

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics

Annual Report covering the period
1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015

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The PSNI is required to report on its performance on a financial year basis and hence this report covers the period 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015. These security statistics relate solely to incidents that occurred within the jurisdiction of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. 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](#). A further breakdown of the information provided in this report can be found in the [accompanying excel spreadsheet](#) which is also published on the PSNI website, it provides a breakdown of the information at Police Area and Police District levels as well as providing historical trends.

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National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Section 1: Security Statistics Summary

In 2014/15 there were fewer security related deaths, fewer shooting & bombing incidents and fewer paramilitary attacks than 10 years ago in 2005/06. However, whilst the levels of most incident types have remained relatively consistent over the last 5 or 6 years, some have shown increases in the last two years. There were 3 security deaths in 2014/15, the most in any financial year since 2008/09. Similarly, whilst there was a decrease in bombing incidents in 2014/15, shooting incidents increased to their highest level since 2009/10. In addition, paramilitary style attacks increased by 34% in 2014/15, the highest number of incidents recorded since 2009/10. Within these, there has been an increase in the proportion of paramilitary style shootings that are attributed to Loyalists during the last two years.

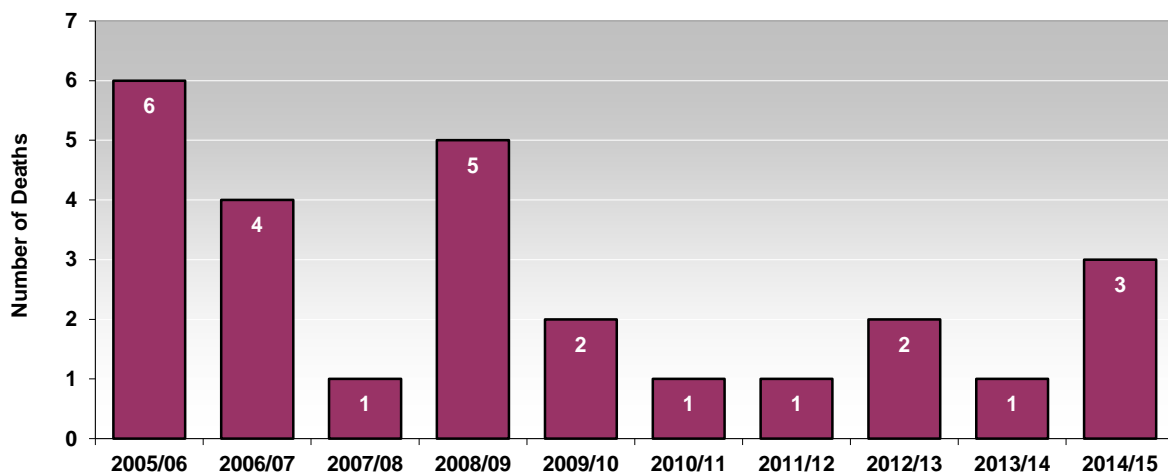
- During 2014/15 there were three security related deaths, one in April 2014, one in October 2014 and one in January 2015. This is two more than in 2013/14 but three fewer than the six security related deaths recorded in 2005/06.
- In 2014/15 the police recorded 73 shooting incidents and 36 bombing incidents. This is 19 more shooting incidents and 33 fewer bombing incidents than in the previous year (2013/14). The lowest combined number of shooting and bombing incidents recorded during the past ten years was in 2006/07 and 2007/08 before increasing in subsequent years.
- During 2014/15 there were 36 casualties resulting from paramilitary style shootings, eight more than the previous year (2013/14) and 40 fewer than ten years ago in 2005/06. Of the 36 casualties resulting from paramilitary style shootings recorded in 2014/15, 30 were attributed to Republicans and six were attributed to Loyalists.
- There were 58 casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults in 2014/15, this is 16 more than in 2013/14 and 18 fewer than the 76 recorded ten years ago in 2005/06. Of the 58 recorded in 2014/15, 42 were attributed to Loyalists and 16 were attributed to Republicans.
- There were 58 firearms seized by the PSNI during 2014/15 compared to 101 seized during the previous year. The number of firearms seized each year has fluctuated over the last ten years with a peak of 365 firearms seized in 2005/06.
- During 2014/15, 22.9kg of explosives and 4,569 rounds of ammunition were seized. This compares to 23.1kg of explosives and 5,057 rounds of ammunition seized in 2013/14.
- In 2014/15, 227 people were arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act of which 35 were subsequently charged. The number of persons arrested was 59 more than the previous year (2013/14) and the number of persons subsequently charged increased from 32 to 35. Compared to ten years ago (2005/06) the number of persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act and the number of persons subsequently charged has decreased. In 2005/06, 273 persons were arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act of which 72 subsequently charged.

Section 2 – Deaths due to the Security Situation

During 2014/15 there were three security related deaths in Northern Ireland. Two of the three deaths during this period occurred in West Belfast, one in April 2014 and the other in October 2014. The third death occurred in Ballymoney in January 2015.

The number of security related deaths has fluctuated over the past ten years but the overall trend shows a decline since 2005/06. There have been approximately half the number of security related deaths in the last five years (2010/11 – 2014/15) compared to the preceding five years (2005/06 – 2009/10), however a significant level of threat remains as evidenced by the one or two security related deaths per year in five of the last six years and three security related deaths during the 2014/15 financial year (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Deaths due to the Security Situation 2005/06 – 2014/15¹



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.

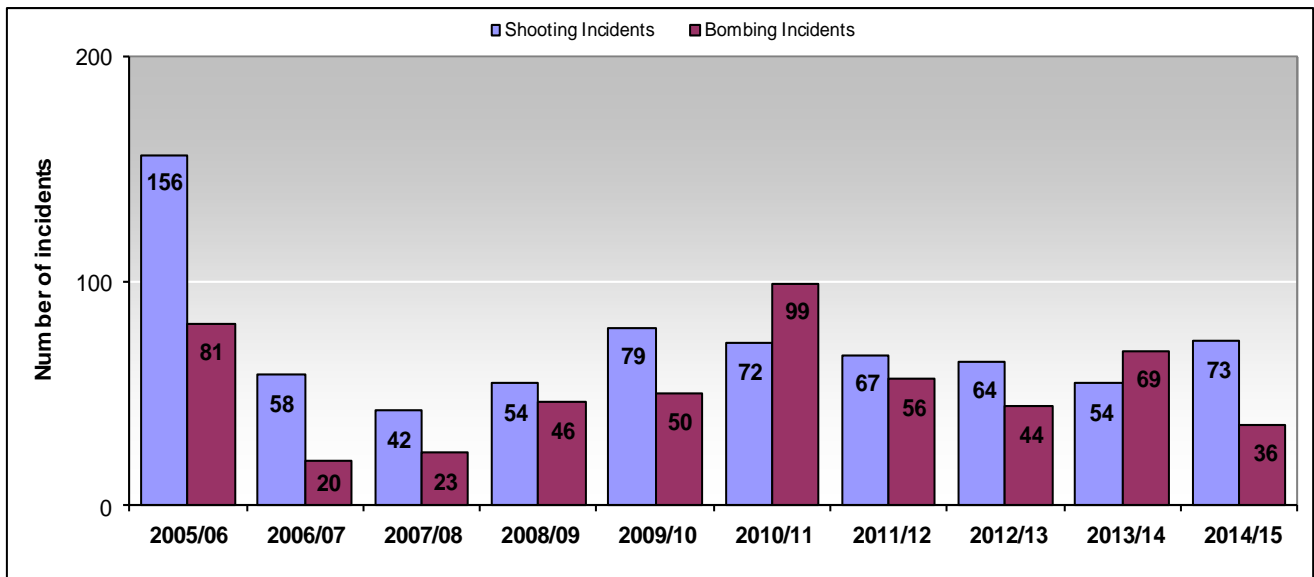
Section 3 – Shooting and bombing incidents

There were 73 shooting incidents in Northern Ireland during 2014/15, 19 more than the 54 recorded in 2013/14 and just under half of the 156 shooting incidents that occurred ten years ago in 2004/05. West Belfast had the most shooting incidents in 2014/15 (18 incidents) followed by North Belfast and Foyle (16 shooting incidents each) and Lisburn (with 5 shooting incidents).

During 2014/15 there were 36 bombing incidents, 33 fewer than in 2013/14 and 45 fewer than ten years ago in 2005/06. Foyle had the most bombing incidents in 2014/15 (9 incidents) followed by North Belfast (8 bombing incidents) and Newtownabbey (4 bombing incidents).

More detailed information on shooting and bombing incidents across Police Districts and Areas is available from the accompanying spreadsheet [on our website](#).

Figure 2: Shooting and bombing incidents 2005/06 – 2014/15^{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 attribution of each paramilitary style attack as Loyalist or Republican is based on the investigating officer's perception.

The number of casualties as a result of paramilitary-style attacks has lowered considerably over the past decade (2005/06 – 2014/15, 855 casualties) compared to the preceding decade (1995/96 – 2004/05, 2646 casualties), as illustrated in the trend graph in Annex 1. During 2014/15 there were 94 casualties as a result of paramilitary-style attacks. This is 24 more than the previous year but 58 fewer than the number that occurred ten years ago in 2005/06 (152 casualties). Fifty eight of the 94 casualties were the victim of paramilitary-style assaults while the remaining 36 were the victims of paramilitary-style shootings (Table 1).

Table 1: Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style attacks 2005/06 – 2014/15

	Shootings			Assaults			Total Casualties (Shootings and Assaults)
	Total	By Loyalist Groups*	By Republican Groups*	Total	By Loyalist Groups*	By Republican Groups*	
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
2012/13	27	1	26	36	27	9	63
2013/14	28	9	19	42	37	5	70
2014/15	36	6	30	58	42	16	94

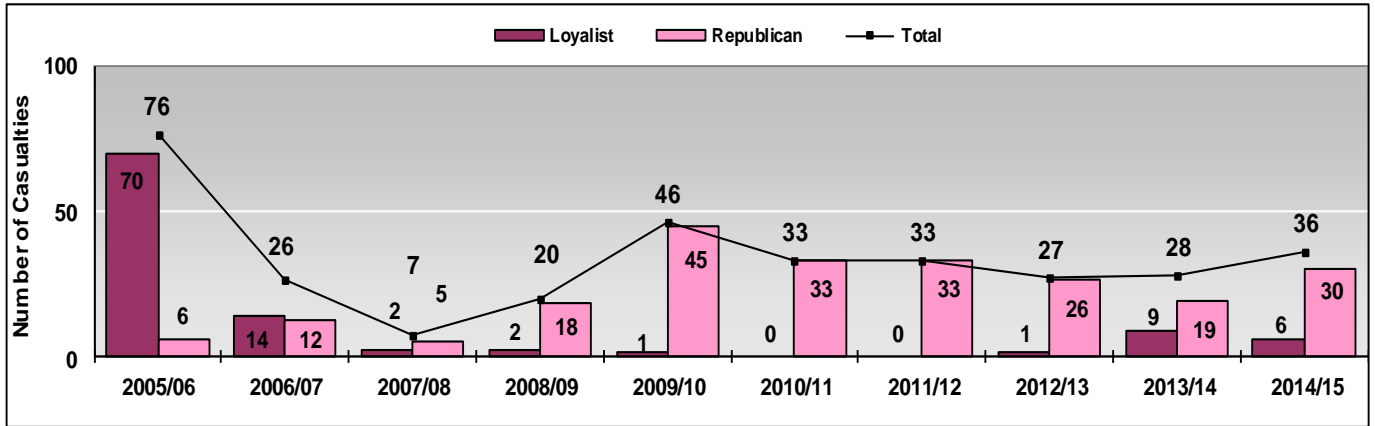
* Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available.

Paramilitary-style shootings

The majority of paramilitary style shootings carried out in recent years have been attributed to Republican groups whereas ten years ago, during 2005/06, the majority were then attributed to Loyalist groups (Figure 3). The 36 casualties recorded in 2014/15 is just under half of the 76 recorded ten years ago in 2005/06 but is eight more than the figure recorded in the previous year (2013/14). Just over a quarter of the paramilitary style shootings in 2014/15 were carried out in West Belfast (10 casualties), followed by Foyle (8 casualties) North Belfast (7 casualties).

More detailed information on paramilitary-style attacks across Police Districts and Areas is available from the accompanying spreadsheet [on our website](#).

Figure 3: Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style shootings 2005/06 – 2014/15*

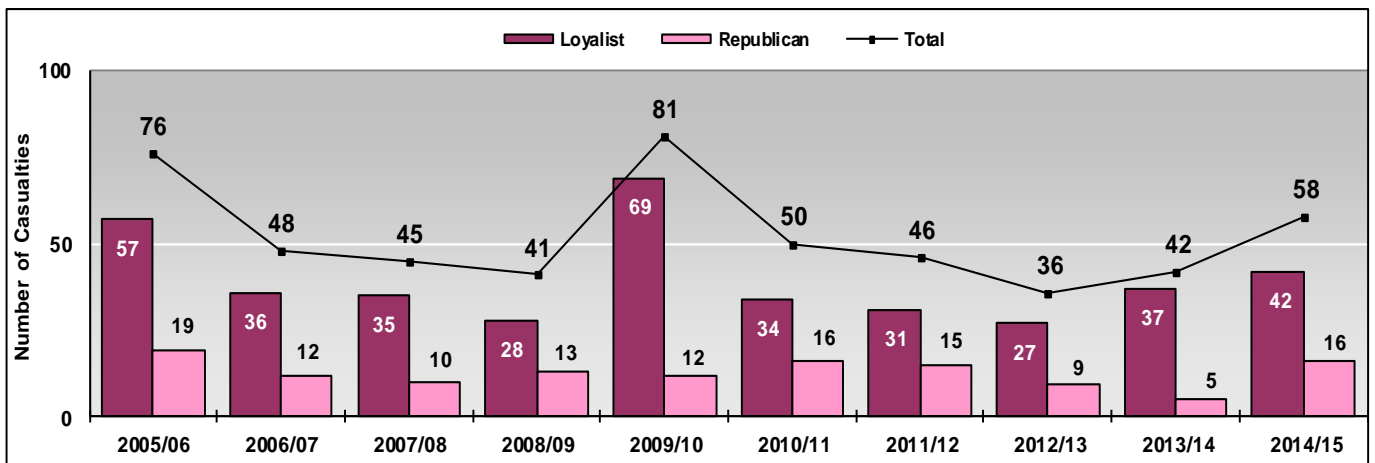


* Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available.

Paramilitary-style assaults

Responsibility for the majority of paramilitary style assaults conducted in the last ten years has been attributed to Loyalists (Figure 4). In 2014/15, the majority (72%) of the 58 casualties resulting from paramilitary assaults were attributed to Loyalists while the remaining 28% were attributed to Republicans. The policing areas with the greatest number of casualties resulting from paramilitary style assaults in 2014/15 were West Belfast (7 casualties) and East Belfast and Ards (each with six casualties).

Figure 4: Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style assaults 2005/06 – 2014/15*



* Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available.

Section 5 – Firearms, ammunition and explosives finds

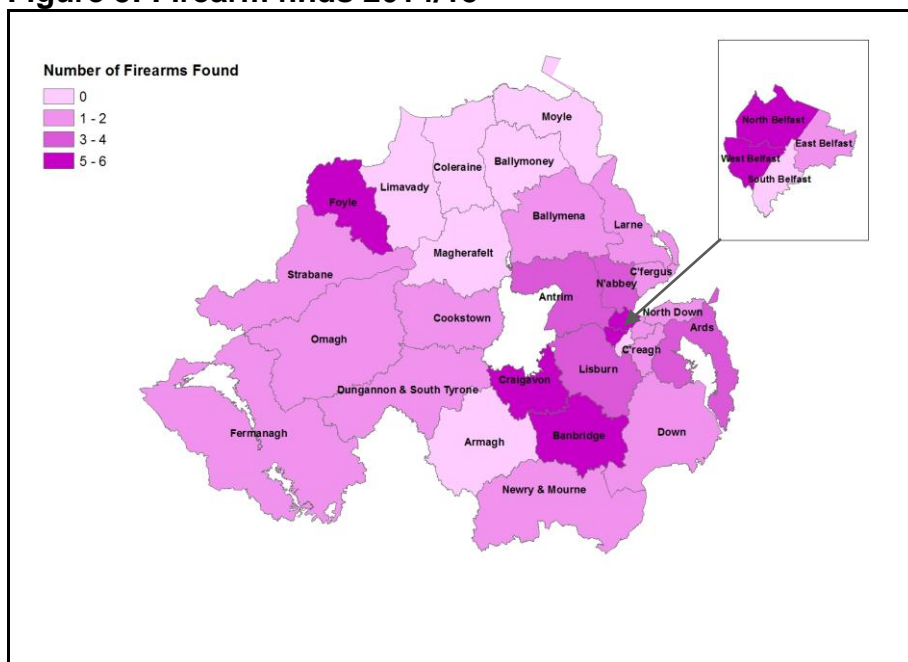
PSNI Officers seized 58 firearms, 4,569 rounds of ammunition and 22.9 kg of explosives during 2014/15. Compared to the previous year (2013/14) the number of firearms found in the past year (2014/15) has decreased by 43 firearms (from 101 firearms to 58 firearms), the number of rounds of ammunition has decreased by 488 rounds (from 5,057 rounds to 4,569 rounds) and the amount of explosives has decreased slightly by 0.2kg (from 23.1kg to 22.9kg).

The policing areas with the largest number of firearms seizures in 2014/15 were North Belfast, Banbridge and Craigavon (each had 6 firearms seized), followed by West Belfast and Foyle (each of which had 5 firearms seized). The three police areas that recovered the largest number of rounds of ammunition were Antrim (1,136), Castlereagh (862) and Omagh (580). Approximately half of all explosives found during 2014/15 were seized in Lisburn (11.06kg). One seizure consisting of 11kg of explosives in November 2014 accounted for almost all explosives found in the Lisburn policing area during 2014/15.

Table 2: Firearms, ammunition and explosives finds 2005/06 – 2014/15

Financial Year	Firearms	Ammunition (rounds)	Explosives (kgs)
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
2012/13	57	2,589	11.4
2013/14	101	5,057	23.1
2014/15	58	4,569	22.9

Figure 5: Firearm finds 2014/15



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

In 2014/15, 227 persons were arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act, 35 of whom were subsequently charged (Table 3). This is a highest number of arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act since 2005/06 and an increase in the number of persons subsequently charged from the previous year (2013/14). However the last year (2014/15) saw the smallest proportion of persons charged (15%), having been arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act, during the last 10 years. Of the 227 persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act in 2014/15 across the 29 police areas, the greatest number of arrests took place in Foyle (30 arrests) followed by West Belfast (23 arrests).

Table 3: Persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act (TACT) and subsequently charged 2005/06 – 2014/15*

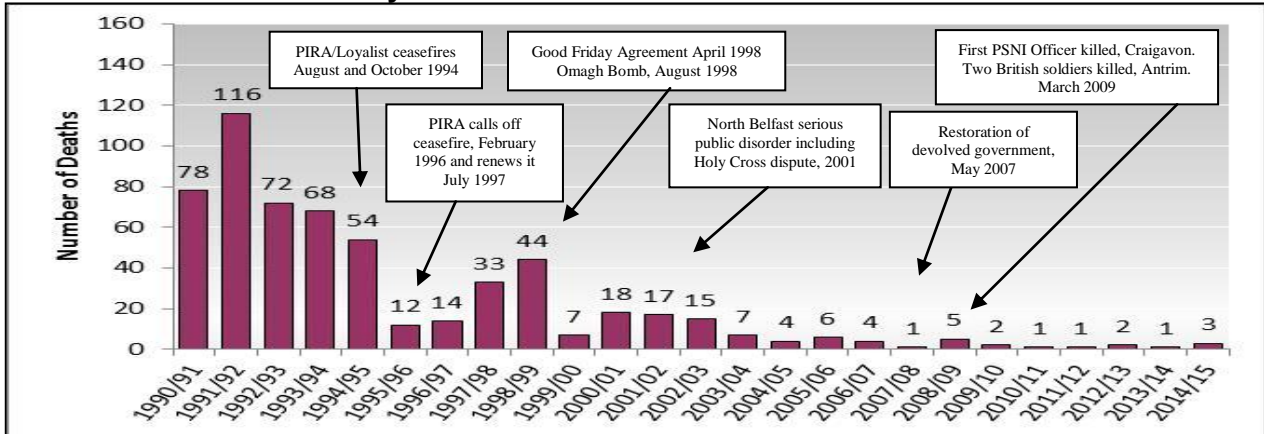
	<i>Persons Arrested under Section 41 of TACT</i>	<i>Persons subsequently Charged^{1,2}</i>
2005/06	273	72
2006/07	177	57
2007/08	130	34
2008/09	174	40
2009/10	169	36
2010/11*	195	41
2011/12	159	39
2012/13	157	50
2013/14	168	32
2014/15	227	35

**Revised figure: The 2010/11 figures were revised in 2011/12. 2010/11 figures were originally 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.*

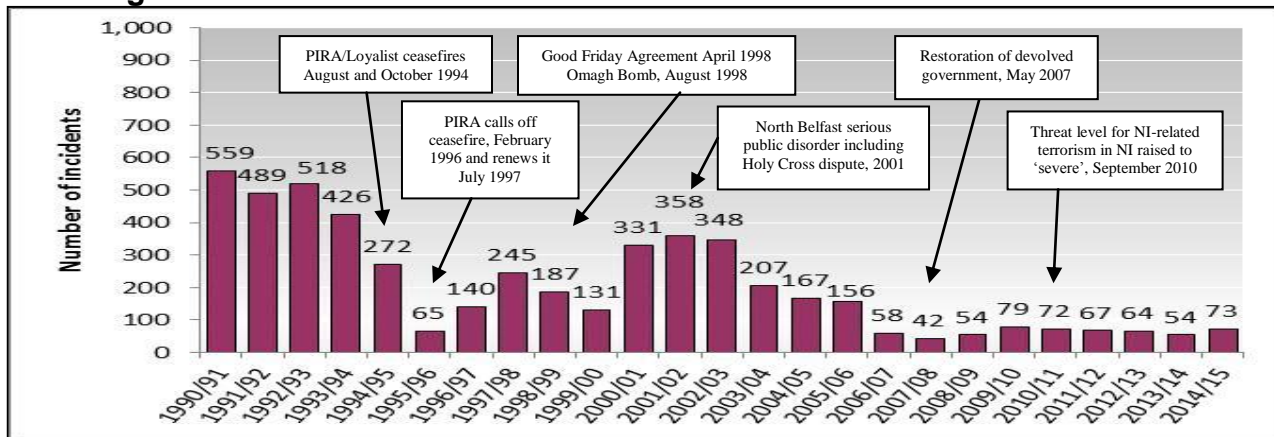
¹ Statistics refer to charges brought against a person after the original period of detention (including extensions). Any subsequent charges, additions, deletions to the original charges are not included.

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.

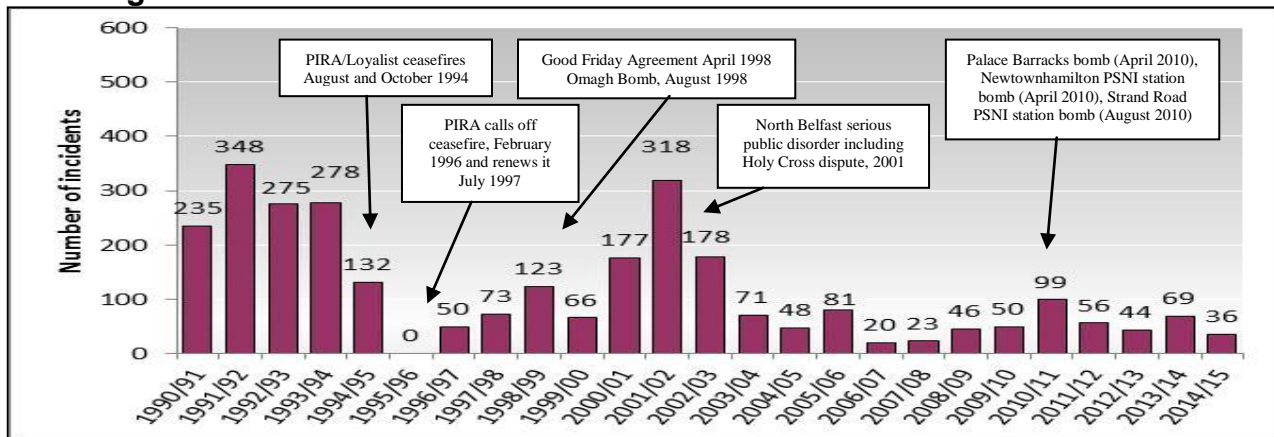
Annex 1: PSNI Security Statistics: Trends over the last 25 Years Deaths Due to the Security Situation 1990/91 – 2014/15



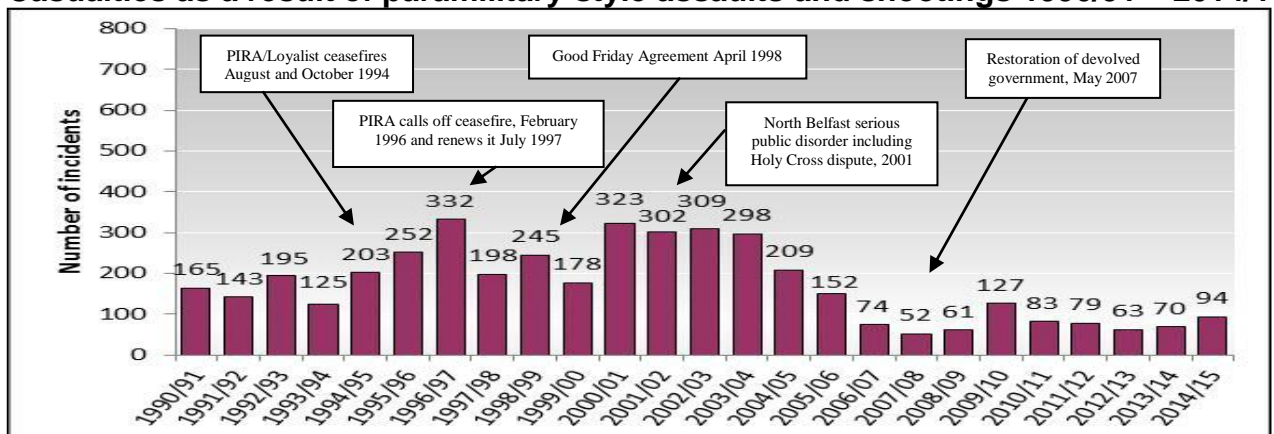
Shooting Incidents 1990/91 – 2014/15



Bombing Incidents 1990/91 – 2014/15



Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style assaults and shootings 1990/91 – 2014/15



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](#).

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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 related incidents that may have happened either in the Republic of Ireland or in Great Britain.

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.

Availability of 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.

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.

Further Research

Research into the history of the security situation in Northern Ireland is available from a number of different areas including academics, media and charities. Included below are a few websites which users may find interesting. This list is not exhaustive.

www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/The-Sense-of-Safety.pdf

www.cain.ulst.ac.uk

www.conflictresearch.org.uk

www.wavetraumacentre.org.uk