

as conducting weekly coordination meetings. In addition, under the Regulation of Organisational Structure of the IACM and the General Regulation of Public Areas, the IACM is responsible for monitoring progress with roadworks. However, regarding approval of construction period and calculation of exact number of construction days, the department had long been failing to exercise its control. The audit report also disclosed irregular situations with IACM, in which supervisory staff overstepped their superior's authority to approve suspension of roadworks, resulting in IACM's inability to better understand and solve all overdue cases.

In order to maintain good communication with the audit industry and get to know the newest information related to auditing, in September, the Commissioner of Audit, Ho Veng On, attended as an observer the Fifth Conference of the Supreme Audit Institutions of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (OISC/CPLP) held in Funchal-Madeira, Portugal, and presented a paper entitled "The Role of Audit Institutions in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

In November, the Commissioner of Audit, Ho Veng On, led a delegation to attend the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau Audit Conference 2017 organised by the Audit Office of Guangdong Province in Meizhou, and exchanged views on audit issues of mutual concern with the Director of the Audit Commission of Hong Kong and the Director General of the Audit Office of Guangdong Province.

On 5 June 2017, the 2017 Audit Seminar for SAIs along the "Belt and Road Routes", organised by the China National Audit Office (CNAO), commenced in Nanjing. The Director of the Commissioner of Audit's Office and the Director of Audit Bureau were invited to participate, to gain an overview of China's economic and social development and government audit, and exchange opinions with other participants. In addition, on the invitation of China Audit Society, the Director of Audit Bureau led a delegation to Taipei in August, to participate in the "Cross-Strait, Hong Kong and Macao Audit Theories and Practices Conference 2017" and presented papers on the related topics.

In order to enhance auditors' professional knowledge, the CA joined hands with the Macau Society of Registered Auditors to organise the Audit Professional Workshop in 2017. Six experienced auditors with great achievements in the industry shared information about risk management of large-scale infrastructure projects, information risk, internal control, information technology auditing, internal auditing, ways to determine important information demarcation points, effective cyber security risk management, and effective management of reputation, crises and incidents.

Regarding publicity and promotion, the CA continued organising talks on auditing culture for cadets of the Academy of Macao Public Security Forces who were attending promotion preparation programmes, and newly recruited public administration workers. At the invitation of public departments, the CA also promoted optimisation of use of public funds to relevant public servants. In all, 43 talks were held during the year, attended by some 1,200 participants.

Central Government Recognises Macao's Judiciary Work, and the Public Prosecutions Office Upholds Social Justice

Numbers of cases handled by the three-tier court system

2017	The Court of Final Appeal	The Court of Second Instance	The Court of First Instance (including the Examining Magistracy)	The Administrative Court	Total
Cases handled	89	1,241	21,591	1,095	24,016
Cases concluded	69	1,122	21,135	138	22,464
Cases pending	65	740	13,392	1,485	15,682

The majority of the cases in the three-tier court system were criminal cases and criminal labour cases, which totalled 9,432 (excluding Examining Magistracy cases). Ranking second were civil and labour cases, which totalled 5,375. There were also 1,301 administrative cases, and 7,908 other cases.

Law promotion and legal consulting services



To strengthen the promotion of the law and foster transparency of the judicial system, starting from 9 October 2013, the court issues press releases about typical concluded cases, and publishes them on the websites of the court and the Government Information Bureau. Various media may republish and report on these cases, which can hopefully promote legal awareness and law abidance

in society, and inform the public regarding the judicial approaches and methods for settling various disputes. As at the end of 2017, an accumulated total of 466 articles had been released, 40 of which were released in 2017.

In 2017, the Information Office of the Court of First Instance and the Small Claims Court continued to provide consulting services, with details as follows:

2017	The Court of First Instance	The Small Claims Court
Number of enquiries received	9,498	1,566
Number of cases involved	9,043	1,566
Number of enquiries directly handled by the Information Centre	8,410	1,566
Number of enquiries transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office	544	-
Number of enquiries transferred to other departments	89	-
Telephone enquiries	2,534	-

Legal assistance and enforcement

Regarding delivery of judicial writs and assistance in investigations and evidence collection in civil and commercial cases, in 2017 the Court of Final Appeal received 165 judicial writs from mainland China courts, and delivered 42 judicial writs to mainland China courts on behalf of courts in Macao.

In 2017, the Court of Second Instance received 25 requests for reviewing and endorsing judgments made by mainland China courts or arbiters; no judgments endorsed by the Court of Second Instance were sent to the Court of First Instance for enforcement.

Declarations of assets and interests

In 2017, the Court of Final Appeal followed the regulations in Law No.11/2003, which had been amended according to Law No.1/2013, in the process of receiving individuals for the declaration of assets. It opened 138 individual dossiers, processed 2,109 documents for the declaration of assets that involved 1,615 people, and organised and updated the contents of the individual dossiers according to the law.

According to the regulations stipulated in Clause 1 of Article 4 in Law No.1/2013, effective from April 2013; and Clause 2 of Article 21 in Law No.11/2003, which was amended according to the former law, the office of the Court of Final Appeal has uploaded the fourth part of the disclosure document of asset declaration to the website of the Courts of Macao, ensuring it is

available in the public domain as required by law.

In 2017, the disclosure documents (part four) of 378 individual dossiers involving 277 people were published online and could be retrieved. A total of 2,310 disclosure documents involving 647 people have been published online and can be retrieved.

Central Government highly praises Macao's judiciary work, while further achievement strived for in judicial system reform

According to President of the Court of Final Appeal Sam Hou Fai, speaking at the opening ceremony of the 2017-2018 judicial year, Macao's three tiers of courts have adhered to the requirements of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region, throughout the past 18 years following its reunification with the motherland. With consideration of the profound changes occurring after the reunification and the actual situation in Macao, the three tiers of courts have continued to explore and summarise experiences, and joined hands with the Government and the Legislative Assembly to facilitate the rule of law and optimise the judicial system. As a result, judicial independence and justice have been effectively guaranteed, and the principle of "One country, two systems" could be thoroughly implemented in the judicial area. Such achievements have been recognised by the Central People's Government and the general public of Macao.

In May 2017, the Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, Mr Zhang Dejiang, visited Macao under the directive of President Xi Jinping. During his visit, Mr Zhang visited the Court of Final Appeal. After being briefed about the courts and the Public Prosecutions Office, Mr Zhang highly praised the work of the Macao judiciary on behalf of President Xi and the Central People's Government. He commented that Macao's judiciary has continuously explored optimising its judicial system, and the Central People's Government fully recognised its contribution to the successful implementation of "One country, two systems". Mr Zhang also advised members of the judiciary to exercise its authority carefully and lawfully for the people, and reminded them to always keep this in mind and act accordingly.

President of the Court of Final Appeal Sam Hou Fai also pointed out that in spite of the various difficulties and limitations faced, to strike a balance between judicial justice and efficiency, establishing an innovative and cost-efficient judicial system would be one of the most important quests in judicial reform. Thus, he proposed the following:

- 1. To amend the litigation system and simplify the proceedings.** At present, the Government is conducting preliminary studies on amending the Civil Procedural Code, in the hope of gauging views on how to simplify proceedings and raise judicial efficiency by abandoning the old concepts and systems and expediting amendments to the law, while taking into account the principle of "One country, two systems" and the actual situation in Macao.
- 2. To amend the Judicial Organisation Framework Law and increase judicial economy.** The case involving the former Prosecutor General, which was adjudicated in the Court of Final Appeal, again highlighted the importance and urgency of amending the law. Emphasis should be put on adjusting and optimising jurisdiction, and making the best

use of the existing resources of the courts, to raise judicial efficiency and protect the right of appeal of litigants, in order to enhance judicial justice.

- 3. To establish a mediation system that matches the actual situation in Macao, and settle disputes through multiple methods.** Mediation is simple, fast, low-cost, and with high privacy, while also helping to maintain the relationship between the parties involved. Since this method of settling disputes fits the actual situation in Macao, Macao should formulate laws and develop a system to regulate mediation with reference to the experiences of mainland China and Hong Kong. An organisation dedicated to mediation should be set up; principles should be formulated for people to follow while performing mediation; and a quality, capable and widely-recognised team of mediators should be formed.



The operation of the Public Prosecutions Office of Macao in 2017 can be summed up as follows:

1. Adhered to the principle of striking a balance between quality and quantity in handling cases, and strived to maintain the rule of law and social justice. All cases with evidence were investigated, and no injustice or appeasement of crime was tolerated. The dignity of law was maintained, to ensure public order in Macao society, where the rule of law applies.
2. Exercised the prosecutorial functions vested in it by law. It conducted research on issues related to law enforcement, and provided legal advice on the development of Macao's legal

system and the maintenance of legality.

3. Leveraged its advantage of being a single organisational structure in handling significant and sensitive cases, and efficiently ensured normal proceedings with the collective intelligence of a dedicated working group.
4. Continued to regulate and strengthen the internal management of the Office of the Prosecutor General to ensure lawful recruitment of staff and operation of the Finance Committee.
5. Promoted the informatisation of its operations, by optimising the work flow and enhancing the efficiency of prosecution through application of advanced technology.

Regarding litigation cases, in 2017, the Public Prosecutions Office initiated investigations of 14,358 criminal cases, representing a decrease of 3.5 percent compared with 14,876 cases in 2016. A total of 16,303 cases were concluded, representing a decrease of 5.67 percent; 4,363 prosecutions were made, representing a decrease of 2.59 percent; 11,651 cases were filed, representing a decrease of 6.32 percent. According to analyses of the statistics, there were three major reasons for filing cases: inability to determine the identity of the offenders after investigations, insufficient evidence of crime, and victims not wishing to take the cases further. A total of 249 filed cases were re-investigated in light of new evidence, representing an increase of 56.6 percent.

In 2017, the judicial officers of the Prosecutorial Office at the Examining Magistracy actively cleared old cases and expedited handling of new cases. As a result, the number of backlog cases continued to decrease. A total of 8,711 cases in 2017 were transferred to 2018, representing a drop of 1,696 cases compared with 10,407 cases transferred to 2017, at the end of 2016.

In 2017, of all cases filed for investigation, the five top-ranked crimes were:

1. 4,756 cases of theft, robbery and property damage (a year-on-year decrease of 2.26 percent);
2. 1,699 cases of offences against physical integrity (a year-on-year increase of 3.79 percent);
3. 1,242 cases of crimes related to traffic accidents (a year-on-year decrease of 7.73 percent);
4. 1,164 cases of fraud and extortion (a year-on-year increase of 13.12 percent); and
5. 1,077 cases of crimes related to illegal immigration (a year-on-year decrease of 20.93 percent).

Crimes that saw a significant increase in the number of cases filed for investigation in 2017 compared with 2016 include: nine cases of cruelty to animals (a year-on-year increase of 800 percent); and 65 cases of domestic violence (a year-on-year increase of 333.33 percent). Such significant increases could be attributed to the fact that the Animal Protection Law and the Law on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence came into effect in September and November 2016, respectively. Meanwhile, in 2017, 58 cases of money-laundering were filed for investigation, representing a decrease of 73.99 percent compared with 223 cases in 2016. Besides, there were

248 cases involving drugs, representing a decrease of 15.36 percent compared with 293 cases in 2016, which signified that Macao has made another achievement in preventing and combating drug-related crimes.

Since 2015, the average number of cases transferred to the Court of First Instance for trial by the Public Prosecutions Office has been 4,000 every year. In 2017, the judicial officers of the Prosecutorial Office at the Court of First Instance handled trial hearings for 10,682 criminal cases and appeals for 51 cases and made 380 answers to appeals.

Apart from criminal cases, the Prosecutorial Office at the Court of First Instance also handled a large number of civil litigation, labour civil litigation and administrative litigation cases. In 2017, the judicial officers participated in and attended 1,397 trial hearings for civil cases.

In handling labour litigation cases, the Public Prosecutions Office started by performing mediation with regard to the characteristics of the disputes and on the principle of protecting the interests of labour. In 2017, the Public Prosecutions Office handled 892 cases in the Labour Tribunal: 493 were work-related accidents and occupational diseases, while 494 mediations were made, and only 34 cases required litigation due to failure to reach a mediation agreement; besides, 399 cases of ordinary labour litigation were initiated, while 349 mediations were made, and 10 cases required legal actions. Regarding the number of workers involved in the cases, 843 workers were involved in labour litigation cases mediated by Public Prosecutions Office, and 55 employees were involved in cases that required legal actions.

Moreover, to safeguard the legal interests of minors, members of vulnerable groups and the public, the Public Prosecutions Office exercises its authority to take part in the litigation of civil cases that involve minors, missing and incapacitated persons. In 2017, the Public Prosecutions Office handled 175 cases in the family and juvenile court, and 527 cases that involved interdiction, disqualification, curatorship, execution procedures of litigation costs, bankruptcy procedures, mandatory inventory procedures and demand procedures for tax clearance on behalf of the MSAR treasury.

In 2017, the numbers of both judicial appeals against administrative actions and administrative litigation cases increased significantly, with a year-on-year increase of 330 percent for the former and 100 percent for the latter. Such increases could be attributed to the rise in the number of cases of administrative penalties for online car hailing services, which totalled 1,300 between 2016 and 2017. Other cases included disputes over issues such as eligibility to purchase Home-Ownership Scheme Housing, eligibility to rent public housing, non-resident employees working for non-authorised entities, illegal operation of guesthouses, and tax.

In 2017, the Administrative Court office of the Public Prosecutions Office handled a total of 1,250 judicial appeals, 26 litigation cases, and 19 cases involving urgent procedures; reviewed and submitted 2,695 pleadings; and concluded 83 cases.

In 2017, the five judicial officers of the Prosecutorial Offices at the Court of Final Appeal and the Court of Second Instance participated in 1,120 criminal, civil and administrative cases before

the Court of Second Instance, and gave 907 opinions on appeals or answers to appeals; handled 65 cases before the Court of Final Appeal Office, and gave 60 opinions on appeals or answers to appeals.

Moreover, in 2017 the Public Prosecutions Office handled a total of 82 criminal, civil and commercial cases involving judicial assistance. The situation was similar to that of 2016, in which there were 85 cases.

Regarding regional criminal judicial assistance between Macao and mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, in view of objective historical reasons and the actual situation, at present, Macao is still awaiting the enactment of related laws and regulations, especially those involving the transfer of fugitive offenders.