

HONG KONG STANDARD
29 SEP 1996

Brothel closures 'on target'

By Kate Morrow

POLICE are stepping up measures to close 100 Mong Kok vice establishments by the end of the year.

Deputy District Commander for Mong Kok Senior Superintendent Lawrence Leung Lau-on said 62 vice establishments had already closed this year.

He said a further 18 would be closed this week.

In April, Mong Kok District Commander Chief Superintendent Richard Best made a pledge to close 100 vice dens by December.

"I am very confident we will reach the target by the end of the year," Sen Supt Leung said.

"In addition, 46 vice-operators have been prosecuted and are awaiting a court hearing."

Sen Supt Leung is also calling for the closure period of brothels to be doubled.

Under existing legislation, vice establishments are closed for six months once owners of the premises receive two convictions.

"We have written to police headquarters asking to extend the closure order of vice establishments from six months to one year," he said.

"We think the longer the owners are out of business, the stronger the deterrent will be."

The matter has been handed over to the Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crime)

"If the request is reasonable, it will go to the policy branch for legal amendment," a spokesman said.

Sen Supt Leung said it took 19 months to close a brothel from the first raid to the court hearing.

To shorten the time he recommends a reduction in the four-month period of grace offered to the owners of vice-establishments.

Sen Supt Leung said the grace period allowed brothel owners time to clean up their act, but he argues that four months was too long and it should be cut to two months.