

LCQ9: Burglary crimes

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yuet-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (February 19):

Question:

Some members of the public have relayed that there has been an increase in the number of burglary crimes targeting low-density residential properties and shops in rural areas and suburbs, and the situation is even worse near Chinese New Year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the numbers and detection rates of burglary crimes in each of the past five years, with a tabulated breakdown by the 18 districts in Hong Kong; the numbers of persons convicted of such crimes and, among them, the respective numbers of those who were minors and non-Hong Kong residents;

(2) of the details of both the publicity activities on the prevention of burglary and joint operations against burglary crimes conducted by the Hong Kong Police Force in the whole year of 2024, as well as the effectiveness of such efforts;

(3) of the details of the publicity activities conducted by the Fight Crime Committee and District Fight Crime Committees on the prevention of burglary in the whole year of 2024; and

(4) whether the Government will review the existing mechanism on the prevention of burglary crimes, including whether it will consider installing smart lampposts fitted with cameras and subsidising village offices to install closed-circuit television monitoring systems or other appropriate alarm devices at major entrances and exits of villages so as to deter law-breakers?

Reply:

President,

The Police pay close attention to burglary cases which occurred in different locations and premises. In addition to actively taking measures against such crimes, the Police have been providing home security and anti-burglary advice to the public through various channels.

After consultation with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Home Affairs Department, our consolidated reply to the Member's question is set out below:

(1) The number of burglary cases and detection rates by Police Districts in the past five years (from 2020 to 2024) are set out in Annex I.

Regarding the number of persons convicted, the number of persons convicted of burglary-related offences (i.e. burglary under section 11 and aggravated burglary under section 12 of the Theft Ordinance (Cap. 210)) and, among them, the number of those who were minors or not holders of Hong Kong Identity Cards at the time of their first appearance, from 2020 to the third quarter of 2024, are set out in Annex II.

(2) The Police adopt a multi-pronged approach to enhance the prevention and combating of burglary cases. In terms of enforcement, the Police have stepped up intelligence gathering and adopted an intelligence-led approach. They have increased high-profile patrols and stop-and-search operations in high-risk areas, such as village houses. Additionally, drones and helicopters from the Government Flying Service are deployed for nighttime aerial patrols and the pursuit of burglars. Roadblocks are also set up at different times and locations to stop and search suspicious vehicles or individuals, thereby enhancing deterrence.

On the publicity front, to enhance public awareness, the Police have launched a one-stop platform, [SafeCity.HK](https://www.safe-city.hk/), to provide the public with crime prevention tips, including information on burglary prevention. The Police also conduct publicity through various channels, such as social media platforms, press conferences, OffBeat 360 and Offbeat 120s, to share with the public ways to enhance home security and encourage them to report to the Police any suspicious persons or behavior. The Police also organise regular seminars for different sectors (for example, members of the property management and security sectors, the retail industry, and so on) and distribute anti-burglary pamphlets to the public in conjunction with District Councils, Rural Committees, Area Committees and property management companies to enhance anti-burglary awareness from different perspectives.

As a result of the Police's vigorous efforts in combating burglary, the situation of burglary cases has improved significantly. In 2024, 1 220 burglary cases were reported, representing a decrease of 134 cases or 9.9 per cent compared to 2023, and the amount of loss was also reduced by 48 million Hong Kong Dollars or 25.5 per cent. The Police will continue with its related work, such as stepping up publicity during high-risk periods, such as the Chinese New Year and long holiday periods (e.g. using the Anti-crime Promotional Truck to visit different districts across the territory) to educate the public on the importance of and ways to prevent theft.

(3) In response to burglary cases, the Fight Crime Committee (FCC) has adopted Beware of Burglary and Theft as the theme of one of its anti-crime publicity campaigns in 2024-25. The campaign will be launched through various media, including online advertisements and distribution of publicity materials such as door and window alarms, to remind members of the public to step up their home security to prevent burglary and theft.

As for the District Fight Crime Committees (DFCCs), various DFCCs organised different publicity campaigns under the theme of Beware of Burglary and Theft in 2024, such as carnivals, seminars and design competitions;

distribution of promotional souvenirs, leaflets, banners, etc; and placing advertisements on the backs of minibus chairs and on the lightboxes of bus shelters. The aim is to integrate messages about preventing burglary and theft into various aspects of citizens' daily lives at the district level.

(4) To further enhance law and order and combat crime in a comprehensive manner, the Police Force has started installing closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) in various districts (including rural areas) in Hong Kong since April 2024. The installation points are located at traditional lampposts, smart lampposts and government buildings. 615 sets of cameras have been installed by the end of last year, with the first phase of installation to be completed within 2025 with a total of 2 000 sets of cameras. As at the end of 2024, the system has assisted the Police in detecting 122 cases, including serious crimes such as murder, robbery and burglary, with 202 arrests. Of the 16 burglary cases detected with the assistance of CCTV, half of them (eight cases) were solved within one day, demonstrating that CCTV has not only made investigations more effective, but has also greatly enhanced the efficiency of crime detection.

Apart from assisting in crime detection, CCTV also has a deterrent effect on criminal behavior. In order to understand the relevant data, the Police have analysed the number of street crime cases for various types of crimes and found that they have dropped after the installation of CCTV. This shows that the scheme has brought about a very positive effect on crime prevention and elimination. The Police will progressively install CCTVs according to the crime rate or pedestrian flow of individual districts and locations (including rural areas), with a view to maximising the effectiveness of CCTVs in preventing and combating crime.

In addition, the Police, in conjunction with the DFCCs, have also encouraged and assisted in the installation of CCTV systems in old low-security buildings. Police Districts also distribute door and window alarms to rural residents, so as to enhance the security level of residential premises.