

Law and order situation in the first half of 2021

1. Overall Crime Situation

In the first half of 2021, a total of 30 871 crimes were recorded, which was a decrease of 1 474 cases or 4.6% when compared with 32 345 cases in the same period of 2020. There were 4 653 cases of violent crime, an increase of 146 cases or 3.2%. The detection rate of overall crimes in the first half of 2021 increased from 32.1% to 35.7%.

The overall crimes registered a decrease, mainly due to the significant drop of 60% of robbery cases and the drop of 30% of burglary cases respectively. Other crime types including arson, wounding and serious assault and criminal damage also registered decreases ranging from about 10% to 40%, indicating that the law and order situation maintained stable.

However, increases were registered for deception, sexual offences, blackmail, criminal intimidation and crime types that were detected by the Police's proactive enforcement actions including serious drug, serious gambling and syndicated vice offences.

2. Robbery and burglary

There were 67 cases of robbery, representing a significant decrease of 119 cases (decrease of 64%) when compared with the same period of 2020. Among these, 42 cases were detected. The detection rate was 63%. There were 741 cases of burglary, registering a drop of 415 cases (decrease of 35.9%). The Police detected a total of over 210 cases and arrested over 210 persons. The detection rate was 29%, representing a rise of 10.5 percentage points. The Police will continue to mount intelligence-led operations and deploy resources flexibly to step up patrol with a view to further combatting street crimes.

3. Deception

Deception cases recorded an increase of 7% from 8 129 to 8 699 cases (+570 cases). The jump was mainly driven by the upsurge of romance scams (from 429 to 822 cases, increase of 91.6%) with 1.6-fold increase in losses, amounting to over \$288 million. Victims often found himself/herself deceived after a substantial period of time, incurring relatively significant loss.

Telephone deception recorded a drop of 137 cases (decrease of 21.1%) to 512 cases but registered a one-fold increase in losses.

Moreover, the Police noticed that scammers sent fraudulent bank SMS messages with links of purported bank websites to victims. After victims inputted account names, passwords, etc, at the websites, scammers would transfer victims' savings out of their accounts. In March 2021, the Police cracked down a crime syndicate operating with such defrauding trick,

arresting 14 scammers involving in 15 deception cases.

In the first half of this year, "Anti-Scam Helpline" of the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) managed to prevent victims of over 280 cases from wiring money to fraudsters and intercept over \$600 million before the money reached the scammers.

Early identification and effective prevention are considered one of the most effective strategies in combatting deception. To raise the public's anti-deception awareness, the ADCC organised "Anti-Deception Month" in April 2021, during which various forms of media were comprehensively deployed to disseminate anti-deception messages across the territory. "ADCC One-stop Platform" website (www.adcc.gov.hk) was launched in the same month to provide one-stop services and multimedia anti-deception information. A promotion truck in the theme of "Anti-Deception Everywhere", together with the Force's anti-scam mascot "The Little Grape", toured around various locations of the city to broadcast promotional videos and distribute publicity materials.

4. Sexual offences

On the aspect of sexual offences, there were 34 cases of rape, a rise of 36% compared with the same period in 2020. The detection rate was 97%. There was only one case involving strangers which had been detected. 483 cases of indecent assault were recorded, representing a rise of 69% (+197 cases). The detection rate was 78%. There were 20 cases in which victims were sexually assaulted, involving rape and indecent assault, by suspects met through the Internet, registering an increase of 67%. The Police will continue to monitor the trend of sexual offences and collaborate with relevant stakeholders for targeted publicity and public education.

5. Homicide

In the first half of 2021, 10 cases of homicide were recorded, representing an increase of five cases when compared with the same period of last year. All cases have been detected. Among the 10 cases, eight cases involved domestic or family violence.

6. Blackmail

707 cases of blackmail were recorded, representing an increase of 334 cases or 89.5% when compared with the same period in 2020. The upsurge was mainly attributable to "naked chat" blackmail, totaling 493 cases, an increase of 287 cases when compared with the same period of last year. It is believed that the rise was attributed to more frequent use of online chat and dating applications during the epidemic.

7. Serious drug offences

There were 756 cases of serious drug offences, registering an increase of 305 cases or 67.6% when compared with the same period of last year. As for drug seizures, the drug types registering increases included cocaine, ketamine, cannabis and heroin. The rise in drug seizures was attributable to

a number of successful police operations, including two different cases with the biggest ever ketamine and cocaine seizure, in which 682kg of ketamine and 706kg of cocaine were seized respectively.

8. Illegal immigrants

Regarding the trends of illegal immigrants, in the first half of 2021, the Police and other law enforcement agencies arrested 721 Mainland and 521 non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants, with a rise of more than four folds and 5% respectively when compared with the same period of 2020. The soar in the number of Mainland illegal immigrants could be caused by the imposition of immigration control measures during the epidemic, resulting in their illegal entry to Hong Kong for illegal work or prostitution activities.

9. Youth crime

Youth crime involving offenders aged 10 to 20 saw a decrease of 787 persons (-34.1%) to 1 519 persons in the first half of 2021. Despite the fall, the number of youths arrested for serious drug related offences (224 persons, +89 persons, increase of 65.9%), criminal damage (194 persons, +47 persons, increase of 32%) and triad related offences (368 persons, +37 persons, increase of 11.2%) registered increases. In addition, there have been a number of bullying cases involving violence and bodily harm.

Apart from law enforcement, the Police will continue to pursue inter-departmental and multi-agency collaboration in developing and strengthening law-abiding awareness among youths. This year, with the theme of "Be a Leader Fight Crime Together", the Junior Police Call Fight Crime Summer Camp aims at encouraging youths to step out of their comfort zone, enhancing their resilience, team spirit and leadership skills to cultivate positive values through diversified adventure-based training activities. The Summer Camp also promotes fight crime messages among the participants.

10. Enforcement on National Security Law

As at June 30, 2021, the Police arrested 117 persons for suspected "secession", "subversion", "terrorist activities", "collusion with a foreign country or with external elements" and "providing pecuniary or other financial assistance or property for the commission by other persons of the offence of secession"; some suspected of "uttering any seditious words", "fraud", "money laundering", etc. Of these, 64 persons have been prosecuted.

Conclusion

In face of the threats arising from home-grown terrorism, the Police will continue to strive for safeguarding national security. In addition to fighting against the epidemic in collaboration with members of the public, the Police will focus on fighting and preventing crimes, as well as enhancing community engagement, in a bid to ensure Hong Kong's long-term safety and social stability.