

Law and order situation in Hong Kong in 2021 (with photo)

Overall law and order situation in Hong Kong

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1. Overall situation

The overall number of crimes reported in 2021 was 64 428 cases, representing an increase of 1 196 cases or 1.9% when compared with 63 232 cases in 2020. There were 9 587 cases of violent crime, a rise of 196 cases or 2.1% compared with 2020. The overall detection rate in 2021 was 38.5%, with a slight increase of 0.7 percentage points when compared with 2020.

The overall crimes registered an increase of 1 196 cases, mainly due to the rise of over 3 000 deception cases. Other crimes with rising trends included homicide, rape, indecent assault, blackmail, child abuse and crimes that Police took proactive enforcement actions against, including serious drug offences.

Major crimes that recorded decreases included robbery, burglary, arson, wounding and serious assault, criminal damage, thefts, etc. Among these, the number of cases of wounding and serious assault, snatching, pickpocketing and “disorder or fighting in public place” hit a 10-year low.

2. Robbery and burglary

There were 123 cases of robbery in 2021, registering a drop of 53%. For burglary, 1 472 cases were recorded, representing a decrease of 30%. While 2021 saw the record low figures for both robbery and burglary cases, the year also noted the highest detection rate for both crime categories (robbery 78%, burglary 35%) in the past 45 years. The records were mainly contributed by more concentrated police resources for anti-crime patrols and intelligence-led operations, as well as the concerted efforts by the community and relevant stakeholders in taking part in crime prevention activities in the past year.

3. Homicide

Twenty-three homicide cases were recorded, representing an increase of one case (+4.5%). 14 of the cases involved domestic or family violence while two of the cases were triad-related. All of the cases were detected.

4. Sexual offences

A total of 79 rape cases were recorded, representing a rise of 23%. There was only one case involving strangers and it has been detected. A total of 1 018 indecent assaults were recorded, representing an increase of 49%. Detection rates of rape and indecent assault cases remained high, at 98.7% and 79.3% respectively, however, 39% (31 cases) and 30% (308 cases) of the

cases involved victims aged under 16 respectively.

Victims of 40 rape and indecent assault cases came to know the culprits through online platforms, representing an increase of 29% when compared with the previous year.

Police will continue to pay attention to the trend of sexual offences and collaborate with relevant stakeholders for targeted publicity and public education, focusing on strengthening the awareness of adolescents in protecting themselves and preventing sexual offences on the Internet.

5. Deception

19 249 deception cases were recorded, representing a significant increase by 24%. Over 70% of the reports were Internet-related. The jump was mainly driven by the upsurge of cases in compensated dating scams (1 743 cases), romance scams (1 659 cases), investment fraud (1 511 cases) and online employment fraud (1 063 cases), noting a soar ranging from 80% to 3.5 folds respectively. Telephone deception registered a decrease of 53 cases to 1 140 cases, however, the pecuniary loss involved rose by 41% to \$810 million.

In 2021, Police collaborated with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies in a series of intelligence-led joint operations, neutralising multiple cross-boundary deception syndicates with the arrest of 85 scammers involving in over 260 online deception cases and telephone deception cases occurred in Hong Kong. In addition, five cases of investment fraud involving over \$2 billion were detected with \$1.4 billion worth of assets frozen.

Police comprehensively disseminated anti-deception messages, which included organising “Anti-Deception Month”, launching “ADCC One-stop Platform” website and the ongoing “CyberDefenders’ Months” to raise the awareness of relevant industries and the public on information security and prevention of Internet traps. The Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) continued to contribute by intercepting over \$2.3 billion of payments in 833 deception cases.

6. Child abuse

There were 1 232 child abuse cases, registering an increase of 60%. Cases involving physical and sexual abuse saw a rise of 65.3% and 55.2% respectively.

Last October, Police launched an educational publicity campaign on child protection – “Let's T.A.L.K”. By encouraging the public to participate in parent-child activities to keep the body and mind fit, the campaign aimed to arouse public concerns about the well-being of young people and enhance children’s awareness on self-protection.

7. Serious drug offences

There were 1 570 serious drug cases, representing an increase of 37%. Due to stringent immigration control measures imposed globally during the

pandemic, trafficking syndicates shifted to the smuggling of mega quantities of drugs through sea and air freights. Last year, Police had stepped up the proactive combat of drug offences by flexibly deploying resources in response to the trend, resulting in a record-breaking seizure of cocaine (706kg, estimated value of over \$940 million) and ketamine (1 266kg, estimated value of over \$840 million). Seizures of various drugs also recorded increases, ranging from 20% to 6 folds.

8. Youth crime

A total of 3 021 youngsters were arrested for committing criminal offences, recording a drop of 966 persons (-24.2%). That said, the number of youngsters arrested for serious drug offences rose by 112 persons to 430 persons. Among them, the number of arrested juveniles aged 10 to 15 increased by 1.1 folds, indicating a rising trend of younger teenagers being exploited in drug trafficking activities.

Police strives to combat the exploitation of youngsters for drug trafficking activities and to track down drug syndicates, as well as to proactively enhance youngsters' anti-drugs awareness. Further to the large-scale publicity campaign "Anti-drugs Month" last June, Police is launching a one-year "Leadership Institute on Narcotics" programme jointly with relevant stakeholders.

9. Enforcement on National Security Law

As at January 25, 2022, Police arrested a total of 162 persons. Of these, over 100 persons have been charged.

Commissioner's Operational Priorities 2022

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There are eight items for the Commissioner's Operational Priorities 2022, which include:

- safeguarding national security
- combating violent crimes
- combating triads, syndicated and organised crimes
- combating dangerous drugs
- combating quick cash crimes
- enhancing cyber security and combating technology crimes
- enhancing public safety
- enhancing counter-terrorism

Work focuses in 2022

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Firstly, to continue to safeguard national security and engage the whole community to counter terrorism. Police will continuously enhance intelligence gathering, proactively strengthen public readiness and responsiveness towards home-grown terrorism and self-radicalised acts through different media and activities, and encourage the public to make reports to Police. The assistance of the whole community is called upon to counter terrorism.

Secondly, to focus on fighting and preventing crimes. Police will continue to give priority to issues concerning law and order situation and livelihood conditions that are of public concerns, in particular crimes with cross-boundary elements, including deception, technology crime, serious drug offences, etc. In addition to carrying on intelligence-led operations, Police will make full use of thematic anti-crime campaigns to raise crime prevention awareness. In order to foster partnership in fighting crimes with Police, the public will be encouraged to build close neighborhood relations and actively report crimes to Police.

Thirdly, to enhance community engagement. Police will adopt proactive and extensive approach in public relations strategy, readily, timely and swiftly making responses towards policing issues through different media and channels, with a view to assisting the public in distinguishing fake information and winning public trust. As for matters of public concerns, Police will work with different sectors of the community and stakeholders to strengthen ties with the community. In particular, to enhance communication with youngsters and strengthen their crime prevention awareness, Police will take the initiative to enhance collaboration with schools, parents and relevant stakeholders.

