



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-03086

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Hate Crime

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Subject: Hate Crime legislation: The Criminal Justice (No. 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004

Question: Please tell me how many people have been sentenced under this legislation since 2004 for offences relating to:

- a) racist hate crimes (i.e. offences aggravated by hostility based on someone's racial group)
- b) sectarian hate crime (i.e. offences aggravated by hostility based on someone's religious background of Catholic/Protestant).

Answer

This information is not held by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. You may wish to contact the Northern Ireland Court Service who hold information on sentencing. You may contact them using the link provided below;

<http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/AboutUs/Freedom%20of%20Information/Pages/default.aspx>

Question 2

Subject: Burning of Polish flags on Bonfires, July 12th 2012.

Background: In July this year, The Polish Association of NI highlighted the issue of burning Polish flags on bonfires as 'bigotry and hatred'. Furthermore, the SDLP's International Secretary Claire Hanna, refereed to this incident as 'hate crime', stating: "All hate crimes, whether it be those seen at the bonfires or the burning of Orange Halls or GAA premises, should be referred to the police so that justice can take its course." (Source: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/bigotry-and-hatred-behind-burning-of-polish-flags-in-belfast-must-stop-warns-group-16187003.html#ixzz22Oaae7bH>)

a): My question therefore is: did the PSNI record any of the Polish flag burning incidents on bonfires as 'hate crime'?

b): If not, I would just like to know why the PSNI did not treat these flag burning incidents as 'hate crime'? (This question refers to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in creating better public understanding of why public bodies such as the police make their decisions).

Answer

The PSNI recorded incidents where the Polish flag was burned as Hate Crime.

Question 3

Subject: Attacks on 'symbolic premises' (hate crimes): churches, GAA Clubs, Orange Halls, and schools

Please can you provide me with a breakdown of figures for Belfast (Policing Districts A and B) on the number of attacks on 'symbolic premises' since 2007?

Answer

Between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2012 there have been 44 attacks on symbolic premises recorded in Policing Districts A and B.

Attacks on symbolic premises are recorded where a crime has a sectarian motivation, where the premises is the intended target of the attack and where the premises is one of the following; a church or chapel, a GAA or Ancient Order of Hibernians Hall, an Orange Hall or Apprentice Boys Hall, or a school. These figures are a subset of sectarian motivated crimes.

Data accuracy: While crimes included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, the identification of a sectarian hate motivation is derived from a motivation 'tick box' on the system used by the PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime. The correct application of a hate motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, but quarterly audits are conducted to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected.

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.

