

Tuesday English News Report

Hooligans not the solution to parallel trading problem

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Local **media** continue to call them protesters or demonstrators. But sorry, let's **call a spade a spade**. There is a word for people like that: hooligans. These are the people, mostly youngsters, who have been organising weekly **rallies** in Yuen Long, Sheung Shui, Tuen Mun and Sha Tin against parallel-goods **traders** from across the border, but end up fighting with police, and picking on and sometimes even attacking any passers-by who carry **bulky** baggage or pull trolleys.

For all they know, their targets might not even be from the mainland. Police and immigration figures show more than half of parallel traders aren't even mainlanders, but local people. If they had their wishes, conditions might not improve that much. If mainland traders were completely **banned**, that would just mean a monopoly by parallel traders from the Hong Kong side.

The ironic thing is that most of those hooligans don't even live in the northern districts of the New Territories that are most affected. They respond via social media run by quasi-fascist groups like Hong Kong Indigenous and Civic Passion. The real local residents who actually experience the inconvenience and **frustration** may be willing to rally and complain to the government, but they offer nowhere near the level of confrontation and violence of those mobs we have repeatedly seen over many weekends and Sundays now. Given their deliberate and repeated **provocation**, police would be justified in taking **harsh** measures.

This does not mean there isn't a problem with parallel trading. There should be short, medium and long-term strategies to address it. As an immediate measure, customs on both sides of the border must crack down on repeat offenders - whether mainlanders or Hongkongers - who carry undeclared goods.

As a medium-term strategy, let's centralise warehouses where a reduced level of trading may be conducted to minimise disturbances to local residents.

Longer term, authorities in both Hong Kong and Shenzhen should reexamine permits with multiple entries. If we want to reduce the number of visits Shenzhen residents may make to Hong Kong, we should be willing to accept restrictions on our ability to visit Shenzhen and the rest of the mainland too. That's just fair.



Protesting against parallel trading in Yuen Long

1. What do you think?

2. Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using words from the box.

hooligans	media	call a spade a spade	rallies
traders	bulky	banned	
frustration	provocation	harsh	

1. The teacher is very _____. She always gives lots of homework and severely punishes students who misbehave.
2. _____ are people who buy goods and sell them for profit.
3. There was a feeling of _____ among the passengers because the train had broken down and it hadn't moved for 4 hours.
4. Students often love going on _____. They can walk in the streets carrying banners and protest against policies that they disagree with.
5. _____ are violent people who like to cause problems and damage public property. They are often associated with football.
6. Smoking is _____ on all Cathay Pacific flights. You will be punished if you are caught.
7. We use this figure of speech when we want to say exactly what something is. We can also use the expression, "Tell it like it is". E.g. "Let's _____. That politician is a liar!"
8. His bag was so _____ he couldn't get it onto the bus.
9. The _____ is basically radio, TV and the newspapers.
10. He hit me without any _____. I didn't speak to him or even look at him.