

Minorities allege prejudice by officers

Ethnic minorities have urged the police to treat them fairly, saying that discriminatory behaviour at the hands of officers made life in Hong Kong stressful and fearful.

Hong Kong Unison, a non-governmental concern group that helps ethnic-minority residents, staged a protest yesterday outside the police force's headquarters in Admiralty.

The protest follows the fatal shooting of a Nepali man by a police officer on a Ho Man Tin hillside on March 17, when he allegedly attacked the constable during an identity check. A police investigation is under way.

Unison said many minority residents could recount painful experiences in dealing with police.

They said they had been treated rudely, addressed with insulting language, misled into admitting an offence, refused translated documents and prevented from calling for outside help after being arrested.

Hassan Singh, an Indian, said police stopped ethnic minorities to check their identity cards more often than other Hong Kong residents. He said the police suspected they were terrorists based on their appearance. Because we are physically stronger, with dark skin and a beard ... they pick on us.

Unison campaign director Fermi Wong Wai-fun said the police should strengthen training of frontline police officers dealing with ethnic minorities, recruit ethnic minorities as police to bridge gaps, and take steps to ensure the police-complaints mechanism was racially and culturally sensitive.

A police spokesman said the force attached much importance to establishing mutual trust with ethnic minorities and provided relevant training. Police officers are required to respect all members of the public and treat them fairly and objectively.

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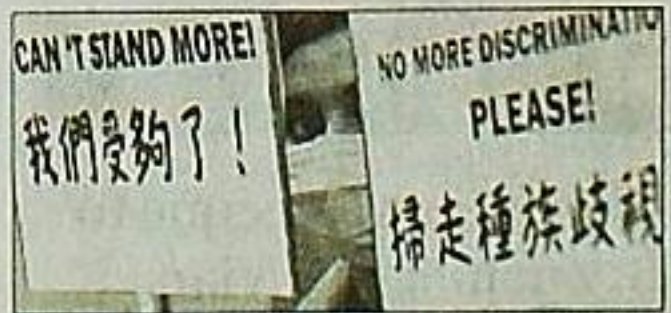
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The protest at police headquarters in Admiralty. Photo: Jonathan Wong

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