

PRESS STATEMENT

13 November 2019

**MTR Unable to Provide Normal Services Due to Repeated Vandalism by Rioters**

The MTR network and facilities have been repeatedly vandalised over the past several days. A total of seven rail lines were affected today (13 November 2019) and train service on some of the lines had to be fully or partially suspended. Furthermore, seven stations were forced to close as station facilities were maliciously damaged or operations were disrupted. A large number of commuters all over Hong Kong was adversely affected because of these incidents. The MTR Corporation strongly condemns the rioters' acts which endangered the safety of passengers, MTR staff and railway operations. The Corporation has reported the cases to the Police and reserves the right to take legal action against the parties concerned.

After the end of service hours yesterday, rioters broke into several closed stations to set fires and vandalise trains, stations and trackside equipment. On the East Rail Line, there were arson attacks that targeted two trains stabled at Sheung Shui Station and a train stabled at University Station. Another train stabled at Mong Kok East Station was also damaged. In addition, a track-side signaling equipment room near Fo Tan was attacked. Considering these stations had already been damaged during the day yesterday, the Corporation had no choice but to suspend the train service of the East Rail Line from the start of traffic hours today. Following recovery efforts by engineering personnel, train service between Hung Hom and Tai Wai stations resumed at around 5pm with trains by-passing Kowloon Tong Station. We are unable to arrange free shuttle bus service for affected East Rail Line passengers because of adverse road conditions.

Besides, rioters also unlawfully broke into Mong Kok Station after the end of service yesterday to vandalise and hurl petrol bombs at the platform screen doors. Facilities at the station concourse were also damaged. Mong Kok Station was forced to close today with Kwun Tong Line and Tsuen Wan Line services not stopping at the station.

Regarding the Light Rail service, given that there were arson attacks and damage to station facilities, tracks and signaling equipment as well as obstructions on the roads, Light Rail Routes 705, 761P and 751P had to be suspended while certain other routes had to be diverted since the beginning of service hours this morning.

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The attacks and disruption by the rioters continued from the start of the train service today. Services on seven railway lines (the East Rail Line, Tung Chung Line, Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line, Ma On Shan Line, West Rail Line and Tseung Kwan O Line) were affected and service on some of these rail lines was fully or partially suspended. A total of seven stations<sup>1</sup> were forced to shut down because of damage and severe disruption of operations. In view of today's situation and following a risk assessment with relevant government departments, another 16 stations<sup>2</sup> closed early at 8pm tonight while the remaining stations (excluding Airport Express) closed at 10 pm as scheduled. Details of the vandalism we suffered are listed below:

- At around 6:50am, rioters threw a bicycle onto the track near Tai Shui Hang Station, disrupting the train service. MTR staff were deployed to clear the track area immediately. Subsequently, at around 7:20am, external objects were once again thrown into the track area and were hung on the overhead line. Adjustments had to be made to the Ma On Shan Line service during the incident handling.
- At around 7:10am, a plastic barrier was thrown onto the track near Siu Hong Station. A non-passenger train hit the barrier and was not able to provide service afterwards.
- A number of stations had to be closed due to vandalism or emergency situations, with trains subsequently bypassing these stations. At around 7:10am, Yuen Long Station had to be evacuated due to the gathering of crowds and outbreak of disputes. At around 8:45am, rioters threw bricks into Tung Chung Station, disrupted the station operation and obstructed the exits/entrances with objects, necessitating the closure of the station. In addition, Sai Wan Ho Station was also forced to close at around 3:40pm due to damage at its entrance/exit.
- Rioters once again broke into Sheung Shui Station, which was closed, and hurled petrol bombs at the same East Rail Line train that was set on fire earlier in the small hours today.
- Besides the cases of vandalism and damage, the operation of train doors and platform screen doors was repeatedly disrupted this morning at a number of stations along the Kwun Tong, Tsuen Wan, Island, Tung Chung, West Rail and Tseung Kwan O lines. Trains therefore were unable to operate for long periods of times. As a result, services along sections or the full alignment of the rail lines had to be suspended.

Acts of hurling petrol bombs and arson attacks at stations severely endanger the safety of passengers and staff. Throwing objects onto the tracks might even lead to derailment and cause serious injuries. The MTR Corporation reiterates that such violent acts cannot be tolerated and we strongly condemn such unlawful behavior. The Corporation has reported the cases to the Police and reserves the right to take legal action against the parties concerned.

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<sup>1</sup> Tung Chung Station, Sai Wan Ho Station, Mong Kok Station, Tseung Kwan O Station, Hang Hau Station, Tuen Mun Station, Yuen Long Station

<sup>2</sup> Tsuen Wan Station, Kwai Fong Station, Yau Ma Tei Station, Whampoa Station, Wong Tai Sin Station, Kowloon Bay Station, Kwun Tong Station, Tiu Keng Leng Station, Causeway Bay Station, HKU Station, Yuen Long Station, Ma On Shan Station, Sha Tin Wai Station, City One Station, Tsing Yi Station, Kowloon Station

The Corporation will continue to closely monitor the situation and may suspend or adjust train and station services when necessary to ensure the safety of passengers and MTR staff. In view of the repeated vandalism at facilities in MTR network, MTR engineering personnel will inspect and assess the damaged facilities, and try our best to carry out repair works. However, given the extensive damages done to our facilities, we cannot preclude the possibility that some stations and facilities may not be able to resume service tomorrow. We will also continue to assess the risk and may shorten the service hours or close any station in response to increased risk or disruption of railway facilities. The Corporation will disseminate relevant information on train services via the MTR website, MTR Mobile, station and in-train announcements as well as the media. Passengers are advised to pay attention to the latest information.

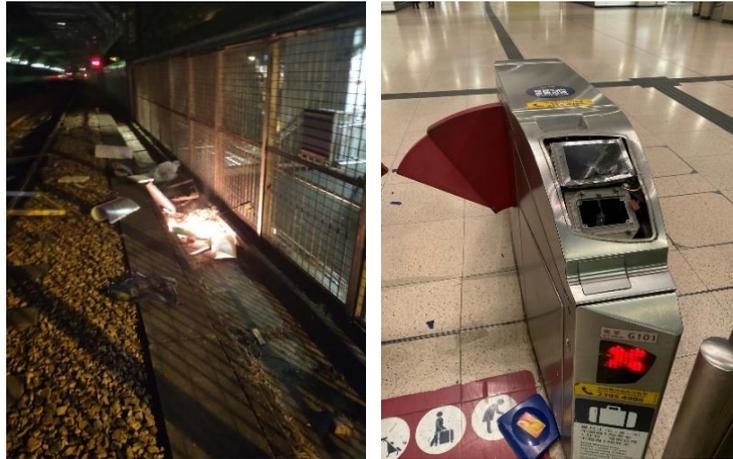
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Photo caption:

1. University Station on the East Rail Line was vandalised and a train was set on fire by rioters during non-traffic hours.



2. An East Rail Line train and station facilities at Mong Kok East Station were vandalised.



- Rioters broke into Kowloon Tong Station on the East Rail Line. Ticket-issuing machines and station offices were vandalised.



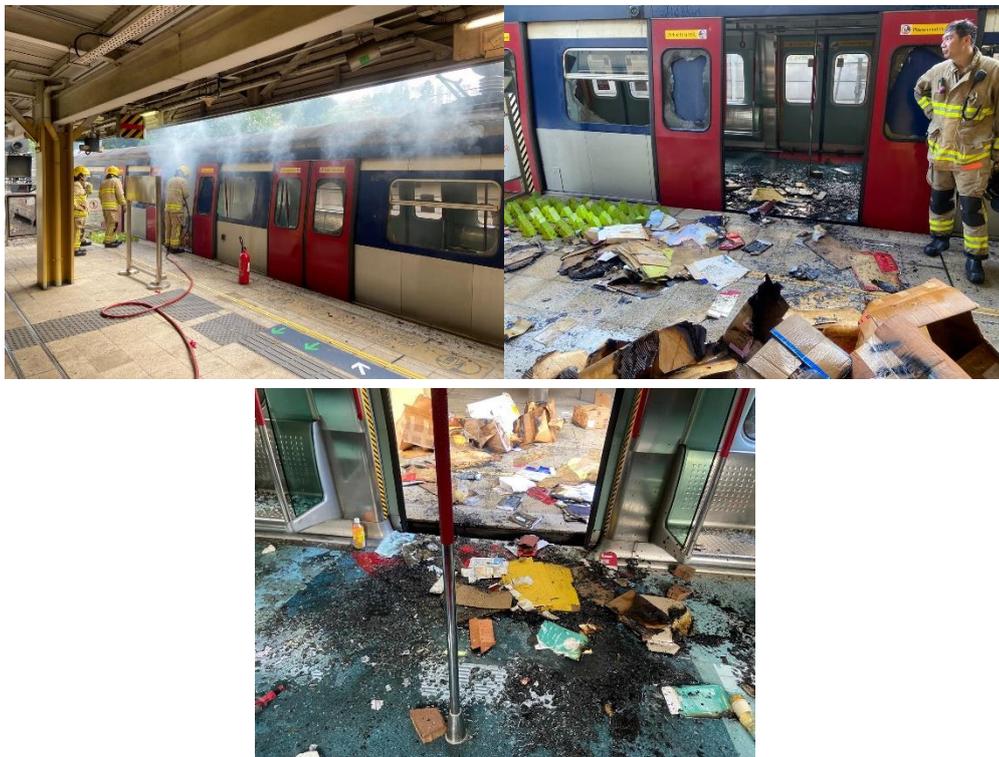
- Barrier was thrown onto the track area at Siu Hong Station. A non-passenger train hit the barrier.



5. Foreign objects were thrown onto the track area near Tai Shui Hang Station.



6. An East Rail Line train at Sheung Shui Station was set on fire yesterday. Rioters once again broke into Sheung Shui Station and set fire to the same train this afternoon.



7. Station facilities at Tung Chung Station were vandalised. Various objects were thrown into the station.

