

LCQ11: Serious drug offences

Following is a question by the Hon Lau Kwok-fan and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (February 20):

Question:

Regarding serious drug offences (covering drug trafficking and manufacturing), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of persons arrested in each of the past 10 years for committing serious drug offences (set out by age group in a table);

(2) given that while the number of crimes concerning serious drug offences in 2018 has dropped as compared to that in the preceding year, the quantity of drugs seized over the same period has risen, whether the authorities have studied if there is a trend of serious drug offences being committed in a syndicated manner and on an expanded scale; and

(3) whether the Police have formulated targeted strategies with a focus on dealing a blow to the leaders and management of drug syndicates; if so, of the details and the effectiveness; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The reply to the question raised by the Hon Lau Kwok-fan is as follows:

(1) From 2009 to 2018, the number of persons arrested for committing serious drug offences (set out under the age groups of "aged under 21" and "aged 21 and over" respectively) is tabulated at Annex. The overall number (especially for the group "aged under 21") has shown a downward trend.

(2) In 2018, the Police and the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) detected a total of 1 621 cases involving serious drug offences (a decrease of about 7.7 per cent when compared with 2017), and the provisional figure of seized drugs was 2 129 kilograms (a decrease of about 16 per cent when compared with 2017). Law enforcement figures and related intelligence have not indicated that syndicated drug trafficking or serious drug offences are on an expanded scale. The Police and C&ED are committed to combatting serious drug offences and will remain vigilant in closely monitoring the changes of related crime trends.

(3) The Police take intelligence-led law enforcement and work closely with local law enforcement agencies as well as those outside Hong Kong to combat drug trafficking syndicates. Depending on the circumstances of individual cases, the Police would prosecute the masterminds of syndicates for conspiracy to traffic in dangerous drugs. For drug traffickers who use minors in undertaking illegal drug activities, the Police would seek a more severe

sentence from the court in accordance with the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134). From 2012 to 2018, the sentences on the offenders were increased by 1.5 months to three years in a total of 16 cases.