



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2010-03205

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Incidents of Hate Crime Against Church Property/Orange Halls

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

Question 1

Can you tell me please:

How many incidents of hate crime against Church property or on Church property have occurred in the past five years broken down by

- (1) year
- (2) type of crime
- (3) religious denomination of the targeted property ie: Catholic/Church of Ireland etc
- (4) policing district

Answer

Please see the table below which details sectarian motivated hate crimes on churches and chapels by year, policing district and crime type from 2007/2008 to 2009/2010. Please note individual records for symbolic premises data has only been recorded on the relevant PSNI system for the last three years. PSNI do not record the religious denomination of the churches, therefore this information is not held.

Question 2

Also, how many times have Orange halls been attacked in hate crimes in the past five years broken down by

- (1) year
- (2) type of crime
- (3) policing district

Answer

Please see the table below which details sectarian motivated hate crimes on orange halls by year, policing district and crime type from 2007/2008 to 2009/2010.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the 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 letter.

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.

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

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

**Sectarian motivated hate crimes on churches/chapels
by year, policing district and crime type
2007/08 to 2009/10**

	Churches / Chapels
Year	
2007/08	19
2008/09	37
2009/10	24
Total – all years	80
Policing District	
A	1
B	4
C	14
D	4
E	7
F	13
G	9
H	28
Total - all districts	80
Crime type	
Criminal Damage	68
Arson	4
Other ¹	8
Total – all crime types	80

Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit

¹Other includes theft, burglary, bomb hoax offences, causing explosion with intent to endanger life and intimidation.

**Sectarian motivated hate crimes on orange halls
by year, policing district and crime type
2007/08 to 2009/10**

	Orange Halls
Year	
2007/08	59
2008/09	59
2009/10	68
Total – all years	186
Policing District	
A	10
B	2
C	6
D	14
E	43
F	41
G	23
H	47
Total - all districts	186
Crime type	
Criminal Damage	117
Arson	34
Theft	21
Burglary	11
Other	3
Total – all crime types	186

Source: PSNI Central Statistics Unit

The figures in the tables above have been extracted from the PSNI's crime recording system and relate to all offences where a sectarian motivation has been recorded, occurring at churches/chapels or orange halls, and where the church/chapel or orange hall is the intended target. This ensures that PSNI figures on attacks on symbolic premises are included in the sectarian hate crime figures.

Definition of 'sectarian' motivation: Any occurrence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate (ACPO definition), will be recorded as having a hate motivation. A sectarian crime is therefore defined as any crime which is perceived to be sectarian by the victim or any other person. The term 'sectarian', whilst not clearly defined, is a term almost exclusively used in Northern Ireland to describe incidents of bigoted dislike or hatred of members of a different religious or political group. It is broadly accepted that within the Northern Ireland context an individual or group will be perceived to be Catholic or Protestant, Nationalist or Unionist, or Loyalist or Republican.

Data Quality: The PSNI's statistics on crimes with a sectarian motivation are derived from a motivation 'tick box' contained in the Occurrence Management Form which has to be completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported crime. The correct application of a sectarian motivation is not quality assured by the PSNI's Central Statistics Unit, but quarterly audits are conducted to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected.