

# LCQ21: Preventing crimes of child abduction

Following is a question by the Hon Judy Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (June 7):

Question:

It is learnt that incidents of alleged child abduction have recently occurred in a number of districts in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of reports and requests for assistance regarding alleged child abduction received by the Police in the past five years and, among them, the number of children who were successfully found;
- (2) of the number of persons arrested for allegedly to have abducted children in the past five years and, among them, the number of those who were convicted and the penalties imposed on them;
- (3) whether the Police has drawn up measures to prevent the crime of child abduction; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) whether the Police will consider stepping up efforts in organising talks at schools to teach school children to be aware of strangers and what they should do when they are being abducted; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Police have all along been highly concerned about child abduction and have attached great importance to these cases. All reports of child abduction will be proactively investigated and seriously handled. The reply to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) and (2) In combat against child abduction, related offences under the existing laws of Hong Kong are "forcible taking or detention of person, with intent to sell him or her" under section 42 and "stealing child under 14 years" under section 43 of the Offences against the Person Ordinance (Cap. 212) (OAPO) and "abduction of child or juvenile" under section 26 of the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance (Cap. 213) (PCJO).

Police statistics on criminal cases are based on the classification of cases confirmed after investigation. As for cases and convictions involving child abduction between 2018 and 2022, the Police Force received a case on

"kidnapping and child stealing" that occurred in 2021. The Police detected the case and located the child involved, who sustained only minor injuries. Of the two arrested persons in the case, one was charged with two counts of "forcible taking or detention of person, with intent to sell him or her" for suspected contravention of section 42 of OAP0, and was on remand pending trial. The other arrested person was released after investigation. Among the court cases concluded in the same period, no one was prosecuted for "stealing child under 14 years" under section 43 of OAP0 or "abduction of child or juvenile" under section 26 of PCJ0.

In addition, the Police had carried out in-depth investigation into the recent reports of suspected child abduction in various districts as mentioned in the question and found that child abduction was not involved.

(3) and (4) Child abduction is a very serious offence. The Police are resolute in taking swift follow-up actions to investigate seriously any child abduction case that occurs. To allay public concerns, the Police will release details of the investigation as soon as possible and step up patrols in the vicinity of the incidents. Moreover, through Police Community Relations Officers and School Liaison Officers, the Police maintain close liaison with schools and provide them with necessary support. Talks are also organised on a regularly basis to disseminate crime prevention information to teachers and students and to advise them what to do when they need help.