

**Independent Committee in relation to the
Fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po**

WITNESS STATEMENT OF

CHENG KA-CHUN

I, CHENG Ka-chun, Superintendent of Police, Hong Kong Police Force, of No. 302 Wo Yi Hop Road, Kwai Chung, Hong Kong do say as follows:-

1. I am the Superintendent, the head of the Detective Training Centre (“**DTC**”), Hong Kong Police Force (“**Force**”) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. I have joined the Force for 40 years since about 1985, and was promoted to the present rank on 19 July 2018. My main responsibilities include providing quality in-service detective training to both crime and uniform officers in the Force, such as Standard Criminal Investigation Course (“**SCIC**”), Advanced Criminal Investigation Modules, Basic Investigation Course and District Special Duty Squad Course, etc. In addition, I am the officer-in-charge of the Disaster Victim Identification Unit (“**DVIU**”), which is deployed in disasters and mass casualty incidents to perform the duty of victim identification.

2. I make this Witness Statement pursuant to the request of the Independent Committee (“**Committee**”) in relation to the fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po as set out in a letter from Messrs. Lo & Lo, Solicitors for the Committee, to the Department of Justice dated 19 January 2026 (“**19 January Letter**”) in which specific questions were raised in paragraphs 1 to 19 (“**Questions**”). Save where otherwise appears, the facts deposed hereto are within my personal knowledge or are derived from office files and records and

sources to which I have access and which are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

3. In this Witness Statement, I shall address Question 19, e. of the 19 January Letter. Other Questions which are within the Force's purview will be addressed in the witness statements of other relevant officers of the Force to the Committee.
4. This Witness Statement is divided into the following parts:-
 - (1) Part A describes the general composition and duty of the DVIU;
and
 - (2) Part B describes the performance of the duty of the DVIU in the Wang Fuk Court Fire Incident ("**Incident**").

Part A – General Composition and Duty of the DVIU

5. DVIU of the Force was established in 1975 and has since come under the command of the DTC, with the Head of the DTC being the Commander of the DVIU. The DVIU of the Force follows the mode and standard of operation set out by the INTERPOL, which is also widely adopted by other member countries/regions.
6. The duty of the DVIU is to assist the Consultant Forensic Pathologist-in-charge in the identification of disaster victims in major incidents and disasters for investigation and subsequent court proceedings.
7. The DVIU comprises of DTC staff and graduates of the SCIC under a reserve system and is mobilised upon the order from Assistant Commissioner of Police, Operations ("**ACP OPS**"), in the event of major incidents and disasters in Hong Kong or where a significant

emergency or disaster affects Hong Kong residents outside Hong Kong.

8. DVIU reserves are required to undergo the relevant training in the SCIC to assess their competence of discharging duties at Command Post (including Administration & Logistics Support Team), Recovery Team, Dead Body Collection Point as well as Mortuary Team under the lead of DTC instructors in the ranks of Chief Inspector (“CIP”) and Senior Inspector/Inspector (“SIP/IP”). After the training, members of the DVIU will return to the normal policing duties in their parent formations, but will be mobilised when necessary.

Specific Duty of the Respective Teams

Command Post

9. Command Post is set up to monitor the whole operation efficiency by distributing required equipment, protective gears, documentary and computer support to different teams and to make proper record on Occurrence Book (“OB”) for the deployment and results of recovery teams. In addition, it should maintain a close liaison with other police units, enforcement agencies and Government departments so as to achieve the major function of the DVIU in the identification of victims.

Recovery Team

10. Each Recovery Team comprises at least four members with one Team Leader, one Recording Officer/Photographer and at least two Recovery Handlers. Recovery Teams are responsible for searching and recovering dead bodies, body parts and properties attached to the body and/or body part (“Associated Property”) at

the scene and they should be deployed only after the completion of rescue operation and the clearance of any potential hazard or danger.

11. Recovery Team Leader, normally in the rank of IP or Sergeant, should ensure the safety of his/her members with proper dressing and equipment, immediate decontamination after each search and the accuracy of all documentation and record in either the paper Disaster Victim Recovery (“DVR”) Booklet or e-DVR Booklet via Disaster Victim Information System (“DVIS”) – a computer system which directly linked to Major Incident Investigation and Disaster Support System (“MIIDSS”). The information obtained by the Recovery Team can be transmitted to the MIIDSS directly for analysis carried out by the Casualty Enquiry Unit (“CEU”).

12. Each DVR Booklet includes a Unique Body Reference Number (“UBRN”) for each recovery of body and/or body part, the details of the team, the descriptions of each body, body part and/or Associated Property, sketch (if required), photos and remarks of any other information relevant or of value to the identification. Four tags bearing the UBRN will be tied to a peg beside the body and/or body part, the body and/or body part itself, the inner body bag and outer body bag respectively. After completing all documentation at the scene, the Recovery Team will place the body and/or body part into an inner bag first and then into an outer bag. After that, the Recovery Team will remove the body and/or body part (which have been put in an inner bag and an outer bag) and its Associated Property from the scene to the Dead Body Collection Point for further processing.

Dead Body Collection Point

13. The Dead Body Collection Point has the following duties and functions:-

- (1) It ensures that the recovered body and/or body part is properly documented with the designated form, i.e. paper DVR Booklet or e-DVR Booklet, which is completed and verified by the Team Leader of the Recovery Team.
- (2) Once taking over the recovered body and/or body part, it should be responsible for its safekeeping and movement with proper record compiled in the OB and DVIS.
- (3) It ensures that all Associated Property accompanying the recovered body and/or body part should be securely attached to it for onward delivery to the mortuary.
- (4) It then arranges to convey the body and/or body part, along with its Associated Property, to the designated mortuary in a systematic manner under the designated escort.

Mortuary Team

14. Upon receiving the body and/or body part from the Dead Body Collection Point, the Mortuary Team will verify relevant documentation and compile an independent file under each UBRN. The file should ultimately include a body card, the DVR Booklet and the post-mortem form. Afterwards, pathological and anthropological examinations will be conducted on the body and/or body part to confirm its identity. The Mortuary Team will then compile the post-mortem form with different experts, such as pathologist, odontology expert, fingerprinting officer, based on different examinations and findings. The post-mortem form includes description of the body and/or body part, clothing and wearing items, identity items, remarks after pathology and odontology, DNA and fingerprint result, etc. The Mortuary Team will also liaise with the CEU for exchange of data in the file and other information for the arrangement of identification. Furthermore, valuable items and clothing removed from the body

at the mortuary shall be packed separately in exhibit bags, if applicable, and then be placed in another main property exhibit bag before being handed to the Investigation Unit.

Part B – The Performance of the Duty of the DVIU in the Incident

15. At about 02:51 pm on 26 November 2025, a fire broke out at the lower level outer wall of Wang Cheong Court, Wang Fuk Court, Tai Po. The fire spread very quickly upwards along the scaffold nets and scaffoldings then to six other adjacent buildings of the same complex, which was undergoing major maintenance, resulting in the fire upgraded to No. 5 alarm and eventually causing 168 deaths and 79 injuries.

Scene of Fire

16. Wang Fuk Court is a subsidised Government Home Ownership Scheme housing complex located in Tai Po. The complex has eight residential blocks including Wang Yan House, Wang Tao House, Wang Sun House, Wang Kin House, Wang Tai House, Wang Cheong House, Wang Shing House and Wang Chi House. Each block has 31 floors with eight flats on each floor, three lifts, two staircases respectively leading to the G/F lobby and a G/F back door. Each flat ranges from 40 to 44 square meter with one living room, one kitchen, one toilet and two bedrooms. Except for Wang Chi House, all other seven blocks (1,736 flats in total) were involved in the fire.

Ground Operation

17. In the evening on 26 November 2025, I was instructed by Mr. David JORDAN, ACP OPS to mobilise the DVIU for the Incident, which was believed to involve a large number of deaths and

casualties. A total of 605 DVIU officers were therefore turned out for the operation. Together with the DTC staff as the respective station leader and the core coordinators of the operation, a total of 1 Superintendent, 6 CIPs, 153 SIP/IPs, 1 Police Station Sergeants, 71 Police Sergeants and 373 Police Constables were mobilised.

18. On 28 November 2025, the Command Post was set up at Tai Po Baptist Public School with 64 DVIU members deployed. The Dead Body Collection Point was set up on G/F of Wang Fuk Court Car Park with 64 DVIU members deployed and the Mortuary was designated at Fu Shan Public Mortuary, Tai Wai with 56 DVIU members deployed. In the operation, a total of 94 Recovery Teams were formed with 4 members in each team, involving a total of 376 police officers.
19. Between 29 November 2025 and 3 December 2025, the Recovery Teams were deployed into the affected seven buildings to conduct the first and preliminary search for the deceased from G/F to the rooftop, covering all flats (except for 41 flats with potential safety concern pending for the clearance by the Housing Authority), electricity meter rooms, garbage rooms, corridors, staircases and all other common areas of the buildings. Designated areas to be searched would be assigned to 8 to 10 Recovery Teams, led by a Zone Leader of DTC staff at the rank of IP/SIP to CIP, in order to coordinate the search efforts and thoroughness at each designated area throughout the operation.
20. On 3 December 2025, the Recovery Teams were deployed to conduct the second search against 12 flats, for which no missing persons were found in the first search, and those 41 flats previously with potential safety concern as informed by the Housing Authority, which had by now been cleared safe.

21. Between 4 December 2025 and 9 December 2025, the Recovery Teams were assigned to search for any body and/or body part covered in the soot, fallen scaffoldings and rubbles scattered around the grounds of the estate and to check clear the lift shafts of the affected buildings. Scaffoldings adhering on the outer walls of the buildings inaccessible by the Recovery Teams were searched with the assistance of Small Unmanned Aircraft Teams from the Force.
22. Three stations were set up in the Dead Body Collection Point for (i) registry, (ii) initial pathological examination, photo-taking and documentary checking, and (iii) safekeeping the body and/or body part for subsequent transportation to the Fu Shan Public Mortuary. Each station was commanded by an IP while a CIP from the DTC was assigned to be the officer-in-charge overseeing the operation of whole Dead Body Collection Point.
23. In the Fu Shan Public Mortuary, the Reception Team, Documentary Team and Liaison Team were formed to assist pathologists to conduct examinations and data analysis so as to identify the recovered bodies and body parts.

Identification Process

Phase I – Recovery

24. In the search operation conducted by the Recovery Teams, on 29 November 2025, no body or body part was recovered. From 30 November 2025 to 9 December 2025, a total of 74 bodies and/or body parts were found from Wang Cheong House (31 bodies and/or body parts), Wang Tai House (36 bodies and/or body parts) and Wang Sun House (7 bodies and/or body parts). No body or body part was found at Wang Yan House, Wang Tao House, Wang Kin

House and Wang Shing House by the DVIU.

Phase II – Record and Documentation

25. UBRNs were generated for the said 74 recoveries with the completion of either paper DVR Booklet or e-DVR Booklet. An independent file for each body and/or body part was opened to file all the documents such as body cards, booklets, photos, post-mortem forms and reports of forensic examinations. Upon the completion, all relevant documents were sent to the MIIDSS as soon as practicable in order to facilitate the comparison and matching process with the missing person data kept by the CEU.

Phase III – Identification

26. Based on the individual condition of each body and/or body part, the primary identifiers including fingerprints, forensic comparison with DNAs taken from the body and/or body part and direct relative(s) of the reported missing persons, odontological and/or anthropological examinations were applied in all cases to confirm the identity of the body and/or body part, except for one case. In that one case, in the absence of the above primary identifiers, the DVIU had to rely on circumstantial evidence to draw inference on the identity as mentioned below.

Outcome and Conclusion of the Operation

27. The operation was concluded on 23 January 2026. The breakdown of the identification result of the 74 bodies and/or body parts are as follows:-

- (1) Among the 74 bodies and/or body parts, **12 body parts were found not containing any animal substance while**

2 body parts were found to be animal but not human tissues.

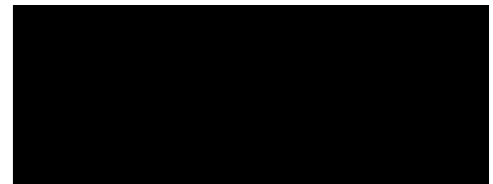
- (2) Among the remaining 60 bodies and/or body parts, after further examinations conducted by pathologists, odontology experts and anthropologists, **5 more body parts were retrieved from such 60 bodies and/or body parts (i.e. one bag of body and/or body parts carrying human tissues from more than one victim).** Therefore, there were a total of 65 bodies and/or body parts, which were believed to be identifiable, after expertise analysis at the Mortuary.
- (3) Of these 65 bodies and/or body parts:-
- (a) **60 victims were identified by forensic methods of DNA and/or fingerprint comparison and/or odontological examination;**
 - (b) **4 body parts were found in duplication with 3 (of the said 60) victims.** I understand that WONG Cheung-hing, Chief Inspector of Police, has prepared an updated list of fatalities (“**Updated List of Fatalities**”) as Annex 1 to be attached to his 2nd Witness Statement to be submitted to the IC. With reference to the serial number (“S/N”) in the Updated List of Fatalities, the 3 said victims are S/N 73, S/N 112 and S/N 119; and
 - (c) **1 body part** (a skull belonging to S/N 167 in the Updated List of Fatalities was found beside another body part of which the DNA was confirmed to be S/N 167’s mother, S/N 112 in the Updated List of Fatalities) was confirmed its identity by circumstantial evidence in the absence of any primary identifier.

28. To conclude, **a total of 61 victims were identified** from the bodies

and/or body parts throughout the whole operation conducted by the DVIU. For ease of reference, I attach hereto as Annex 1 a diagram showing the result and breakdown of the DVIU's operation.

29. I confirm that the contents of this Witness Statement are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Dated this 29 day of January 2026.

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CHENG Ka-chun