(Question Serial No. 4395)

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

Question:

According to media reports, unlawful occupation of government land by ancestral graves occasionally happens. Are there any regular inspections of burial grounds for indigenous villagers in the New Territories conducted by the Lands Department and the District Lands Offices? Please set out the respective numbers of proactive inspections in which the irregularities were detected, complaints received, confirmed cases of unlawful occupation of government land and subsequent rectifications in the past five years.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 117)

Reply:

The Lands Department (LandsD) mainly conducts site inspections in response to complaints/enquiries from the public/the media or referrals from other departments. Complaints involving burials within permitted burial grounds (PBGs) handled by LandsD in the past five years (2015 to 2019) are as follows–

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Year</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Number of complaints received involving burials within PBGs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Number of complaints confirmed as unlawful occupation of government land within PBGs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Number of cases with burials cleared from PBGs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: As the processing of a case may straddle different years, these figures may not necessarily correspond to each other in the same year.
LandsD received in end 2019 a number of complaints about suspected illegal burials without specific details indicating whether they are within PBGs. The relevant District Offices will arrange joint site inspection with respective District Lands Offices to ascertain their locations and to investigate whether these complaints are substantiated before considering how these complaints should be handled and reflected in the statistics.

LandsD also conducts routine site inspections on black spots from time to time subject to manpower availability. LandsD does not have information readily available on the number of such inspections.