

Statement of the Hong Kong Bar Association (HKBA)
on the Use of Force by the Hong Kong Police on 12 June 2019

The afternoon of 12 June 2019 saw clashes between the police force and protesters in the vicinity of the government headquarters. The HKBA strongly condemns any act of violence perpetrated by any party.

The HKBA notes with grave concern video footages showing that the police appeared to have acted in disregard of the safety and well-being of protesters and frontline journalists covering the protest. These acts include the deployment of wholly unnecessary force against largely unarmed protesters who did not appear to pose any immediate threat to the police or the public at large. Such force could also be seen to be directed at persons clearly identifiable as journalists. In these cases the police may well have over-stepped its lawful powers in maintaining public order.

At the same time, the HKBA urges the public to continue to exercise patience and to advocate their views tempered with rationality.

The government must also seriously question itself as to whether its current proposals to amend the Fugitives Offenders Ordinance and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance could possibly be worth pursuing in light of the recent unrest and instability in our society. Given the clear and plain opposition recently voiced by such a significant portion of the public, any responsible administration which sees itself to be accountable to the public should see the necessity to pause, engage in dialogue with the community and reconsider its stance.

HONG KONG BAR ASSOCIATION
13 June 2019