

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

DEVB(PL)308

(Question Serial No. 6818)

Head: (91) Lands Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Land Administration
Controlling Officer: Director of Lands (Ms Bernadette LINN)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

- (1) How many private columbaria are still in operation notwithstanding that their operation are in breach of lease conditions or that they are unlawfully occupying government land?
- (2) How many complaints about suspected cases of unauthorised columbaria were received by the Lands Department in the previous year? Of these, how many have been handled and how many identified as confirmed cases of unauthorised columbaria?
- (3) How many inspections were conducted in the previous year? How many columbaria were found to be unauthorised during these self-initiated inspections?
- (4) How many lease enforcement, land control or legal actions were taken in the previous year to rectify the irregularities of the columbaria concerned? What are the relevant details?
- (5) Given the growing problem of unauthorised development of private columbaria, will the Government consider allocating additional resources for conducting inspections and taking lease enforcement actions? What are the details?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (Member Question No. 136)

Reply:

The responses to (1) to (5) of the question are as follows:

- (1) Based on the Information on Private Columbaria (the List) published by the Development Bureau on 30 December 2016, 99 private columbaria were found to have breached the land lease/tenancy/permit terms and/or have illegally occupied government land for columbarium use (“unauthorised columbaria”).

- (2) In 2016, the Lands Department (Lands D) received 29 complaints against suspected cases of unauthorised columbaria. Three of these complaints, involving two cases, are under investigation. The remaining 26 complaints, involving 15 cases, have been handled. Among these 15 cases, three have been identified as confirmed cases of unauthorised columbaria and the rest do not involve columbarium use.
- (3)&(4) Lease enforcement and land control actions taken by Lands D against unauthorised columbaria in 2016 are set out in the following table:

Number of site inspections (involving suspected/confirmed unauthorised columbaria)	550
Number of advisory/warning letters issued (involving 48 confirmed unauthorised columbaria and two suspected unauthorised columbaria)	64
Number of warning letters registered in the Land Registry	30
Number of notices issued under section 6(1) of the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap. 28)	6

- (5) The staff expenses for lease enforcement work involving columbaria in 2017-18 is expected to be maintained at around the same level as 2016-17.

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