES
Genuine firearms, including 3 semi-automatic pistols and one AR15 Assault Rifle, were found during Police raids.

HK$ 500 million+
Estimated repair cost for the 150+ MTR stations damaged.
Hijacking of Public Events

In early June and July 2019, anti-government protests usually began in a peaceful manner before eventually descending into disorder. In August 2019 radical protestors started to equip themselves with personal protective equipment and make use of petrol bombs which were thrown indiscriminately at Police officers, crowds and on public and private property. On 31 August 2019 alone 100 petrol bombs were used by protestors.
Attacks on Innocent Citizens

Whilst demanding to exercise their right of self-expression, rioters have shown that they are not willing to tolerate any expression of views opposed to their own and this has seen innocent citizens who hold differing views attacked and even resulted in one death.

On 13 November 2019, a seventy-year-old man died as a result of sustaining serious head injuries after being struck in the head by a brick thrown by protestors.

In one incident at the Hong Kong International Airport on 13 August 2019, whilst protestors were attempting to disrupt the operation of the airport, two Mainland visitors were seized by an angry mob and had their limbs fastened with cable ties before being repeatedly punched and kicked.

A Mainland Chinese visitor was assaulted and publicly shamed by a mob at the Hong Kong International Airport.
Radicals took the law into their own hands and assaulted others with dissenting views.

Radical protestors tied a Mainland Chinese reporter’s hands with cables and beat him up brutally at the Hong Kong International Airport on 13 August 2019.
On 11 November 2019, a man who had remonstrated with protesters who were damaging a rail station in Ma On Shan was doused with flammable liquid and set on fire thereby sustaining third degree burns on more than 40% of his body. He was sent to hospital in critical condition and was hospitalised for months.

The victim has been left with permanent skin and organ damages.

Source: Elizabeth Quat Facebook page
A woman was sprayed with black paint in the face and poured with liquid by rioters.

The sight of rioters taking the law into their own hands and torturing innocent people with dissenting views is traumatising for Hong Kong people.
Vandalising Banks and Shops

Since August 2019, the sight of rioters setting buildings on fire, vandalising shops, damaging public and private property and even looting, particularly premises with links to the Mainland or known to be supportive of the government, has unfortunately become a routine sight especially during weekends and this has caused widespread public fear in what was previously one of the safest and most stable societies in the world.

Rioters smashed glass and inflicted extensive damage to a shopping mall.
Rioters trashed shops that they deemed unsupportive of their unlawful acts.
Physical Attacks on Police

To date more than 2,000 people, including over 500 Police officers, have sustained injuries and one elderly man has been sadly killed during the protests. It is now not uncommon for radical protestors to attack Police officers on or off duty and to routinely make use of an array of offensive weapons to do so. In mid-October 2019, for the first time, a radio-controlled improvised explosive device was used to target officers in the busy district of Mongkok. In one of the most appalling cases so far, a rioter slashed an on-duty officer in the neck with a boxcutter in a blatant attempt to take his life.
An officer was slashed in the neck by a rioter with a boxcutter.

An inspector was attacked by rioters with a slingshot and steel balls, which led to broken teeth and bloody mouth injuries.

An officer sustained serious burns after suffering acid attacks at the hands of rioters, which left him with permanent scars.
During a violent protest outside the Legislative Council Complex in June 2019, a constable was brutally beaten up by rioters with metal poles, bricks and other weapons, sustaining critical injuries.

Other incidents have included rioters throwing corrosive liquids on officers, with one sustaining third-degree burns and having to undergo a skin graft. During the unlawful occupation of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) an officer serving with the Force Media Liaison Cadre was hit by an arrow in his leg and whilst he thankfully survived, he or one of the members of the media he was with, could easily have been killed.

A media liaison officer was struck in his calf by an arrow shot by rioters.
Rioters threw corrosive fluid at a group of officers.
A frequently used tactic of the protestors has been their regular activities to disrupt Hong Kong’s transport system. To achieve this, they have erected barricades on main roads, including Nathan Road which connects the busier districts in Kowloon, damaged traffic lights and hampered the functioning of the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) which has been totally or partially shut down on numerous occasions as rioters have rampaged through underground and overland stations, destroyed key facilities, intimidated staff and tampered with railway tracks. Such activity has often been aimed at the rush hour in an effort to force ordinary citizens into being part of a work strike.

Black-clad protestors staged unlawful largescale protests at the airport, leading to cancellation of hundreds of flights and paralysis of air traffic.

A Caucasian tourist was on her knees bowing to protestors and begging them to let her go and take her flight.
On 13 August 2019, hundreds of protesters converged on Hong Kong’s International Airport with the intention of impressing their demands on visitors arriving in and departing from Hong Kong. The large-scale unlawful assembly in the airport resulted in travellers being unable to depart and in the cancellation or re-scheduling of hundreds of flights thereby causing immense inconvenience to innocent travellers, financial loss to the aviation industry and reputational loss to the HKSAR as a reliable aviation hub.

On 11 November 2019, protesters dropped objects from a bridge within the campus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) onto the Tolo Highway and East Rail Line thereby causing severe disruption to the transport system linking much of the New Territories and Kowloon for three consecutive days. Such destructive and dangerous actions endangered both the lives and livelihoods of many ordinary citizens.
Paralyzing the Transport System
Since 9 June 2019, the Police have arrested over 7,600 people, including more than 3,000 students or about 40% of the total. Alarmingly, since the commencement of the new school year in September, there has been an increasing trend in the number of young students arrested. Some protestors exploited impressionable teenagers to commit crime and advance their ulterior political agendas. A place of learning is supposed to be a nurturing ground for talent but unfortunately certain universities have been turned into battlefields where rioters have manufactured weapons and taken refuge.
Between 11 and 16 November 2019, several thousand protesters occupied the campus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and committed wanton destruction of the campus and its railway station thereby forcing the closure of the East Rail Line and Tolo Highway. Hundreds of rioters, including CUHK students, took control of the campus and turned it into a manufacturing base for petrol bombs, with a sophisticated production line consisting of makers filling glass bottles with petroleum and different chemicals and capping them with ignition fuses. A large amount of chemicals including sulphuric acids and nitric acids, were stolen from the university’s laboratories. Rioters used petrol bombs and other types of weapons such as bows and arrows to attack Police officers when they attempted to restore order.

In a bid to peacefully resolve the situation, the Police and the Vice-Chancellor and President of CUHK entered into a discussion to secure a resolution agreement. However, the resulting agreement was rejected by the protesters gathered on the campus and on 16 November 2019, after a 5-day long occupation, the police regained control of the campus bridge over the Tolo Highway and East Rail Line. The university’s management made a report to the Police to seek assistance in clearing the campus. As a result, protesters left the campus before the entrance of the police who seized 3,900 petrol bombs that had been abandoned there.
On 5 December 2019, on a hillside near the Shing Mun Reservoir in Shing Mun Country Park the Police found 59 bottles, containing 137 litres of assorted chemicals which were suspected to have been stolen from laboratories in CUHK.

Following events at CUHK similar occupations occurred on the campuses of other universities across Hong Kong, the most serious being that at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) which was occupied by approximately 1,000 rioters between 18 and 29 November 2019. Likewise, the campus was used as a weapon factory where a large amount of lethal weapons like bows, arrows and even home-made bombs were used. Videos filmed from within the campus showed rioters practising throwing petrol bombs in a drained swimming pool and shooting arrows from a vantage point. While the university became a powder keg, rioters also set fire to the adjacent major transport interchange and forced the closure of the Cross Harbour Tunnel thereby causing parts of the city to be gridlocked for days.

A university, supposed to be a breeding ground for talents, has turned into a battlefield for rioters
Given the large number of under-age people inside the campus, the police adopted a prudent, humane and flexible approach to resolve the situation and formed a working group consisting of different stakeholders including PolyU management and community leaders. Members of the group subsequently entered the campus to implore the protesters within to leave peacefully. Eventually 810 people were arrested on leaving the campus, some after voluntarily surrendering and others who tried to break out. A total of 318 youngsters exited the campus but were not arrested on the spot, instead they had their ID card and personal details recorded before being released, as per a flexible arrangement to cater to the well-being of under-age protesters. Those with medical needs were given first aid by qualified personnel and were not arrested on the spot but only had their personal particulars recorded by Police.

All these flexible arrangements were intended to facilitate a peaceful and humane solution to the crisis. Contrary to media and online reports, protesters were never deterred or prohibited from exiting the campus. Police always appealed to those who were holed up to leave in an orderly manner, with assistance from the school’s staff and professionals like academics and social workers. The occupation of PolyU lasted 13 days and upon its conclusion 4,296 petrol bombs, 671 bottles of chemicals and 622 weapons were seized.
In a nutshell, adding up the 4,000+ petrol bombs seized from PolyU, the almost 4,000 seized from CUHK and those from their vicinities, the Police have collected as many as 10,000 petrol bombs and foiled the attacks that such weapons were intended to be used in, which would have caused serious damage and posed incalculable risks to the city’s population.
A large self-made crossbow is seized.
Paralysis of Major Transport Routes

Since both CUHK and PolyU are located adjacent to major transport networks, namely Tolo Highway and Cross Harbour Tunnel respectively, the occupation of campuses has interfered with the operation of such key infrastructure and caused serious disruption to traffic and travel. The former is a major route catering to as many as 100,000 vehicles daily and connecting several key districts in the New Territories while the latter is the most-used harbour crossing bridging Kowloon and Hong Kong Island and catering to 120,000 vehicles daily.
Masked rioters set up barricades and threw debris from the overhead bridge near the CUHK onto the Tolo Highway, posing a grave threat to passing vehicles. As a result, the route was closed for almost a week. In contrast, the Cross Harbour Tunnel was sealed off for 15 days as rioters set up barricades and set fire to toll booths. This caused tremendous disruption to the everyday life of ordinary citizens and jeopardised emergency services.

A rioter was aiming his bow and arrow at passing vehicles underneath a bridge connected to the CUHK.
Firearms And Bombs Seizures

Back on 7 June 2019, the very first petrol bomb was thrown outside the Police Headquarters, which then caused a public outcry. For a law-abiding citizen who had been accustomed to the safety and stability of Hong Kong, that one single petrol bomb certainly touched a nerve. Nonetheless, seven months later, petrol bombs have become the most common weapon used by rioters to target Police officers and Police premises. Subsequent Police operations have seized a large number of firearms and explosives and foiled plots to use such in attacks akin to those observed in terrorist atrocities seen throughout the world. A few alarming cases are highlighted here.
As many as 4000 petrol bombs were seized on PolyU campus.
Raid on Industrial Building

In one of the first cases involving explosives seized, Police officers raided an industrial premises on 1 August 2019 and found explosives, materials for making petrol bombs, bows and arrows, as well as essential oils containing cannabis-derived substances. One woman and seven men, including the banned Hong Kong National Party’s convenor, Chan Ho-tin, were arrested for possessing explosives and offensive weapons.
Radio-controlled improvised explosive devices

For the first time during the ongoing social unrest, a radio-controlled improvised explosive device was detonated in the busy district of Mongkok on the night of 14 October, 2019, in one of the most blatant, pre-meditated attempts to seriously injure or even kill Police officers on duty. The home-made bomb was planted in a flowerbed and was detonated as Police officers parked their vehicles and alighted to clear rioters’ roadblocks just 10 to 15 meters away. At that time, apart from Police officers, many reporters, protesters and bystanders, who had no inkling about the imminent danger that they were subjected to, were in the vicinity.

Bomb Disposal Officer spoke at a press conference about the radio-controlled improvised explosive device that was detonated in the busy district of Mongkok.
Seizure of Home-made Bombs outside Wah Yan College

On the morning of 9 December 2019, Police Bomb Disposal Officers defused two large improvised explosive devices outside Wah Yan College, in Happy Valley. The devices were found to be complete, fully functional and radio controlled and could be activated by using a mobile phone. They contained a total of 10 kilograms of high explosives consisting of two different types. A primary high explosive, to serve as a detonator and booster and a secondary high explosive based upon ammonium nitrate. The devices also contained large quantities of nails which would have serve as shrapnel upon detonation. Both devices had been constructed to serve a single purpose, to kill and to maim people and given the quantity of the explosives involved their use would have resulted in a large number of fatalities.

Seizure of TATP

During the second half of 2019, experts of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Bureau were turned out for a record high number of cases involving explosives. On several occasions, TATP, triacetone triperoxide, an extremely unstable and dangerous synthetic explosive, has been seized in schools and residential areas. For instance, two secondary school students, one aged 17 and the other 18, brought TATP to their school in Ma On Shan, New Territories, on 27 November. They were arrested for “Possession of Explosives”. One even had an empty cartridge in his possession and was further arrested for “Possessing Arm and Ammunition without a license”. This alarming case shows that young people with little awareness of the dangers posed to themselves or others have been caught up in the movement without really thinking matters through.
Arrest of a Syndicate for Possession of Firearms and Ammunition

On 8 December 2019, the Police mounted an operation at multiple locations across the city which resulted in the arrest of eight males and three females who were subsequently charged with “Conspiracy to Wound”, “Possession of Firearm without License” and “Possession of Instrument fit for unlawful purpose”. During the operation a large quantity of weapons including a semi-automatic pistol, 106 live rounds, three daggers, one knife, nine retractable batons, and fire crackers were seized. It is believed that the seized items were intended to be used during a large scale public order event on 8 December 2019 on Hong Kong Island and to frame the Police.

A large amount of riot gear and raw ingredients for making bombs are seized.
Fake News

300+ CLARIFICATIONS AND REBUTTALS

The Police actively rebut fake news and false rumours on social media.

Online rumours alleged an undercover police officer of throwing a petrol bomb. But the truth is a rioter, armed with an air gun, threw a petrol bomb from a footbridge, as captured by the media.

Online tabloids accused Police officers of stealing cans of coca cola from a shop. But the truth is the Police officers were holding portable fire extinguishers. (online photo)
Spreading of Misinformation
“Fake news and false reports used to fool the public and foil Police efforts”

Apart from physical violence, misinformation has also been weaponised during the protests with radicals using the media, social media and other internet platforms to spread malicious rumours and misinformation to sow the seeds of grievance in society and to slander the Police. Such rumours are characterised by two common features: anonymity and inconsistency. In several cases, people claiming to be protestors have made allegations of criminality against the Police to the media, often supported by politicians or lawyers. Almost as a rule, such complainants refuse to reveal their identities when making these accusations and are reluctant to make formal reports for authorities to follow up properly.

The Hong Kong Police respects freedom of the press, their rights to record the social unrest in the city and will facilitate such as far as possible. While the media are understandably interested in documenting the alleged wrongdoings of authorities and are to act as a check and balance against the same, there have been numerous reports that ignore the intentional acts of law-breakers and violent protestors. While many such reports accuse Police officers of using excessive force, they rarely if ever mention what these protestors did and were doing before showing police action captured in that one snap shot of what is claimed to be “excessive”. It is very unfortunate that, in general, many media and online reports use short and edited videos that are taken out of context and fail to show the full picture of how radical protestors’ use of extreme violence has necessitated a justifiable Police response.

An altar was set up for the two deceased youngsters, whom protestors falsely and maliciously accused the Police of killing.

Rioters built barricades outside a carpark where a youngster had fallen to his death. His misfortune was used to malign the Police.
58 PRESS CONFERENCES

The Police launched the landmark 4 pm press conference in August 2019 to disseminate the most updated information to the public.

Malicious Sexual Assaults Allegations

Another focus of false rumours and allegations are of sexual assault and harassment by the Police. There have been several false complaints of Police officers molesting, sexually Assaulting, or even gang raping arrested people, both male and female, on the internet and in tabloids. Such claims, however, were mostly made by people who refused to come forward to make such allegations officially to the police or other law enforcement agencies or even to reveal their identity, leaving the Police with no way of following up or verifying the authenticity of the reports. In many cases, the Police proactively looked into such allegations using information reported in the media and found no evidence to lend any credibility to the complaints: CCTV footage or other official records totally discredited the complainants raised in the media. The investigations that have been possible have shown the maliciousness and intention to malign the Police as well as the reluctance of those making and propagating such complaints to be held accountable. Notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence to rebut such allegations, sections of the media and the public have ignored the facts and continued to propound the baseless allegations as truth.
Rebuttals and Clarifications

Since August a daily 4pm press conference has been held to proactively disclose key information about police actions such as arrests and the use of force during operations. In response to widely-circulated online rumours, the Police Public Relations Branch makes timely rebuttals and clarifications to set the record straight and to prevent the public from being misled and misguided by false information. The Force strives to remain transparent and actively engages with members of the public by means of stand-up press briefings, social media posts, videos, infographics, SMS messages and press releases. Furthermore, the Force has also actively liaised with different news platforms and social media companies to help them identify and eventually address and remove false content. As a case in point: CNN ran an erroneous title “Police use petrol bombs and water cannons against Hong Kong Protestors” on their international news site in August. Following liaison, CNN issued an apology and published a clarification online. This shows the prevalence of misinformation and how Police’s efforts can have some tangible results. All these concerted efforts are to educate the public about the importance of accessing accurate and most up-to-date information.
"A doctored screen capture of a French movie has been used to smear the Police."
Dear Sirs,

Following my conversation with Inspector Billy Wong, I wish to inform you that on Sunday night Hong Kong time, a headline was temporarily displayed on the CNN website saying “Police use petrol bombs and water cannons against Hong Kong Protestors”. This headline was erroneous and was later replaced.

We are now investigating how this mistake happened.

CNN is working hard to ensure that reporting of the Hong Kong protests is fair and balanced at all times. Therefore, we wish to apologise for this error.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Clark
Vice President and Bureau Chief
CNN Hong Kong
Inter-departmental Efforts to Counter Death Rumours

The most striking example of misinformation is the widely-circulated rumour alleging that the Force has covered up the deaths of protestors following violent clashes in the Prince Edward MTR station on 31 August 2019. After committing extensive acts of vandalism and launching vicious attacks on Police officers with petrol bombs and various offensive weapons, masked rioters took refuge in the underground station in an escape attempt. As Police officers entered the station to make arrests, many rioters put up violent struggles, necessitating officers’ use of force in response. The whole arrest operation, with participation of staff of the railway’s operator, MTRC, and ambulance men of the Fire Services Department, was all documented by CCTV cameras. However, certain tabloids, online media, and even legislators fabricated stories of officers murdering and covering up the deaths of protestors.

The MTRC released screen captures of CCTV footage and relevant Government departments repeatedly and categorically rejected such accusations, including through an inter-departmental press conference to dispel public misunderstanding. Nonetheless, reports of such “fake news” still persist in some local media and online platforms. The same hosts have also sought to sensationalise recent cases of youth suicides and accused the Force of murdering the deceased and concealing the true causes of their deaths.
Fabrication of Murder Rumours

Another case in point is the death of a 22-year-old university student who fell to his death in a car park as Police officers were dispersing radical and violent protestors nearby. The Police have categorically rejected allegations in some tabloids and online forums accusing the police operation of leading directly to his death and also caused unnecessary suffering to the family of the deceased. To emphasise the point, during multiple press briefings and social media posts, the Police have explained in detail the lack of suspicious circumstances surrounding his death while the car park’s management company has released CCTV footage of the moments leading up to his misfortunate accident that showed him being alone at the time.

Another high-profile death during the ongoing unrest is the suicide of a 15-year-old female student in September who was found drowned in the sea. Since the deceased’s body was retrieved, there have been relentless but groundless rumours accusing Police officers of murdering the teenager and dumping her body. Worse still, netizens circulated a large amount of personal information of the deceased and her family, leading to harassment and nuisance telephone calls targeting the deceased’s mother. This has compelled her to go on a local TV news channel to appeal to netizens to stop speculating about her daughter’s misfortune as she believed it was indeed a suicide given her mental health record.
Police Actions And Strategies

To tackle the current protests, especially the violence used by the mostly young protesters, the Hong Kong Police has adopted both a hard and soft approach, exercising restraint and adhering to its long standing guidelines and regulations on the use of force.
Use of Force

The Hong Kong Police is a professional law enforcement agency with extensive experience and capability in the handling of large-scale public events. The Force conducts impartial assessments on all public order events and deploys manpower to facilitate events, ensure public safety and minimize the impact of events on other members of the public and road users.

Whilst seeking to facilitate all peaceful and legal events, the Force maintains the capability to interdict events that descend into violence and pose a risk to life and property. In recent months when radical protesters have set fire to subway stations, local shops, roads, government buildings and police stations, thrown bricks and petrol bombs and corrosive liquid at police officers and members of the public, particularly those with different political views to their own, the Force has been required to exercise its ability to restore order and has sought to do so in line with its existing use of force protocols.
Faced with ever escalating violence used by rioters, the Force has continued to use the minimum and appropriate level of force necessary to restore order. Contrary to allegations made against it, the Force has not initiated any of the violent clashes but has instead only responded to unprovoked attacks. Whilst doing so it has made use of crowd control tactics and equipment widely used internationally and has been noticeably restrained in its use of such when one considers the scale of violence and numbers of rioters frontline officers are confronted by. As soon as a situation is brought under control, the necessity to use force ceases.
Anti-Violence Hotline

Events in recent months have left many people in Hong Kong society with trepidation over their personal safety and in order to enable and encourage them to report crime, the Force launched the anti-violence hotline through which members of the public can submit photos and videos to it and thereby play a part in helping the Force to restore law and order.

Thanks to the support of the public, since its launch, the Force has received more than 970,000 messages from concerned citizens regarding the illegal acts of rioters, for further investigation.

Public Support

Over the course of the protests the Force has received overwhelming public support and appreciation for its efforts to uphold law and order. Such support has come from all walks of life and has sustained the Force’s commitment to its vision that Hong Kong be one of the safest and most stable societies in the world. Several largescale public rallies in support of Police’s law enforcement actions have been held, with the most well-attended one drawing 476,000 people. All Police stations have been inundated with thank-you cards and other acts of gratitude and appreciation from members of the public.
Rebuilding Public Trust

During the time that these protests have been going on, numerous false allegations have been made against the Hong Kong Police and regretfully some members of the public have been misled through disinformation they have read or seen in the media or online. This has resulted in the long-standing reputation of the Force being seriously tarnished. Recognising that the Force and public must stand together to keep Hong Kong safe the police are committed to rebuilding public trust and confidence and aim to achieve such through continued transparency and by keeping the public well informed of the reasoning behind police actions using the following strategies:

(a) Promptly rebut all false allegations and misinformation against the police;

(b) Increase the transparency of police work;

(c) Enhance police professionalism and sensitivity; and

(d) Strengthen existing and explore new communication channels and engagement platforms with the public.
In conclusion, the protests originally arose from a proposed amendment to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and following its withdrawal have continued for over nine months, during which time radical protesters’ violence has reached alarming levels, plunging Hong Kong into a chaotic and unnerving situation.
The Hong Kong Police Force is now not only battling physical violence, but also the underlying notion of an acceptance of lawlessness in society as some rioters and others in the community advocate that breaking the law in order to force their so-called ideals is acceptable and justifiable. The democratic ideals, said to be the basis of their five demands, have long faded into reckless and ruthless violence against people and property, resulting in the severe erosion of the freedom of everyone else in Hong Kong society, the exact opposite of what the rioters claim they are fighting for. So far, over 7,600 people have been arrested but no death has been linked to the actions of the Police. This shows officers have been extremely retrained in using force in face of an increasing number of deadly attacks.
This special edition booklet is meant to give a fair account of the truth of Hong Kong’s situation to law enforcement agencies around the world. History repeats itself. What is happening in Hong Kong has already been seen in other parts of the world where radical protestors deploy similar tactics as aforementioned to discredit authorities and meanwhile, inflict extensive damage to life and property in their own communities, all under the pretext of ulterior demands.

Despite the disturbances, the fundamentals and institutional foundations of the HKSAR’s economy and society remain robust. The members of the Hong Kong Police Force, will stand firm and stand tall to protect the rule of law, a common value shared by many law enforcement agencies globally. During Operation TIDERIDER, the officers have once again demonstrated unswerving professionalism, loyalty and perseverance in protecting the city and are more than ever united and committed to embody the new Force motto: “Serving Hong Kong with Honour, Duty and Loyalty”.
Behind the Protests

The Truth of Hong Kong