

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****CSTB217****(Question Serial No. 1954)**Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not SpecifiedProgramme: (5) Public LibrariesControlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Culture, Sports and TourismQuestion:

Regarding the management of public libraries, will the Government please reply on the following:

1. Tabulate the inspection work initiated by the Government in reviewing whether public library books comply with the Hong Kong National Security Law in the past 3 years with a breakdown by year and 18 administrative districts:

	2022		
	Number of inspections initiated by the Government in reviewing whether public library books comply with the Hong Kong National Security Law	Number of books reviewed during inspections initiated by the Government	Number of books which were found not comply with the Hong Kong National Security Law after inspections initiated by the Government
Central and Western District			
Eastern District			
Southern District			
Wan Chai District			
Kowloon City District			
Kwun Tong District			
Sham Shui Po District			
Wong Tai Sin District			
Yau Tsim Mong District			
Sha Tin District			
Sai Kung District			
North District			

Tai Po District			
Yuen Long District			
Tuen Mun District			
Tsuen Wan District			
Kwai Tsing District			
Islands District			

- List out by year the number of complaints received by the Government about public library books which may be in breach of the Hong Kong National Security Law in the past 3 years and, among which, the number of those substantiated;
- What measures have been put in place by the Government in the past 3 years to ensure that public library books comply with the requirements of the Hong Kong National Security Law and what were the expenditures involved?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 36)

Reply:

- The collection of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) is inter-connected by an integrated computer system, so that users may easily reserve, borrow or return library materials across libraries through the Library Catalogue and computer system without restrictions on districts. The collection development of the HKPL, including the review of library books, is also planned and managed as an overall system.

The review of library books is a routine and ongoing task. Libraries in various districts have already included the safeguarding of national security as one of the considerations in their daily collection management work. Any library material in the HKPL system which is found suspected of breaching the Hong Kong National Security Law or related legal requirements will be immediately removed from library shelves in all libraries. Only when the library material concerned is ascertained upon careful examination that its content does not violate the relevant laws will it be put on library shelves again.

- The number of complaint cases received by the HKPL about books which may be in breach of the Hong Kong National Security Law in the past 3 financial years is 1 120. Most of them are repeated cases or complaints involving the same books/authors. The numbers by year are tabulated below:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>The number of complaint cases about books which are in breach of the National Security Law</b>
2020-21	1 076
2021-22	26
2022-23 (as at 28 February 2023)	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 120</b>

The HKPL has completed a preliminary review of the relevant library materials and has arranged for the withdrawal of books which are suspected of breaching the Hong Kong National Security Law or related legal requirements or are contrary to the interests of national security according to the criteria set up based on legal advice, with a view to ensuring that materials contrary to the interests of national security will not be included in the library collection.

3. In tandem with the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law, the HKPL has re-examined and updated the procedures for and guidelines on purchasing library materials and accepting donations of books and periodicals. Safeguarding national security has now been included as one of the considerations to ensure that library collections for loan/use by members of the public free of charge conform to the laws of Hong Kong. In addition to carefully selecting library materials to be included in the library collection, the HKPL also proactively examines the existing items in various libraries. Any library material which is found suspected of breaching the Hong Kong National Security Law or related legal requirements will be removed from library shelves immediately. Only when the library material concerned is ascertained upon careful examination that its content does not violate the relevant laws will it be put on library shelves again. The HKPL is continuously reviewing its library materials, which is a dynamic and ongoing process. It also organises training and experience sharing sessions to enhance the knowledge of its staff on the relevant work so as to ensure that the library collection does not contain materials that are in breach of the Hong Kong National Security Law. At present, the relevant work is carried out with the existing resources of the Department and no additional expenditure is involved.

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