



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2014-05947

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Crimes At Churches

Request and Answer:

Question

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request details of the number of crimes recorded by police at each church, synagogue or other religion-related location in Northern Ireland, based on MO locations.

With this request I am seeking similar information to the response given in FOI reference number F-2014-03228 regarding crimes at pubs and nightclubs.

For each year from 2011 to 2014 so far (or for fewer years if necessary to bring this request within the time constraints of the FOI Act), please disclose the following:

- The number of crimes recorded by police at each church or religious location (i.e. the name of the church, its general location, and the number of crimes recorded)
- If possible please also give any available breakdown of the types of crimes recorded at churches/religious locations overall (e.g. the number of alleged thefts, number of assaults, etc); and the number of each type of crime recorded at each individual church/religious location.

Answer

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information.

I have decided not to release the specific addresses of the churches/religious buildings where the incidents occurred or specific details about the crime types down to individual crime record level as this would be low level data and this has been exempted by virtue of Section 31 of the Act.

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemptions, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

Section 31(1) (a) – Law Enforcement

Harm Test

To release low level statistics in relation to names and locations of churches in a particular area would be likely to assist criminals in identifying such premises which they may conclude are vulnerable to this type of theft. To identify a church which has been subject to these offences over the period in question may highlight that premises are an easy target for theft.

Public Interest Test

Factors Favouring Disclosure

Disclosing this information may increase awareness of Churches where thefts have occurred and highlight to the public to be more aware and lead to more information from the public.

Factors Favouring Retention

Release of the information may lead to more crime being committed at these premises. A fear of crime could be realised and the prevention or detection of crime could be hindered.

Decision

Disclosure of the specific breakdown of the specific information requested would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime by revealing low level statistics relating to identifiable church premises where these thefts have occurred. This would compromise the law enforcement tactics of the PSNI and put individuals at risk. Although there are valid arguments for disclosure of the information, in this case they are outweighed by the strong public interest in the prevention of crime.

Instead find attached a spreadsheet giving details for all crimes that were recorded from the 1st January 2011 to the 31st December 2014 where the Occurrence MO location sub type was listed as 'Church/Religious Building' broken down by year and town area. In addition, the spreadsheet also contains a table of recorded offences where the location MO subtype is 'Church/Religious Building' broken down by crime type.

PSNI can neither confirm nor deny that it holds any other information with regard to an exempt body as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 23(5) Information Supplied by, or concerning, certain Security Bodies.

Section 23 is a class based absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest in this case.

Confirming or denying the existence of whether any other information is held would contravene the constrictions laid out within Section 23 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in that this stipulates a generic bar on disclosure of any information applied by, or concerning, certain Security Bodies.

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.

Notes:

Source: PSNI Statistics Branch

Data presented consists of all crimes that were recorded from 1st January 2011 to 31st December 2014 where the Occurrence MO location sub type was 'Church/Religious Building'. Please note that offences may have occurred within the vicinity of a church or within church grounds. A count of the number of offences that were reported at or within the vicinity of the Occurrence Address is provided;

Note that when the Occurrence Address was not available or incomplete, the Dispatched Address was used.

Note that this information is based on data extracted from a live system and may be subject to change. It is dependent on the information having been input into the system in such a way as to identify those records

Please note that figures within the current financial year are provisional and will be subject to change.

Year	Town	Count of Recorded Crimes
2011	AGHALEE	2
	AHOGHILL	1
	ANTRIM	7
	ARMAGH	8
	AUGHNACLOY	3
	BALLINTOY	1
	BALLYCASTLE	7
	BALLYCLARE	13
	BALLYMENA	27
	BALLYMONEY	6
	BALLYNAHINCH	2
	BALLYNURE	1
	BANBRIDGE	7
	BANGOR	5
	BELFAST	120
	BUSHMILLS	2
	CARRICKFERGUS	8
	CASTLEWELLAN	3
	CLOGHER	2
	CLOUGHMILLS	1
	COALISLAND	1
	COLERAINE	17
	COOKSTOWN	6
	CRAIGAVON	14
	CROSSGAR	1
	CRUMLIN	4
	CUSHENDUN	2
	DERRYGONNELLY	1
	DOWNPATRICK	6
	DRAPERSTOWN	1
	DROMORE	3
	DUNDONALD	1
	DUNGANNON	6
	DUNMURRY	1
	ENNISKILLEN	4
	FINTONA	1
	GILFORD	1
	GLENGORMLEY	1
	HILLSBOROUGH	2
	HOLYWOOD	4
	KESH	1
	KILKEEL	1
	KILLYLEA	1
	KILLYLEAGH	1
	KINAWLEY	1
	LAMBEG	1
	LARNE	7
	LIMAVADY	1
	LISBELLAW	1

	LISBURN	14
	LISNASKEA	2
	LONDONDERRY	14
	LOUGHGILLY	1
	MAGHERA	2
	MAGHERAFELT	5
	MARKETHILL	1
	NEWRY	8
	NEWTOWNABBEY	41
	NEWTOWNARDS	4
	NEWTOWNBUTLER	2
	NEWTOWNSTEWART	1
	OMAGH	3
	PORTADOWN	5
	PORTGLENONE	2
	PORTSTEWART	1
	RANDALSTOWN	1
	SAINTFIELD	1
	SION MILLS	1
	SIXMILECROSS	1
	STEWARTSTOWN	1
	STRABANE	4
	SWATRAGH	2
	TEMPLEPATRICK	1
	WARINGSTOWN	3
	WHITEHEAD	3

Year	Town	Count of Recorded Crimes
2012	AGHALEE	1
	ANTRIM	5
	ARDGLASS	3
	ARMAGH	19
	ARTIGARVAN	1
	AUGHNACLOY	1
	BALLYCASTLE	1
	BALLYCLARE	3
	BALLYGOWAN	1
	BALLYMENA	9
	BALLYMONEY	4
	BALLYNAHINCH	2
	BALLYNURE	1
	BANBRIDGE	8
	BANGOR	10
	BELFAST	171
	BENBURB	1
	BROUGHSHANE	1
	CALEDON	1
	CARNLOUGH	1
	CARRICKFERGUS	4
	CARRICKMORE	1
	CASTLEWELLAN	2
	CLOGHER	1
	COAGH	1
	COLERAINE	10
	COMBER	1
	COOKSTOWN	2
	CRAIGAVON	8
	CRUMLIN	4
	DONAGHADEE	1
	DOWNPATRICK	20
	DROMORE	3
	DUNDONALD	1
	DUNGANNON	13
	DUNGIVEN	1
	DUNMURRY	1
	ENNISKILLEN	17
	FIVEMILETOWN	2
	GARRISON	1
	GLENARM	1
	GREYABBEY	1
	HILLSBOROUGH	5
	IRVINESTOWN	1
	KEADY	2
	KESH	2
	KILREA	1
	LARNE	5
	LAWRENCETOWN	2

LIMAVADY	10
LISBURN	24
LONDONDERRY	28
LURGAN	2
MAGHERA	1
MAGHERAFELT	5
MAGHERAMASON	1
MARKETHILL	3
MOY	1
MULLAGHBAWN	1
NEWMILLS	1
NEWRY	19
NEWTOWNABBEY	10
NEWTOWNARDS	22
NEWTOWNBUTLER	1
NEWTOWNHAMILTON	1
NEWTOWNSTEWART	1
OMAGH	11
PORTADOWN	6
PORTAFERRY	1
PORTRUSH	3
PORTSTEWART	4
RANDALSTOWN	2
RATHFRILAND	1
SAINTFIELD	2
SCARVA	1
SION MILLS	1
STRABANE	4
TANDRAGEE	2
TEMPLEPATRICK	1
WARRENPOINT	1
WHITEHEAD	3

Year	Town	Count of Recorded Crimes
2013	ANTRIM	10
	ARMAGH	9
	BALLINTOY	1
	BALLYCASTLE	5
	BALLYCLARE	4
	BALLYMENA	15
	BALLYMONEY	5
	BALLYNAHINCH	13
	BANBRIDGE	11
	BANGOR	4
	BELFAST	165
	BELLEEK	1
	BENBURB	2
	BROUGHSHANE	1
	BUSHMILLS	1
	CALEDON	1
	CARRICKFERGUS	3
	CARRICKMORE	1
	CARRYDUFF	1
	CASTLEDERG	1
	CASTLEWELLAN	1
	CLOUGHMILLS	1
	COALISLAND	1
	COLERAINE	6
	COOKSTOWN	5
	CRAIGAVON	12
	CRUMLIN	5
	DONAGHADEE	1
	DOWNPATRICK	7
	DROMARA	1
	DROMORE	3
	DUNDONALD	1
	DUNGANNON	5
	ENNISKILLEN	8
	FINTONA	1
	GILFORD	4
	GLENAVY	1
	GLENGORMLEY	1
	HILLSBOROUGH	3
	HILLTOWN	1
	HOLYWOOD	2
	KILKEEL	1
	KILLYLEAGH	1
	KINAWLEY	1
	LARNE	4
	LIMAVADY	2
	LISBURN	11
	LISNASKEA	2
	LISNASKEA	1

	LONDONDERRY	15
	MAGHERA	2
	MAGHERAFELT	11
	MAGHERALIN	2
	MAGHERY	1
	NEWRY	9
	NEWTOWNABBEY	16
	NEWTOWNARDS	12
	NEWTOWNBUTLER	1
	OMAGH	4
	PORTGLENONE	2
	PORTRUSH	1
	PORTSTEWART	3
	RANDALSTOWN	1
	RICH HILL	1
	ROSTREVOR	1
	ROSTREVOR	1
	STRABANE	2
	VICTORIA BRIDGE	1
	WHITEHEAD	1

Year	Town	Count of Recorded Crimes
2014	ANTRIM	4
	ARDGLASS	1
	ARMAGH	2
	AUGHNACLOY	2
	BALLINTOY	2
	BALLYCASTLE	2
	BALLYCLARE	1
	BALLYMAGORRY	1
	BALLYMENA	10
	BALLYMONEY	1
	BALLYNAHINCH	3
	BANBRIDGE	6
	BANGOR	8
	BELFAST	147
	BELLAGHY	1
	BROOKEBOROUGH	1
	BUSHMILLS	1
	CARRICKFERGUS	7
	CARRICKMORE	1
	CASTLEDERG	1
	CASTLEWELLAN	1
	COAGH	1
	COLERAINE	12
	COOKSTOWN	3
	CRAIGAVON	9
	CROSSGAR	4
	CRUMLIN	5
	CULLYBACKEY	1
	CULLYHANNA	1
	DERRYLIN	1
	DONAGHADEE	2
	DOWNPATRICK	10
	DROMARA	2
	DROMORE	1
	DUNDONALD	1
	DUNDRUM	1
	DUNGANNON	3
	DUNGIVEN	2
	DUNMURRY	3
	ENNISKILLEN	12
	FIVEMILETOWN	3
	GILFORD	1
	HILLSBOROUGH	2
	HOLYWOOD	1
	IRVINESTOWN	5
	KATESBRIDGE	1
	KILKEEL	2
	KINAWLEY	1
	KIRCUBBIN	3

LARNE	3
LIMAVADY	2
LISBURN	2
LISBURN	15
LISNASKEA	1
LONDONDERRY	6
LOUGHBRICKLAND	1
LURGAN	2
MAGHERA	1
MAGHERAFELT	6
MONEYMORE	3
MOY	1
NEWCASTLE	1
NEWRY	14
NEWTOWNABBEY	13
NEWTOWNARDS	17
NEWTOWNBUTLER	1
OMAGH	1
PORTADOWN	5
PORTAFERRY	2
PORTGLENONE	1
PORTRUSH	1
PORTSTEWART	1
RANDALSTOWN	2
RICHHILL	1
ROSSLEA	1
SAINTFIELD	1
STRABANE	3
TEMPO	1
TOOMEBRIDGE	2
WARINGSTOWN	3
WHITEHEAD	1

Recorded offences where the location mo subtype is 'Church/religious building ' by Crime type

	Year			
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Violence against the person	24	20	35	27
Sexual offences	4	13	4	5
Robbery	1	1	4	0
Burglary	81	90	67	70
Theft offences	176	226	177	152
Criminal damage	149	175	140	149
Drug offences	3	1	1	3
Possession of weapons offences	0	0	0	1
Public order offences	3	2	3	1
Miscellaneous crimes against society	1	1	2	0
NFIB-related fraud	0	2	1	3
Total	442	531	434	411