

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics

Annual Report covering the period
1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012

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Background

The PSNI is required to report on its performance on a financial year basis and hence this report covers the financial year period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2012. These security statistics relate solely to incidents that occur within the jurisdiction of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and exclude any incidents that may have occurred in the Republic of Ireland or in Great Britain. Further information on context and background is provided in the NOTES section of this bulletin and in the [Security Situation Statistics User Guide](#) on the [PSNI website](#).

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Section 1: Security Statistics Summary

Generally the security situation in Northern Ireland has improved significantly over the last ten years with fewer security related deaths, shootings, bombings and paramilitary style shootings and assaults recorded in 2011/12 than ten years ago in 2002/03. However, a significant threat still remains as evidenced by the one security related death in 2011/12 and the numerous shooting and bombing incidents as well as with the continued use of paramilitary style shootings and assaults.

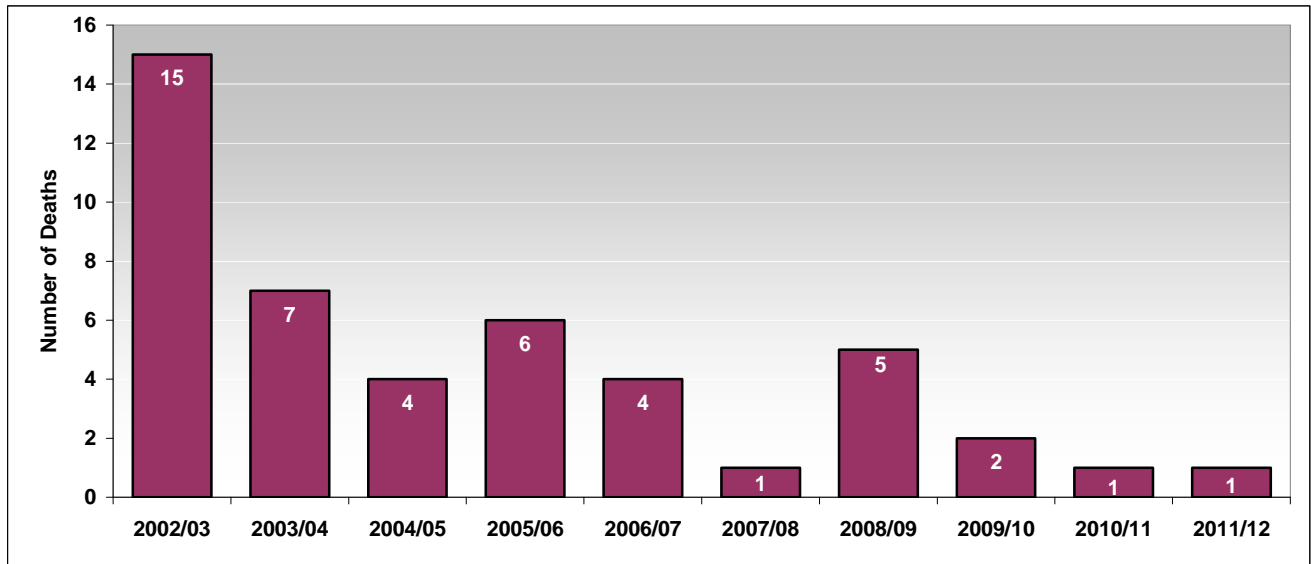
- During 2011/12 there was one security related death and this was of a PSNI officer who was murdered on 2nd April 2011 in Omagh. Compared to 10 years ago, the level of security related deaths has decreased significantly. In 2002/03 there were 15 security related deaths compared with one security related death in 2011/12 and one in the previous year in 2010/11.
- In 2011/12 the police recorded 67 shooting incidents and 56 bombing incidents. This was lower than in the previous year (72 shooting incidents and 99 bombing incidents in 2010/11). The numbers of shooting and bombing incidents have decreased in the last 10 years with the lowest levels recorded during 2006/07 and 2007/08 before slightly increasing again in subsequent years. Ten years ago in 2002/03 there were 348 shooting incidents and 178 bombing incidents
- During 2011/12 there were 33 paramilitary style shootings, the same number as in 2010/11 and 132 fewer than the 165 recorded 10 years ago in 2002/03. All 33 paramilitary style shootings recorded in 2011/12 were attributed to Republicans as have been the vast majority of all such shootings since 2007/08.
- In 2011/12 there were 46 paramilitary style assaults, 4 fewer than in 2010/11 and 98 fewer than the 144 recorded 10 years ago in 2002/03. Of the 46 recorded in 2011/12, 31 (67%) were attributed to Loyalists and 15 (33%) were attributed to Republicans.
- There were 176 firearms seized by the PSNI during 2011/12 compared to 86 seized during the previous year. Over the last 10 years the numbers of firearms seized each year has remained relatively constant with a peak in 2005/06 when 365 firearms were seized.
- During 2011/12, 43.8kg of explosives was seized compared with 2.9kg in 2010/11. This increase was due to a number of larger seizures made by the police throughout the year with the largest being 25.0kg seized in Dungannon during April 2011.
- In 2011/12, 159 people were arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act and 39 were subsequently charged. This is down slightly on the previous year when 195 persons were arrested and 41 were subsequently charged¹. Over the last 10 years there has been a decrease in the numbers of persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act and in subsequent charges. In 2002/03, 240 persons were arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act with 97 subsequently charged and in 2003/04 there were 339 arrests with 102 subsequently charged.

¹ Please note that the previously published figures for 2010/11 have been revised to include those persons produced from prison for interview.

Section 2 – Deaths due to the Security Situation

During 2011/12 there was one security related death with the murder of a PSNI Officer on Saturday 2nd April 2011 in Omagh (Figure 1). In the previous year there was again one security related death with a further two recorded the year before that in 2009/10.

Figure 1: Deaths due to the Security Situation 2002/03 – 2011/12¹



¹ Includes all deaths considered to be directly attributed to terrorism, where the cause has a direct or proximate link to subversive/sectarian strife or where the death is attributable to security force activity.

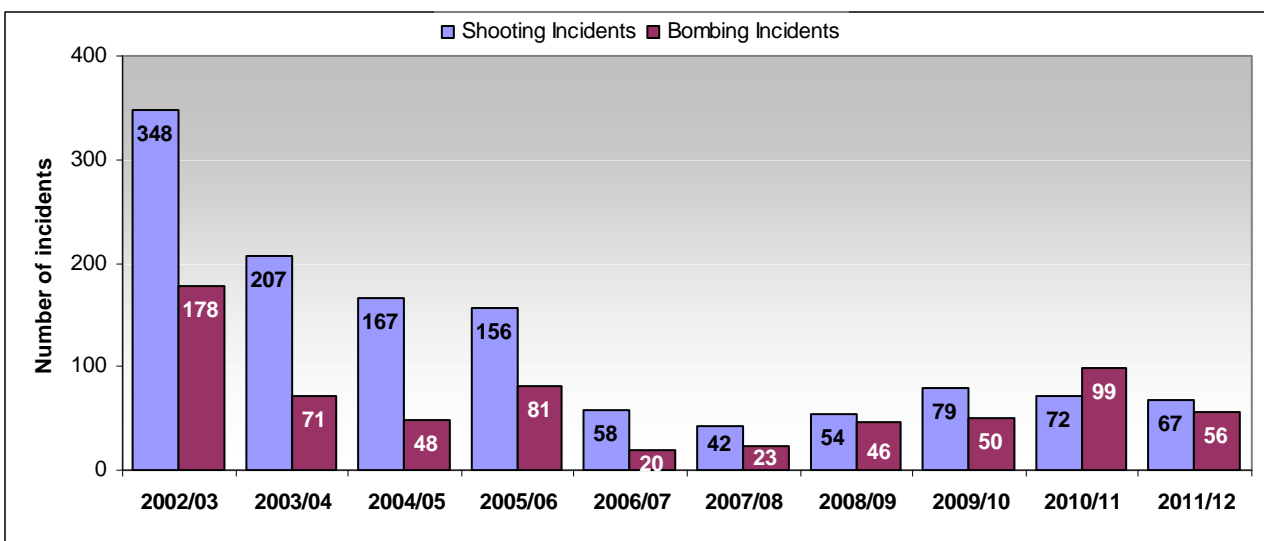
Section 3 – Shooting and bombing incidents

During 2011/12 there were 67 shooting incidents in Northern Ireland; five fewer than in the previous year and substantially fewer than the 348 shooting incidents recorded 10 years ago in 2002/03. Of the 67 shooting incidents which occurred in 2011/12, 13 took place in Foyle, 10 in North Belfast and 8 in West Belfast.

There were 56 bombing incidents recorded in 2011/12, down 43 on the 99 recorded in the previous year. Of the 56 bombing incidents in 2011/12 almost one quarter (23%) occurred in Foyle.

In Northern Ireland as a whole, ten years ago in 2002/03 there were more than 3 times as many bombing incidents (178) recorded compared with 2011/12 (56).

Figure 2: Shooting and bombing incidents 2002/03 – 2011/12^{1, 2}



¹ The following types of shooting incidents are included:

- Shots fired by terrorists
- Shots fired by the security forces
- Paramilitary-style attacks involving shootings
- Shots heard (and later confirmed)

² An individual bombing incident may involve one or more explosive devices. Incidents recorded include explosions and defusings (devices used). Incidents involving hoax devices, petrol bombings or incendiaries are excluded.

Section 4 – Paramilitary-style attacks (shootings & assaults)

Paramilitary style attacks are usually carried out by Loyalist or Republican groups on members of their own community as a so-called punishment and tend to be in the form of either paramilitary style shootings or paramilitary style assaults. The paramilitary grouping deemed responsible for each assault or shooting in police figures is based on the perception of the police officer leading the investigation at the time. Each paramilitary shooting or assault is therefore categorised as having either a Loyalist or Republican attribution.

During 2011/12 there were 33 paramilitary style shootings and 46 paramilitary style assaults (Table 1). This compares with 33 paramilitary style shootings and 50 assaults recorded the previous year and is substantially lower than the levels recorded 10 years ago in 2002/03 (165 paramilitary shootings and 144 paramilitary style assaults).

Table 1: Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style attacks 2002/03 – 2011/12

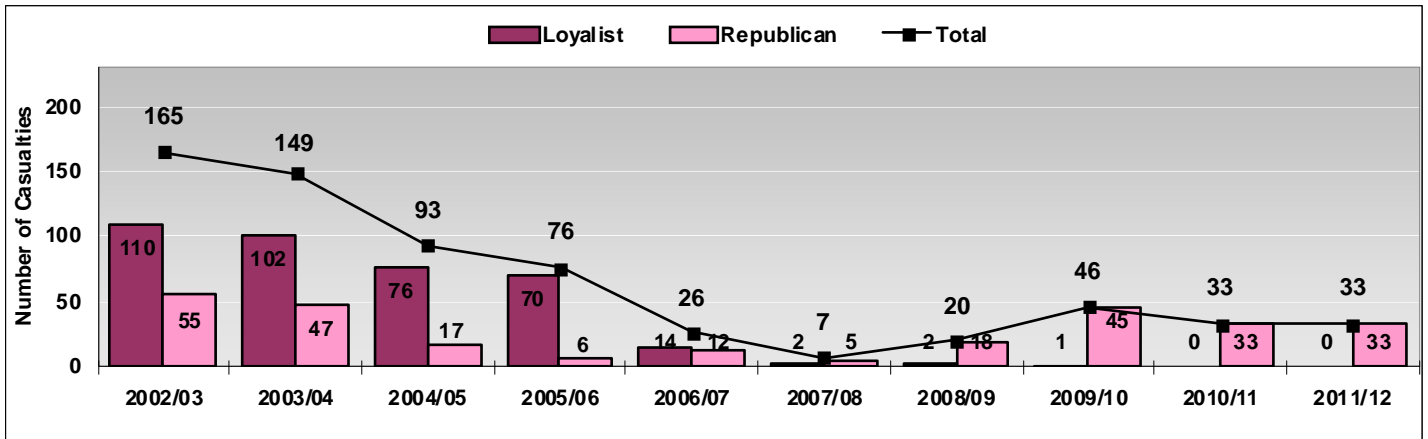
| | Shootings | | | Assaults | | | Total Casualties (Shootings and Assaults) |
|---------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|
| | Total | By Loyalist Groups* | By Republican Groups* | Total | By Loyalist Groups* | By Republican Groups* | |
| 2002/03 | 165 | 110 | 55 | 144 | 94 | 50 | 309 |
| 2003/04 | 149 | 102 | 47 | 149 | 101 | 48 | 298 |
| 2004/05 | 93 | 76 | 17 | 116 | 71 | 45 | 209 |
| 2005/06 | 76 | 70 | 6 | 76 | 57 | 19 | 152 |
| 2006/07 | 26 | 14 | 12 | 48 | 36 | 12 | 74 |
| 2007/08 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 45 | 35 | 10 | 52 |
| 2008/09 | 20 | 2 | 18 | 41 | 28 | 13 | 61 |
| 2009/10 | 46 | 1 | 45 | 81 | 69 | 12 | 127 |
| 2010/11 | 33 | 0 | 33 | 50 | 34 | 16 | 83 |
| 2011/12 | 33 | 0 | 33 | 46 | 31 | 15 | 79 |

* Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available and does not necessarily indicate the involvement of a paramilitary organisation.

Paramilitary-style shootings

The vast majority of paramilitary style shootings carried out in recent years have been attributed to Republican groups whereas before that, between 2002/03 and 2005/06 the majority were then attributed to Loyalist groups (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style shootings 2002/03 – 2011/12*

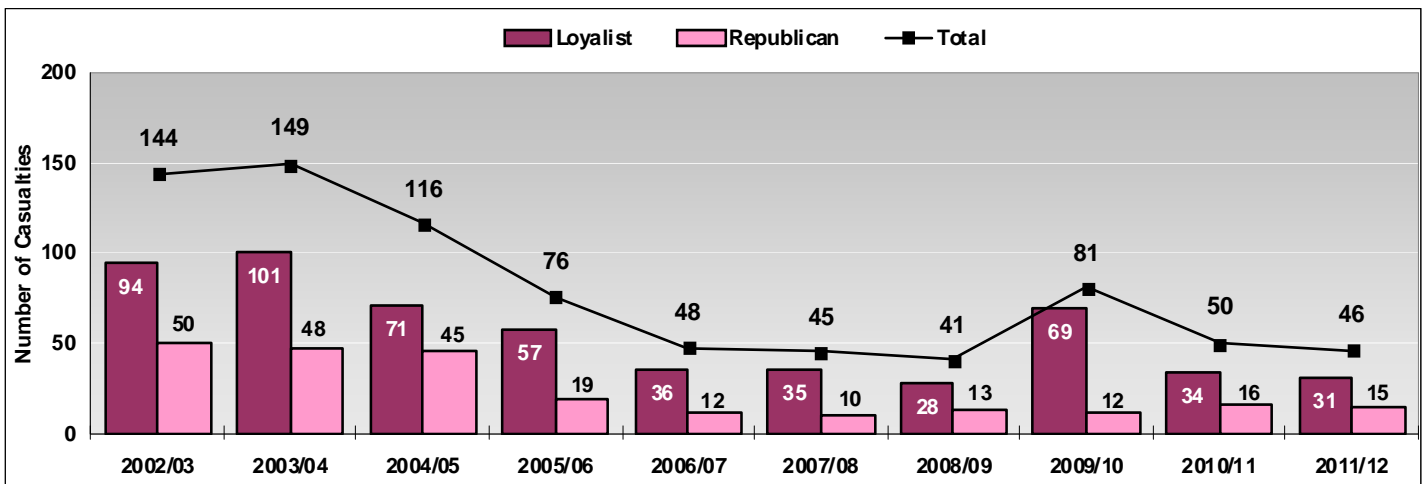


* Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available and does not necessarily indicate the involvement of a paramilitary organisation.

Paramilitary-style assaults

Responsibility for the majority of paramilitary style assaults conducted in the last 10 years has been attributed to Loyalists (Figure 4). In 2011/12, 31 (67%) paramilitary assaults were attributed to Loyalists while the remaining 15 (33%) were attributed to Republicans. The policing areas with the greatest number of resultant casualties from paramilitary style assaults in 2011/12 were East Belfast (7 casualties), North Belfast (5 casualties) and Carrickfergus (5 casualties).

Figure 4: Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style assaults 2002/03 – 2011/12*



* Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available and does not necessarily indicate the involvement of a paramilitary organisation.

Section 5 – Firearms, ammunition and explosives finds

There were 176 firearms seized by PSNI in 2011/12 compared with 86 the year before and this was the highest level of firearms seized since 2005/06 (Table 2). In addition there was an increase in the number of rounds of ammunition seized (4,064 rounds in 2011/12 compared with 2,574 rounds in 2010/11) and in the quantities of explosives seized (43.8 kg in 2011/12 compared with 2.9kg in 2010/11).

Table 2: Firearms, ammunition and explosives finds 2002/03 – 2011/12

| Financial Year | Firearms | Ammunition (rounds) | Explosives (kgs) |
|----------------|----------|---------------------|------------------|
| 2002/03 | 129 | 18,549 | 19.9 |
| 2003/04 | 148 | 19,017 | 92.1 |
| 2004/05 | 81 | 23,822 | 26.5 |
| 2005/06 | 365 | 112,748 | 35.0 |
| 2006/07 | 55 | 5,086 | 132.2 |
| 2007/08 | 62 | 22,010 | 208.4 |
| 2008/09 | 113 | 4,420 | 30.6 |
| 2009/10 | 77 | 34,962 | 2.2 |
| 2010/11 | 86 | 2,574 | 2.9 |
| 2011/12 | 176 | 4,064 | 43.8 |

The largest number of firearms seized across policing area in 2011/12 was Craigavon (52 firearms seized) followed by Fermanagh (38) and Lisburn (18). There were also 761 rounds of ammunition seized in Craigavon and 625 rounds seized in Omagh. There was also a large explosives seizure in Dungannon (25.0kg) in April 2011.

Section 6 – Persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act and subsequently charged

In 2011/12, 159 people were arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act and of these, 39 were subsequently charged (Table 3). This is a slight decrease on the previous year (2010/11) when 195 persons were arrested and 41 subsequently charged. Of the 159 persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act in 2011/12, 33 of these arrests took place in the Foyle area and a further 25 took place in North Belfast.

Table 3: Persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act (TACT) and subsequently charged 2002/03 – 2011/12*

| | <i>Persons Arrested under Section 41 of TACT</i> | <i>Persons subsequently Charged^{1, 2}</i> |
|----------|--|--|
| 2002/03 | 240 | 97 |
| 2003/04 | 339 | 102 |
| 2004/05 | 231 | 77 |
| 2005/06 | 273 | 72 |
| 2006/07 | 177 | 57 |
| 2007/08 | 130 | 34 |
| 2008/09 | 174 | 40 |
| 2009/10 | 169 | 36 |
| 2010/11* | 195 | 41 |
| 2011/12 | 159 | 39 |

**Revised figure to that previously published:* The 2010/11 figures were previously reported as 188 persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act and 40 persons subsequently charged. However, this did not include persons produced from prison for interview and so these figures have been revised accordingly to 195 arrested and 41 charged.

¹ Statistics refer to charges brought against a person after the original period of detention (including extensions). Any subsequent charges, additions, deletions to the original charges are not included.

² Please note that persons can be charged under legislation other than the Terrorism Act. Persons may also be charged in a different financial year from which they were arrested e.g. those persons detained at the end of March and charged in April.

NOTES

Further information on how these statistics are collated and reported are included in the [Security Situation Statistics User Guide](#) available on the [PSNI website](#).

Strengths and Limitations of the data

Strengths

Police recorded statistics relating to the security situation in Northern Ireland are the main source of official information on trends and statistics relating to the security situation throughout the Troubles and up to the present day. They were initially established by the police to provide much needed facts and figures on widespread civil unrest during the late 1960s and early 1970s and then were developed further through the 1980s and 1990s with computerisation. They are a key source of information on the security situation in Northern Ireland since 1969 and are used widely within PSNI and also by colleagues in government departments as well as by the media, academics and members of the public.

Limitations

As the security situation figures relate to those incidents that took place within Northern Ireland, they do not include any Loyalist or Republican security related incidents that may have happened either in the Republic of Ireland or in Great Britain. In addition, at the moment the PSNI's statistics on arrests and charges under the Terrorism Act are excluded from the Home Office's annual Terrorism Statistics report but it is planned that they will be included in the near future.

These statistics only include those incidents that are brought to the attention of the police and some such incidents may not have been reported. Therefore a level of under-reporting may exist and users of the statistics should exercise caution when examining trends based on these police statistics. The PSNI's Security Statistics are collated and reported by a small number of experienced staff who manually trawl through PSNI systems on a daily basis to identify all such security related incidents. The reliance on these key individuals means that an element of human error could be involved and that small proportion of incidents could be missed or incorrectly classified as a result. However, various internal checks and validation processes are in place to ensure that this is kept to a minimum.

Revisions

Revisions are carried out in accordance with our Revisions Policy, a copy of which is available in the Official Statistics section of the PSNI Statistics website.

Additional Data

Additional data are available on the Security Situation Statistics section of the PSNI website. The accompanying spreadsheet for the security situation data provides trend information back to 1968 where available, subject to statistical disclosure policies.

Further Information

Further information is available in the [Security Situation Statistics User Guide](#) on the [PSNI website](#).

Descriptions of the main security statistics collated

Security statistics generally relate to terrorist and public order type incidents that occur within Northern Ireland and which are recorded on the PSNI's IT systems. The main security related statistics that are collated and reported are as follows:

a) Security related deaths

Each security related death is checked with the investigating officer to ensure that the circumstances fit in with the standard definition adopted by the PSNI's Statistics Branch guidelines i.e. *'those which are considered at the time of the incident to be directly attributed to terrorism, where the cause has a direct or proximate link to subversive/ sectarian strife or where the death is attributable to security force activity'*. At the end of each year, all security related deaths for that period are checked with the PSNI's Crime Operations Department to ensure that the list is complete and accurate before the finalised figures are published. Furthermore, not all security related deaths involve offences of murder as they also include deaths resulting from the use of force by the security forces or could involve persons being killed while planting a bomb which detonated prematurely.

b) Bombings incidents

These include all incidents where a bombing device explodes or is defused. A bombing incident can also relate to more than one device - for example a mortar attack with four devices would be recorded as one bombing incident with four devices. When a device partially explodes (i.e. usually only the detonator or fuse) it is recorded as an explosion. However, if a device is found that is not complete or armed, then it is recorded as a 'find' and not as a bombing.

c) Shooting incidents

These include any shooting incident relating to the security situation and include shots fired by terrorists, shots fired by the security forces, paramilitary style attacks involving shootings and shots heard (and later confirmed by other sources). They exclude the firing of blank rounds.

d) Paramilitary style shooting casualties

Any such paramilitary style shooting incident can have one or more casualties (i.e. two or more persons could be shot in the same incident). The injured party is usually shot in the knees, elbows, feet, ankles or thighs and the motive is supposedly to punish the person for anti-social activities. These paramilitary style shootings are generally conducted by Loyalist or Republican paramilitary groups on members of their own community. The attribution of such shootings is generally recorded as 'Loyalist' or 'Republican' depending on the investigating officer's view on which groups had conducted the shooting. Paramilitary style shootings that result in death are counted as security related deaths and are not reflected in the paramilitary style shooting figures.

e) Paramilitary style assaults

As with the paramilitary style shootings, these assaults are usually carried out by Loyalist or Republican groups on members of their own community as a so-called punishment. The assault will involve major or minor physical injury to the injured party typically involving a group of assailants armed with, for example, iron bars or baseball bats. Multiple casualties may result from a single incident. Confirmation of the paramilitary style assault is generally sought from the investigating officer.

f) Finds of ammunition or explosives

These refer to the seizure or recovery of all illegal firearms, ammunition, explosives, rocket/mortar launchers, detonators and bomb making material/equipment. Replica/blank firing firearms, petrol bombs and petrol bomb making materials, grenades and munitions from World War 1 or World War 2 found on the beach or in attics etc. are not recorded as finds.

g) Incendiaries

These are different from bombings in that they are used to start fires and not to cause an explosion. They normally consist of a cassette, timer battery and material to cause fire (i.e. petrol, gas or other accelerant) and are usually targeted at commercial property.

h) Persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act who are subsequently charged.

Section 41 of the Terrorism Act enables police officers to arrest persons for the prevention of terrorism. Within the PSNI, weekly returns of all persons arrested under Section 41 are sent to Statistics Branch along with details of any subsequent charges. The charge can relate to any offence (e.g. attempted murder) and does not necessarily need to be an offence listed under the Terrorism Act.