

MAC Expresses Serious Concerns over Hong Kong Government's Face Mask Ban under the Emergency Regulations Ordinance and Urges the Taiwan Public to be Aware of Related Prohibitions and Avoid Demonstration Sites

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The government expressed serious concerns over the Hong Kong government's announcement today (October 4, 2019) of the face mask ban, which would be enacted on October 5 this year. We are aware of the misgivings of the Hong Kong people over regulations banning face masks under the Emergency Regulations Ordinance and worry this action will infringe personal safety, freedom of expression, human rights, and the rule of law in Hong Kong. In addition, the decision to invoke the anti-mask law not only will impact Hong Kong's international image and status as the financial center, but also arouse considerable concern over the arbitrary conduct in the name of "emergency powers" by the Hong Kong government in the future.

Taiwan once again called on the Hong Kong government to face up to the current situation in Hong Kong. Controversial approaches will only intensify and create antagonism, if not further entangle the matter at hand. The best solution lies in the core values of human rights and freedom. The Hong Kong government should duly respond to the expectations of the public so that social stability can be restored as soon as possible.

The MAC reminded Taiwan nationals, who have plans to visit Hong Kong or transit in Hong Kong en route to mainland China, to be aware of the various prohibitions in force after the emergency law is invoked. Travelers should avoid covering their face (with visors, masks, etc.) without religious, health, or other reasonable explanation. They should also steer clear of demonstration sites for the sake of personal safety and to avoid inadvertent infringement of laws which may result in facing arrest or fines by the

government. If experience trouble in Hong Kong, please contact MAC representative office in Hong Kong's (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office) 24-hour emergency hotline (852-6143-9012) for assistance.