

**Joint Statement of the Law Society of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Bar Association in Response to Personal Attacks on a Judge**

1. The Law Society of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Bar Association strongly condemn the recent unjustified, derogatory and personal attacks against a judge made in electronic media arising out of her judgment and sentencing in a criminal case concerning the riot in Mongkok in 2016.
2. Disparaging and abusive comments on the judge and her family which have nothing whatsoever to do with the correctness of the judgment or the appropriateness of the sentence serve no useful purpose but divert attention away from the real issues which should be addressed in any public discourse. The effect of the comments is to erode public confidence in the judiciary and the due process of the law. They may even constitute contempt of court.
3. While there are restrictions on commenting about ongoing cases, we strongly support the freedom and rights of members of the public to discuss and express their opinions, or even criticisms, concerning judicial decisions and rulings once issued. However, abusive comments or criticisms amounting to personal attacks on the judge are entirely inappropriate and unacceptable.
4. The Law Society of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Bar Association urge members of the public to express their views in a manner conducive to rational debate. Personal attacks on judges have no place in rational discourse and debate that is a hallmark of a civil society.

Dated: 4 July 2018

LAW SOCIETY OF HONG KONG

HONG KONG BAR ASSOCIATION