

**Notification for Stakeholders about
General Adjournment of Proceedings (“GAP”)
Between 7 March 2022 and 11 April 2022**

General

1. In light of the prevailing public health situation and related developments, as well as the impacts on parties, court users, stakeholders and the Judiciary, the Chief Justice has on 4 March 2022 directed that all hearings of the courts and tribunals originally listed between **7 March and 11 April 2022** be generally adjourned.
2. During this GAP period, the capacity and operations at all levels of court will be substantially reduced. Striking a balance between public health considerations and due administration of justice, the court will only carry out the business as set out in **Annexes 1 and 2** until further notice.
3. Parties, their legal representatives, court users and all stakeholders should read the Annexes carefully and to conduct their affairs with the court accordingly without seeking further directions from the court unless it is really necessary. For convenience, a brief summary is provided as follows.

Civil proceedings

4. In respect of ongoing court hearings for all civil proceedings and appeals, including remote hearings, subject to the court’s direction, they will continue.
5. In respect of all court hearings for civil proceedings and appeals originally listed in the GAP period, subject to Annex 1 and the court’s directions, they will be dealt with by paper disposal or remotely or be re-fixed. The court may give directions as appropriate.
6. The Court of Appeal will continue to deal with urgent appeals and urgent applications.

7. Urgent matters will continue to be dealt with by the Duty Judge and Duty Master.

Criminal proceedings

8. The Court of Appeal will deal with bail applications, leave applications and substantive appeals listed between 7 and 18 March 2022 in accordance with the directions already issued. From 21 March 2022 onwards, all leave applications before a single judge will be disposed of on paper and all other hearings (except bail applications) will be re-fixed, unless the circumstances are deemed by the Court of Appeal so exceptional as to warrant a hearing.
9. All jury trials in the Court of First Instance will be re-fixed, except ongoing ones which may continue pursuant to the court's direction. In respect of ongoing court hearings for other criminal proceedings, subject to the court's direction, they will continue.
10. In respect of all court hearings for criminal proceedings originally listed in the GAP period in the Court of First Instance, the District Court and the Magistracies Courts, subject to Annex 1 and the court's directions:
 - (1) insofar as they can under the law be dealt with on paper or remotely, will be so disposed of and the court will give directions as appropriate;
 - (2) in other cases, will be re-fixed.
11. The court will continue to deal with bail applications and bail reviews.
12. Urgent matters will continue to be dealt with by the Duty Judge and Duty Master.

Other proceedings

13. All death inquests in the Coroner's Court involving juries originally listed in the GAP period will be re-fixed, except ongoing ones which

- may continue pursuant to the court's direction. The Coroner's Court will continue to process and deal with matters listed in Annex 1.
14. Proceedings in the Obscene Articles Tribunal originally listed in the GAP period:
 - (1) insofar as they can under the law be dealt with on paper or remotely, will be so disposed of and the court will give directions as appropriate;
 - (2) in other cases, will be re-fixed.
 15. Urgent matters will continue to be dealt with under the existing practice.

Statutory duties

16. District Judges and Magistrates will continue to perform, as appropriate, their statutory duties relating to urgent applications for search warrants and applications under the Mental Health Ordinance (Cap 136).

Registries

17. All registries, accounts and other court offices will be closed during the GAP period, except for providing necessary support to the court's business as set out in Annex 1.
18. The registries will only conduct the business as specified in Annex 2 during the GAP period.
19. Urgent matters will continue to be dealt with by the Duty Master.

Further adjustments

20. As the public health situation may change rapidly, the Judiciary will closely monitor the situation and constantly review the impacts on the court's operations and business. In particular, as and when the compulsory universal testing is to take place, it is anticipated that the

court's operations and business will be further reduced considerably. The Judiciary may need to further adjust the scope of the court's operations and business at very short notice.

21. The Judiciary will continue to post updated information on the Judiciary website (www.judiciary.hk). Stakeholders are urged to regularly check the website for updated information as necessary.