

Government's reports on budget implementation for 2010. In addition, the Follow-up Committee for Public Finance Affairs received an explanation from the Secretary for Economy and Finance in regard to interim report. During the normal operation period of the Legislative Assembly, legislators submitted 466 written and 49 oral questions to the Government, and held nine plenary meetings for these enquiries. During the plenary meetings, legislators presented 224 pre-agenda speeches, relating to politics, society, the economy, culture, administration and other matters of public interest for Macao.

Efficient and fair trials and stringent action in criminal prosecution

Continued increase in caseload at all tiers of the court system and sharp rise in appeal cases

In 2012, caseloads at Macao's three tiers of the court system continued to increase, reaching a record high of 17,626 cases. Of these, 87 were filed with the Court of Final Appeal, 1,057 with the Court of Second Instance, 16,289 with the Lower Court, and 193 with the Administrative Court. The drastic rise in the number of cases filed with the Court of Final Appeal and the Court of Second Instance indicates that residents were dissatisfied with the administrative actions of government officials, and strongly sought review by the judiciary.



The three-tier court system concluded 17,801 cases in 2012, of which 83 were concluded by the Court of Final Appeal, with 10 more cases pending; 992 were concluded by the Court of Second Instance, with 777 further cases pending; 16,471 were concluded by the Court of First Instance, with 8,209 cases pending; and 255 were concluded by the Administrative Court, with 107 cases pending.

Assistance in and processing of litigation involving foreign parties

As well as handling cases in Macao, the Court of Second Instance also has the power to review and endorse judgments made by courts or arbiters outside Macao. In 2012, some 36 cases were heard and endorsed by the Collegial Panel, while one case was rejected. Countries and regions involved in these cases, which deal with custody, inheritance and divorce, were mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United States, Australia, Canada and Cape Verde.

According to the Agreement on the Delivery of Judicial Writs and Evidence in Civil and Commercial Cases between Mainland and Macao SAR Courts, in 2012, the Court of Final Appeal received 26 judicial writs from mainland China courts, and delivered 56 judicial writs to mainland China courts on behalf of courts in Macao.

According to the Protocol on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons signed by the governments of Portugal and Macao, and the Arrangement between the Government of the Macao Special Administration Region and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons, the Examining Magistracy received and filed 16 transfer requests from the Government in 2012, among which five were successful, all of them involving Hong Kong.

Facilitate construction of the new office tower for judicial departments

Because of insufficient facilities, it had been necessary for the Court of First Instance and its judges to conduct court sessions and work in commercial premises. In December 2011 and August 2012, accidents occurred at the offices used by the Lower Court and the Examining Magistracy, affecting the operation of the judiciary. To resolve these problems, the Chief Executive accelerated construction of provisional facilities for the Lower Court and the Court of Final Appeal, and the courts have also rented a number of floors in commercial buildings in view that a number of judges have been recruited to meet urgent needs. Other solutions will be adopted gradually to solve these problems entirely.

In 2012, the Public Prosecutions Office steadfastly performed its duties according to the law, which included combating criminal activities, prosecuting criminal cases and ensuring public security. Adhering to the principles of independence, justice and impartiality, the courts made adjustments and changes according to the political and economic conditions and the social development of Macao, and continued to enhance the efficiency of court hearings.

Public security safeguarded through criminal prosecutions

In 2012, the total number of criminal cases filed and investigated by the Public Prosecutions Office increased by four percent compared with the figure in 2011, most of which were theft, robbery, damage to property, physical assaults, drug crimes, crimes against public security, organised crime, illegal behaviour resulting from traffic incidents, forgery, illegal acts by public servants and computer crime.

The number of serious crimes also showed a rising trend. For instance, the number of drug-related crimes increased by 22 percent, the number of crimes against public security increased by 20 percent, while the level of organised crime increased by 17 percent. Such increases also show the complexity of the overall law and order situation in Macao. Among the cases of organised crime filed, 41 were pandering and 16 were human trafficking. While boosting the growth of economy, the rapid development of the gaming industry has also brought uncertain factors to Macao, which could threaten local residents' and visitors' personal safety and properties. Over the past year, 998

cases of traffic contraventions were filed, representing an increase of 11 percent, most of which were evasion of traffic accident liability, followed by drunk driving.

Criminal investigation and litigation

In 2012, the Public Prosecutions Office filed 12,172 criminal cases, 438 more than in 2011, representing an increase of four percent. Among these cases, 752 were serious crimes filed and investigated by the special unit of the office, representing an increase of seven percent. Over the year, the Public Prosecutions Office concluded 11,633 cases, a year-on-year increase of nine percent; and reinitiated 78 cases, a decrease of 11 percent compared with the level of the previous year.

With regard to criminal investigation and legal proceedings, the Public Prosecutions Office prosecuted 2,877 cases involving 3,810 crimes under ordinary procedures in 2012, representing a year-on-year increase of nine percent. A total of 3,742 suspects were prosecuted, 266 of whom were remanded in custody, and 4,914 were sentenced to direct or recommended enforcement measures.

There were 1,291 special procedural actions taken directly or recommended by the Public Prosecutions Office, including detentions, searches and covert surveillance. Furthermore, the Public Prosecutions Office applied to have 940 cases heard with simplified proceedings. There were 8,559 cases shelved due to insufficient evidence, after investigation by the Public Prosecutions Office, representing an increase of 10 percent.

In processing cases involving juveniles under the minimum age of criminal liability, 16 years old, the Public Prosecutions Office filed 84 cases, and according to the law, referred 140 suspects under the age of 16 to the Lower Court for its further handling.

Monitor law enforcement to safeguard legal rights

The Public Prosecutions Office participated in 1,075 cases before the Court of Final Appeal and the Court of Second Instance. These included criminal, civil and administrative cases, conflicts between jurisdictional and judicial power, and recognition of extra-jurisdictional verdicts. The office issued 830 written opinions and attended 327 court hearings or consultation meetings. The Public Prosecutions Office initiated 824 administrative cases in the Lower Court, of which 78 involved labour contract disputes, 433 mediation cases involved employment-related injuries, accident and occupation diseases, 75 procedural dossiers concerning investigation of family identity, and 170 civil dossiers were initiated along with proceedings concerning parental rights, labour, prohibited products and child custody. In its role as custodian of under-age citizens, the Public Prosecutions Office initiated 58 cases concerning proceedings on mandatory property inventories. In the implementation of procedures, the Public Prosecutions Office initiated 363 applications concerning the collection of litigation fees, and represented the Finance Services Bureau in one application demanding settlement of unpaid taxes. The office received 288 applications for judicial assistance. The Public Prosecutions Office branch in the Administrative Court participated in the conclusion of 150 administrative actions which involved hearings about tax payments and administration disputes. The Public Prosecutions Office and the Office of the Prosecutor-General also offered legal inquiry services to a total of 8,700 citizens.