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## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2009-02958

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** BOMB ALERTS LINKED TO DISSIDENTS

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

How many bomb alerts linked to dissidents did police and army deal with from January 1 2009 to September 21 2009?

#### Answer

The cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450 and the reasons for this are explained below.

Several departments within the Police Service of Northern Ireland were contacted in relation to this part of your request; however, I have been informed that this information is not held centrally. District Command Units were also canvassed as to whether they held any information regarding the amount of bomb alerts dealt with by police, and for cost estimates for retrieving this information, if held. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that there is no standardised way to collate the requested information within different districts, which is why some districts may be able to retrieve the information and provide a response within the time permitted under the FOI legislation and other districts would have to carry out prolonged searches. Several of the responses from the districts indicated that their search for information would involve a manual trawl of various information sources and would amount to the cost of complying with your request exceeding the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450 (18 hours). Queries indicated the retrieval of the information from all eight districts would take at least 38 hours.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland have also considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine this part of your request to bring it under the cost limit. However, the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice with regard to question 1 and this part of your request has therefore been closed.

#### Question 2

How many of the alerts turned out to be actual bombs - please list type of devices?

#### Answer

Because we are unable to obtain an answer to question 1 within cost, we are unable to quantify how many recorded bomb alerts turned out to be actual bombs.

However I can advise you that Central Statistics Unit have a record of 36 bombing incidents in the period 1st January 2009 to 21st September 2009. This includes all incidents where a bombing device exploded or was defused (neutralised). Please see list below.

Date	Bomb Type	Attribution <sup>1</sup>	Type of Explosive <sup>2</sup>	Exploded/Defused
06-Jan-09	Pipe Bomb	Republican	HME	Defused
06-Jan-09	IED <sup>3</sup>	Republican	HME	Exploded
27-Jan-09	Vehicle Bomb	Republican	HME	Defused
28-Jan-09	Pipe Bomb	Other/Not Known	HME	Exploded
04-Feb-09	Blast Bomb	Other/Not Known	HME	Defused
04-Feb-09	Pipe Bomb	Loyalist	HME	Defused
07-Feb-09	Coffee Jar	Other/Not Known	HME	Exploded
10-Feb-09	Pipe Bomb	Republican	HME	Defused
18-Feb-09	Pipe Bomb	Other/Not Known	HME	Exploded
25-Feb-09	Pipe Bomb	Other/Not Known	HME	Exploded
09-Mar-09	Pipe Bomb	Loyalist	HME	Defused
21-Mar-09	Pipe Bomb	Other/Not Known	HME	Defused
16-Apr-09	Pipe Bomb	Republican	HME	Exploded
12-May-09	IED <sup>3</sup>	Republican	HME	Defused
27-May-09	Coffee Jar	Republican	HME	Defused
28-May-09	Blast Bomb	Republican	HME	Exploded
15-Jun-09	Coffee Jar	Republican	HME	Defused
18-Jun-09	Pipe Bomb	Other/Not Known	HME	Exploded
30-Jun-09	Pipe Bomb	Loyalist	HME	Defused
03-Jul-09	Pipe Bomb	Other/Not Known	HME	Defused
10-Jul-09	Pipe Bomb	Republican	HME	Defused
13-Jul-09	Blast Bomb	Republican	HME	Exploded
13-Jul-09	Blast Bomb	Republican	HME	Exploded
13-Jul-09	Pipe Bomb	Republican	HME	Exploded
24-Jul-09	Pipe Bomb	Other/Not Known	HME	Exploded
24-Jul-09	Pipe Bomb	Other/Not Known	HME	Exploded
15-Aug-09	Pipe Bomb	Loyalist	HME	Exploded
15-Aug-09	IED <sup>3</sup>	Loyalist	HME	Defused
20-Aug-09	Pipe Bomb	Loyalist	HME	Defused
28-Aug-09	IED <sup>3</sup>	Republican	HME	Exploded
01-Sep-09	Command Wired IED	Republican	HME	Defused
11-Sep-09	Pipe Bomb	Republican	HME	Exploded
11-Sep-09	Pipe Bomb	Republican	HME	Defused
17-Sep-09	Under Car Booby Trap	Other/Not Known	HME	Defused
21-Sep-09	IED <sup>3</sup>	Republican	HME	Defused
21-Sep-09	Blast Incendiary	Republican	HME	Exploded

<sup>1</sup> Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available and does not necessarily indicate the involvement of a paramilitary organisation.

<sup>2</sup> Type of explosive can be either HME (Home Made Explosive), Semtex or Commercial.

<sup>3</sup> Improvised Explosive Device.

Note: An individual bombing incident may involve one or more explosive devices. Incidents recorded include explosions and defusings. Incidents involving hoax devices, petrol bombings or incendiaries are excluded.

### Question 3

How many of those bombs contained Semtex?

### Answer

Between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 to 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009, none of the devices used in the bombing incidents listed above contained semtex.

### Question 4

How many Dissident Republican attacks did police thwart from January 1 2009 to September 21 2009?

### Answer

Searches were conducted which failed to locate any records or documents to the level of detail outlined in your request and based on the information you have provided. Accordingly I have determined that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not hold the information to which you seek access. District Command Units were probed for information, however, they have advised that this information is not quantifiable as the number of attacks which have been impeded

as a result of police activity such as checkpoints and high visibility patrols cannot be known. However, I have been advised by the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Central Statistic Unit that there were 10 bombing incidents attributed to Republicans that were defused by bomb disposal experts between 1st January 2009 - 21st September 2009 as can be seen in the table above.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this email.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing [foi@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@psni.pnn.police.uk)

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ [www.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.