

Police Service of Northern Ireland

# Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics

Annual Report covering the period  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

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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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. 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.

*National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.*

*All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.*

*It is a producer's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.*

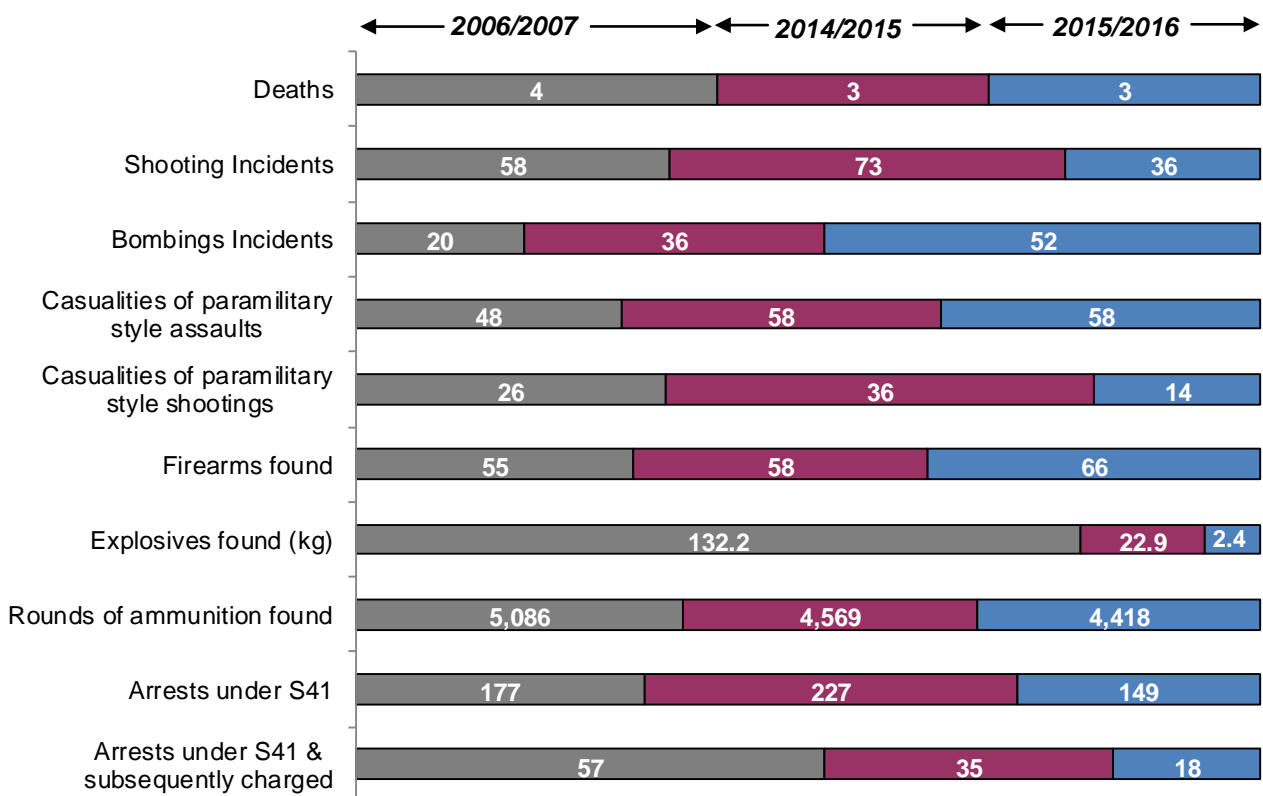
## Section 1 – Security Statistics Summary

Security related deaths, shooting and bombing incidents were at relatively high levels in the early 1990s and then after the first ceasefire in 1994, dropped to their lowest levels in 1995/96. They then gradually increased again in the early 2000s peaking in 2001/02 & 2002/03, albeit at levels well below those pre-ceasefire. After 2002/03 the levels of security related incidents decreased again and have remained relatively consistent over the last 10 years. However, they still pose a significant threat as evidenced by the number of deaths and multiple shooting and bombing incidents that still occur each year.

During 2015/16 there were 3 security related deaths, the same number as the previous year (2014/15). The number of shooting incidents halved from 73 to 36, their lowest annual level since records commenced in 1969. The number of bombing incidents increased slightly compared with 2014/15 (36 to 52) but the number of casualties resulting from paramilitary style attacks decreased from 94 to 72. This was due to a drop in paramilitary style shootings from 36 casualties in 2014/15 to 14 in 2015/16, their lowest level since 2007/08. The numbers of casualties from paramilitary style assaults (58) remained unchanged since 2014/15.

Figure 1 compares the number of security incidents during the past year (2015/16) with the previous year (2014/15) and ten years ago (2006/2007).

**Figure 1: Comparing security incidents for 2015/16, the previous year 2014/15 and ten years ago (2006/07).**



- During 2015/16 there were three security related deaths, one in June 2015 as a result of an assault that took place in 2006, one in January 2015 and one in March 2016. This is the same number as in 2014/15 and is greater than the number per year for the preceding five years, 2009/10 to 2013/14, when there were one or two deaths per year.
- In 2015/16 the police recorded 36 shooting incidents and 52 bombing incidents as a result of the security situation. This is 37 fewer shooting incidents than in the previous year (2014/15) and the lowest number of shooting incidents per year in the last ten years. The number of bombing incidents is 16 more than in the previous year (2014/15).

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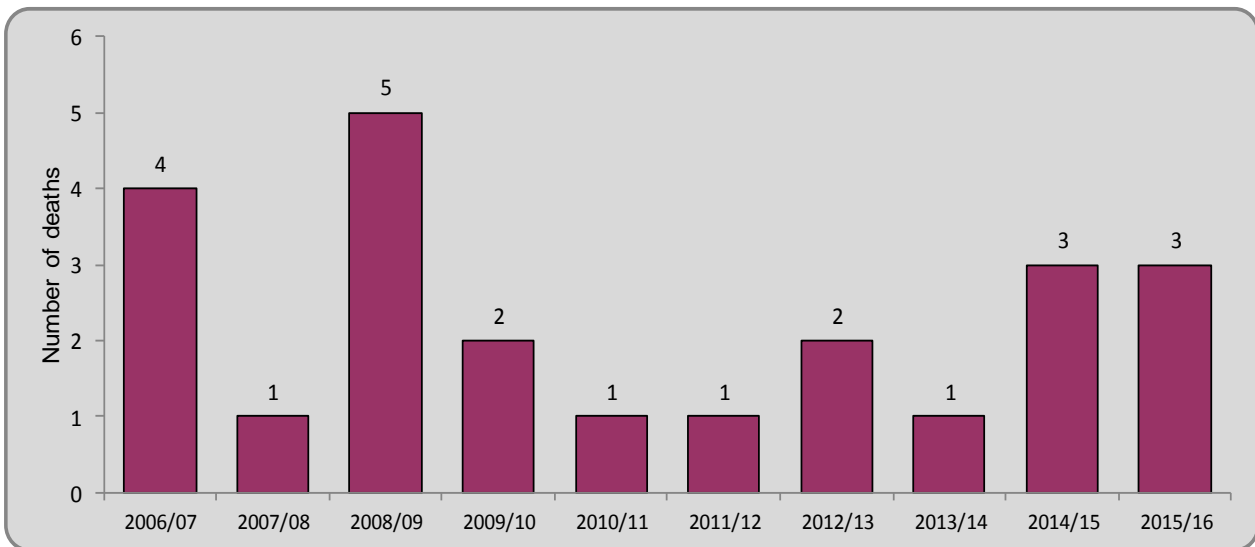
- During 2015/16 there were 14 casualties resulting from paramilitary style shootings, a 61% decrease in the number from the previous year and approximately half the number recorded ten years ago in 2006/07. Of the 14 casualties resulting from paramilitary style shootings recorded in 2015/16, 13 were attributed to Republicans and one was attributed to Loyalists.
- There were 58 casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults in 2015/16, the same number as in 2014/15 and 10 more than the 48 recorded ten years ago in 2006/07. Of the 58 recorded in past year, 47 were attributed to Loyalists and 11 were attributed to Republicans.
- There were 66 firearms seized by the PSNI during 2015/16 compared to 58 seized during the previous year. The number of firearms seized each year has fluctuated over the last ten years with a peak of 176 firearms seized in 2011/12.
- During 2015/16, 2.4kg of explosives and 4,418 rounds of ammunition were seized. This compares to 22.9kg of explosives and 4,569 rounds of ammunition seized in 2014/15.
- In 2015/16, 149 people were arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act of which 18 were subsequently charged with any offence. This is 78 fewer arrests than the previous year and other than in 2007/08, when 130 persons were arrested, it is the lowest number of arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act in the past ten years. There were 18 persons subsequently charged in 2015/16. This is approximately half the number that was charged in the previous year (35 persons) and is the lowest number of persons subsequently charged in the past ten years.

## Section 2 – Deaths due to the Security Situation

During 2015/16 there were three security related deaths in Northern Ireland. The first of these deaths occurred in June 2015 in Derry City and Strabane policing district as a result of an assault that took place in 2006 and the other two occurred in Belfast City policing district, one in January 2016 and the other in March 2016.

The number of security related deaths has fluctuated over the past ten years. After 2008/09, when there were 5 deaths, the number of deaths dropped to one or two per year during the next five years. The last two years, 2014/15 and 2015/16, have seen an increase in this number with three deaths in each of the years (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Deaths due to the Security Situation 2006/07 – 2015/16<sup>1</sup>**



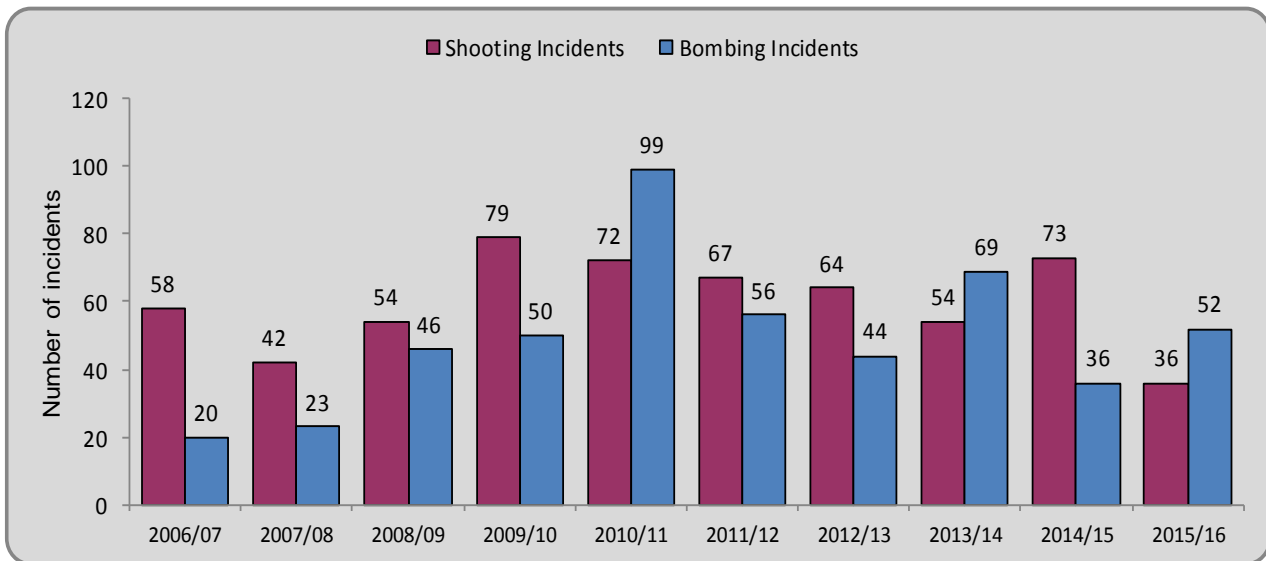
<sup>1</sup> Includes all deaths which are considered at the time of the incident to be directly attributed to terrorism, where the cause has a direct or proximate link to subversive/sectarian strife or where the death is attributable to security force activity.

## Section 3 – Shooting and bombing incidents

There were 36 shooting incidents in Northern Ireland during 2015/16, approximately half the number that occurred during the previous year (73 incidents) and the lowest number of shooting incidents per year in the last ten years. Over the past decade the number of shooting incidents has fluctuated between a low of 36 in 2015/16 to a high of 79 in 2009/10. The 36 incidents in the past year is just under two-thirds of the number that occurred ten years ago in 2006/07 (58 incidents), see Figure 3.

During 2015/16 there were 52 bombing incidents, 16 more than in 2014/15. A significant level of threat remains as evidenced by the number of bombing incidents over the past five years; during the period 2011/12 – 2015/16 there were 257 bombing incidents, compared to the 238 incidents over the preceding five year period, 2006/07 - 2010/11.

**Figure 3: Shooting and bombing incidents 2006/07 – 2015/16<sup>1,2</sup>**

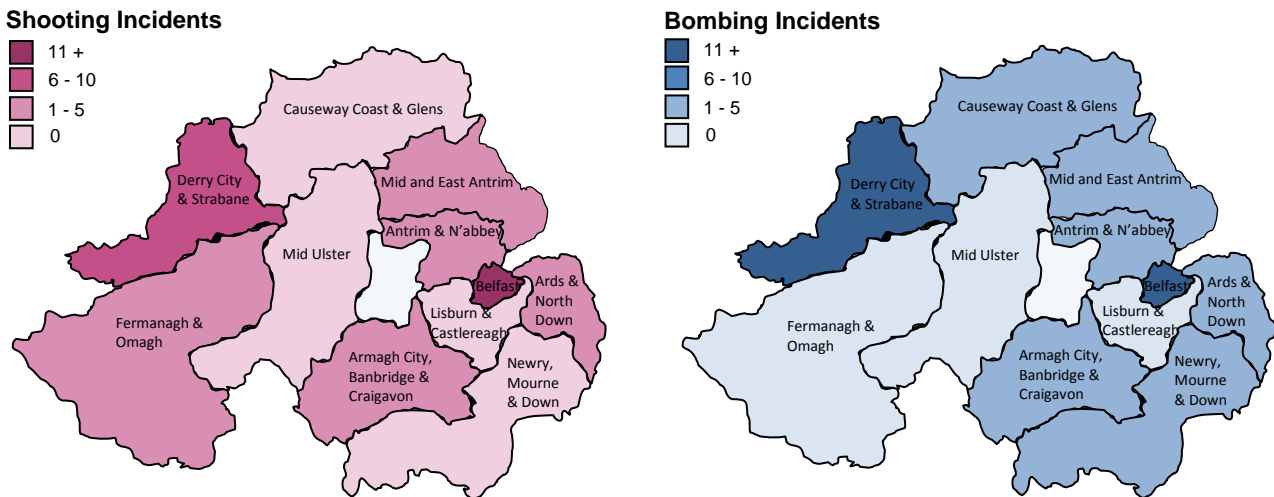


<sup>1</sup> The following types of shooting incidents are included: shots fired by terrorists, shots fired by the security forces, paramilitary-style attacks involving shootings and shots heard (and later confirmed)

<sup>2</sup> 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.

Half of all shooting incidents in 2015/16 occurred in Belfast City policing district (18 incidents), followed by Derry City and Strabane policing district (7 incidents) and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon policing district (4 incidents). Additionally, Belfast experienced half of all bombing incidents in 2015/16 (26 incidents) followed by Derry City and Strabane policing district (13 bombing incidents), see Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Number of shooting and bombing incidents by policing district during 2015/16**



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

## 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 (2006/07 – 2015/16, 775 casualties) compared to the preceding decade (1996/97 – 2005/06, 2546 casualties), as illustrated in the trend graph in Annex 1. During 2015/16 there were 72 casualties as a result of paramilitary-style attacks. This is 22 fewer than the previous year but approximately the same number as occurred ten years ago in 2006/07 (74 casualties). Fifty eight of the 72 casualties were the victim of paramilitary-style assaults while the remaining 14 were the victims of paramilitary-style shootings (Table 1).

**Table 1: Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style attacks 2006/07 – 2015/16**

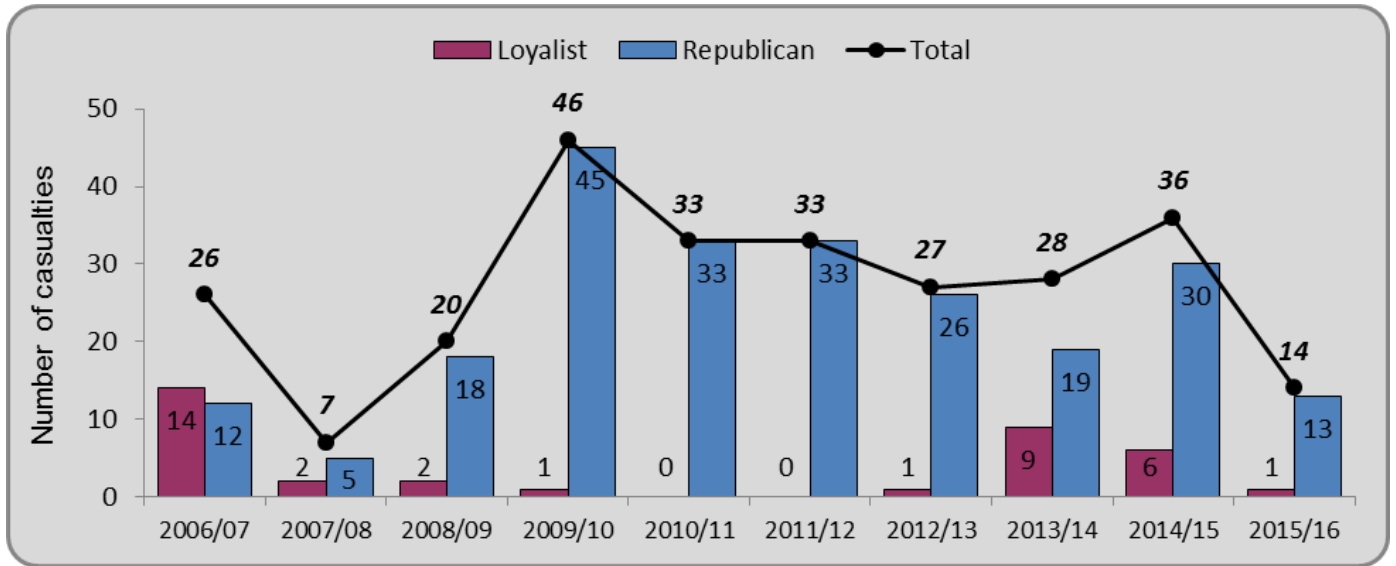
Financial Year	Shootings			Assaults			Total Casualties (Shootings and Assaults)
	Total	By Loyalist Groups*	By Republican Groups*	Total	By Loyalist Groups*	By Republican Groups*	
2006/07	26	14	12	48	36	12	74
2007/08	7	2	5	45	35	10	52
2008/09	20	2	18	41	28	13	61
2009/10	46	1	45	81	69	12	127
2010/11	33	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
2015/16	14	1	13	58	47	11	72

\* Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available at the time of incident.

### Paramilitary-style shootings

During 2015/16 there were 14 casualties as a result of paramilitary style shootings. Other than in 2007/08, when there were 7 casualties, 14 is the lowest number in the past 10 years (Figure 5). It is less than half the number of casualties that occurred in the previous year (36 casualties) and approximately half of the 26 recorded ten years ago in 2006/07. The majority (87%) of paramilitary style shootings carried out over the past 10 years have been attributed to Republican groups. Just under three-quarters of the paramilitary style shootings in 2015/16 were carried out in Belfast (10 casualties). Of the remaining four, two were carried out in Derry City and Strabane policing district, one in Mid and East Antrim policing district and one in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon policing district.

**Figure 5: Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style shootings 2006/07 – 2015/16\***

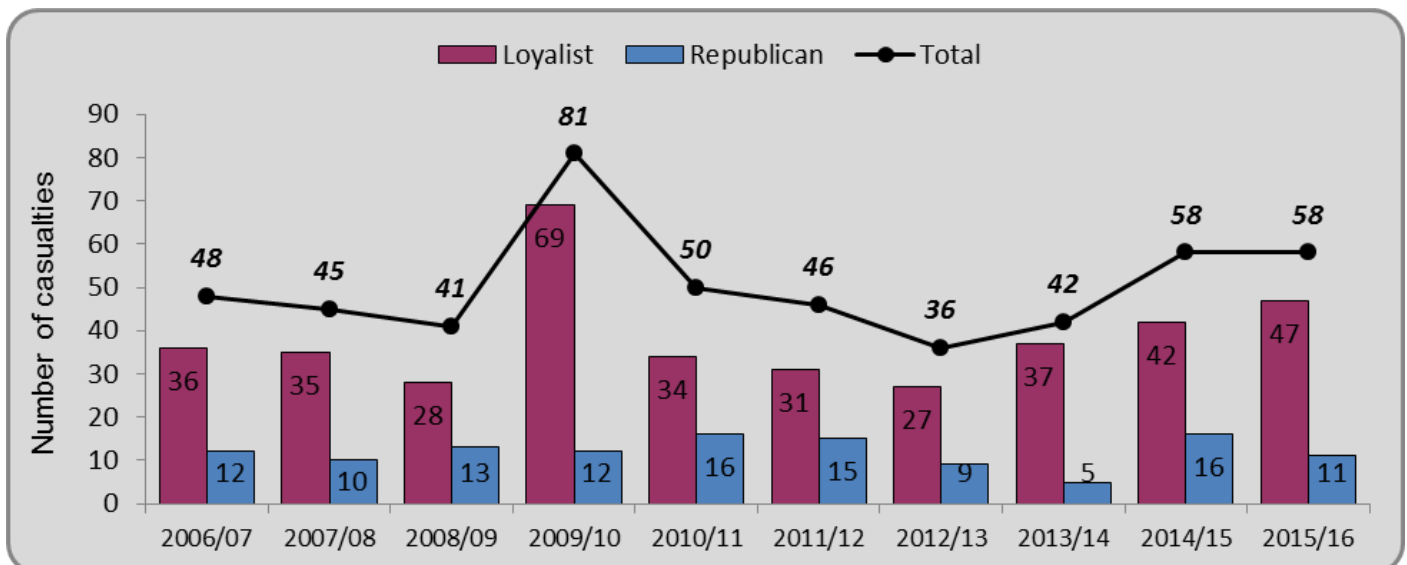


\* Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available at the time of incident.

### Paramilitary-style assaults

During 2015/16 there were 58 casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults, the same number as in the previous year. The past two years, 2014/15 and 2015/16, have seen the greatest number of casualties per year in the past decade, apart from in 2009/10 which witnessed 81 such casualties. Responsibility for the majority of paramilitary style assaults conducted in the last ten years has been attributed to Loyalists (Figure 6). In 2015/16, the majority (81%) of the 58 casualties resulting from paramilitary assaults were attributed to Loyalists while the remaining 19% were attributed to Republicans.

**Figure 6: Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style assaults 2006/07 – 2015/16\***

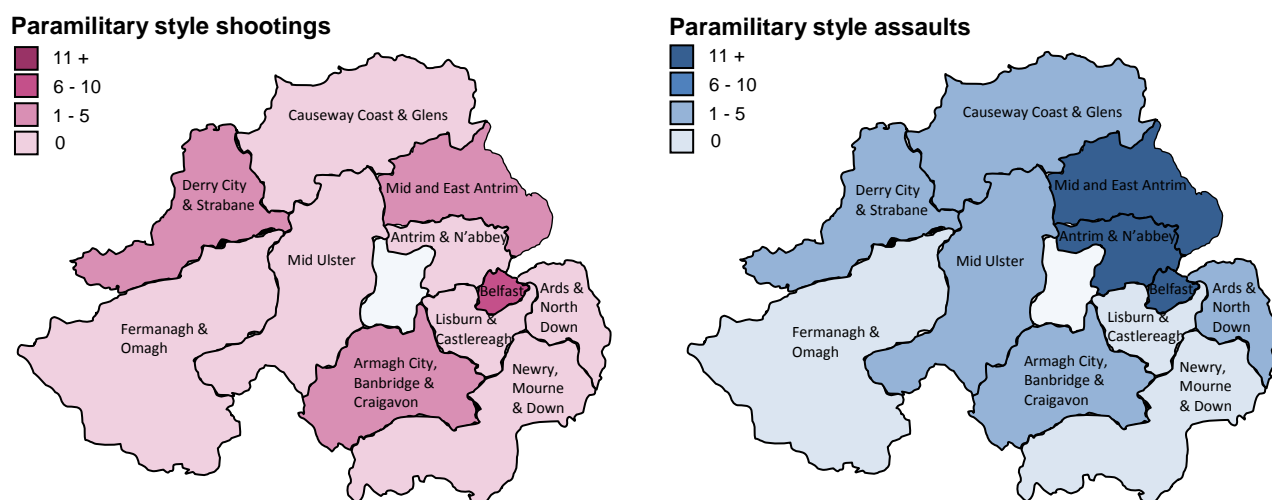


\* Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available at the time of incident.



The policing districts with the greatest number of casualties resulting from paramilitary style assaults in 2015/16 were Belfast City (21 casualties), Mid and East Antrim (13 casualties) and Antrim and Newtownabbey (11 casualties), see Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style shooting and assaults by policing district during 2015/16**



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

### Section 5 – Firearms, ammunition and explosives finds

PSNI Officers seized 66 firearms, 4,418 rounds of ammunition and 2.4 kg of explosives during 2015/16. Compared to the previous year (2014/15) the number of firearms found in the past year has increased by 8 firearms (from 58 firearms), the number of rounds of ammunition has decreased by 151 rounds (from 4,569 rounds) and the amount of explosives has decreased considerably by 20.5kg (from 22.9kg to 2.4kg), see Table 2.

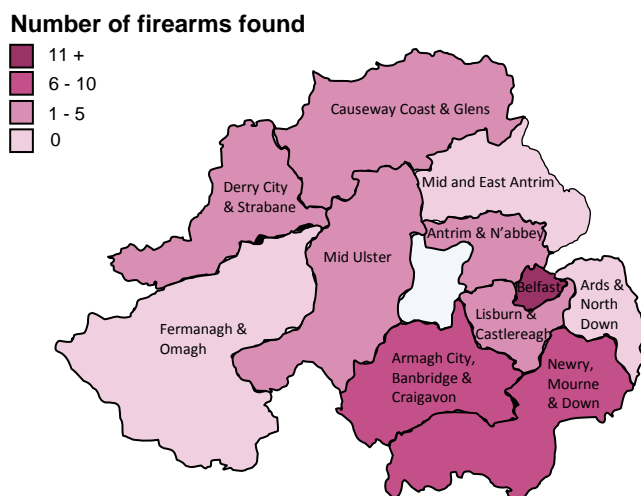
**Table 2: Firearms, ammunition and explosives finds 2006/07 – 2015/16**

Financial Year	Firearms	Ammunition (rounds)	Explosives (kg)
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
2015/16	66	4,418	2.4

The policing districts with the largest number of firearms seizures in 2015/16 were Belfast City (41 firearms seized), followed by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (7 firearms seized) and Newry, Mourne and Down (6 firearms seized), see Figure 8. The three police districts that recovered the largest number of rounds of ammunition were Belfast City (3,244), Causeway Coast and Glens (550) and Newry, Mourne and Down (174) while the largest quantities of explosives were

seized in Belfast City (1.3kg) and Derry City and Strabane (0.9kg). Other than in 2009/10, when 2.2 kg of explosives were seized, 2015/16 saw the lowest quantity found in the past ten years.

**Figure 8: Firearm found/seized in 2015/16**



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

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

In 2015/16, 149 persons were arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act (TACT). This is 78 fewer arrests than the previous year and other than in 2007/08, when 130 persons were arrested, it is the lowest number of arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act in the past ten years. There were 18 persons subsequently charged with any offence in 2015/16. This is approximately half the number that was charged in the previous year and is the lowest number of persons subsequently charged in the past ten years (Table 3).

**Table 3: Persons arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act (TACT) and subsequently charged 2006/07 – 2015/16\***

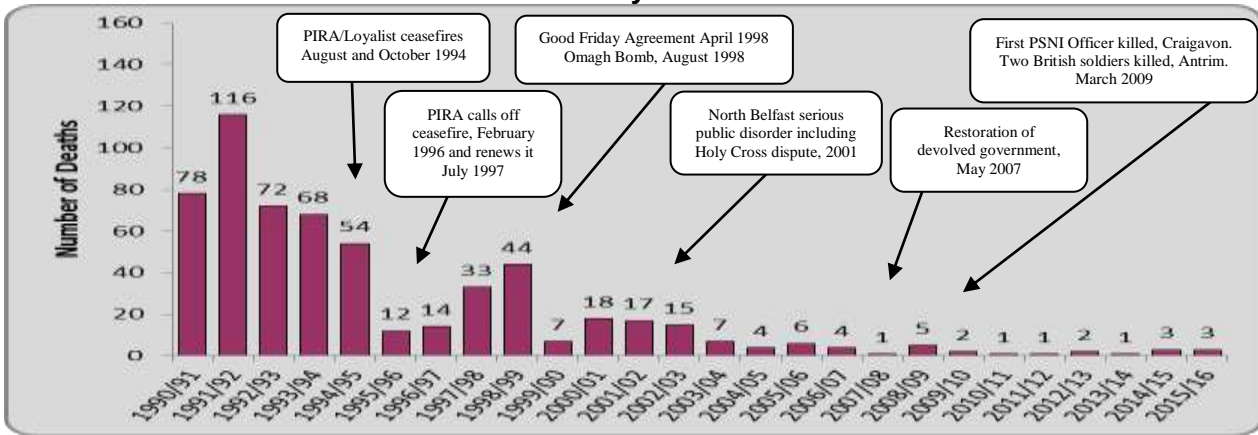
Financial Year	Persons arrested under Section 41 of TACT	Persons subsequently charged <sup>1,2</sup>
2006/07	177	57
2007/08	130	34
2008/09	174	40
2009/10	169	36
2010/11	195	41
2011/12	159	39
2012/13	157	50
2013/14	168	32
2014/15	227	35
2015/16	149	18

<sup>1</sup> 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.

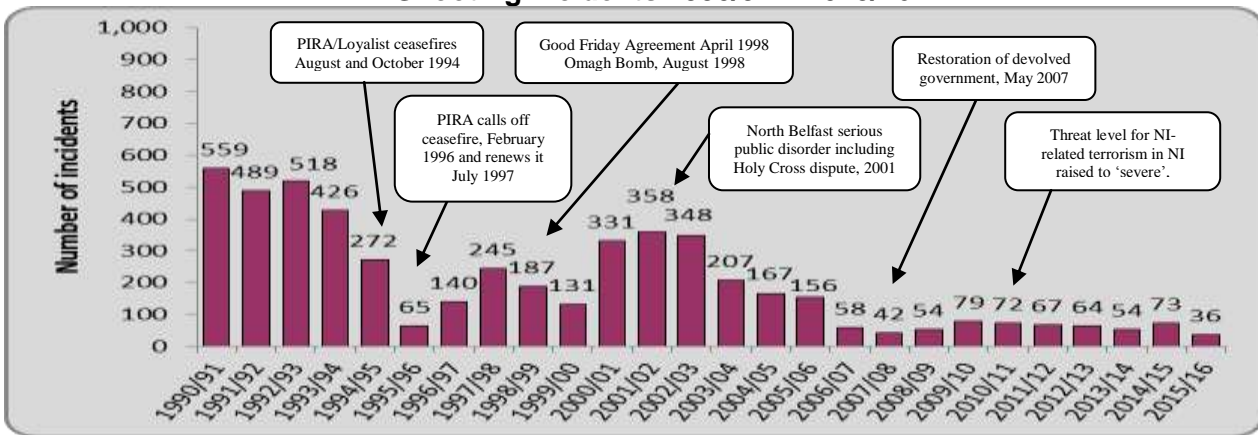
<sup>2</sup> Please note that persons can be charged under legislation other than the Terrorism Act. Persons may also be charged in a different financial year from which they were arrested e.g. those persons detained at the end of March and charged in April.

**Annex 1: PSNI Security Statistics: Trends over the last 26 Years**

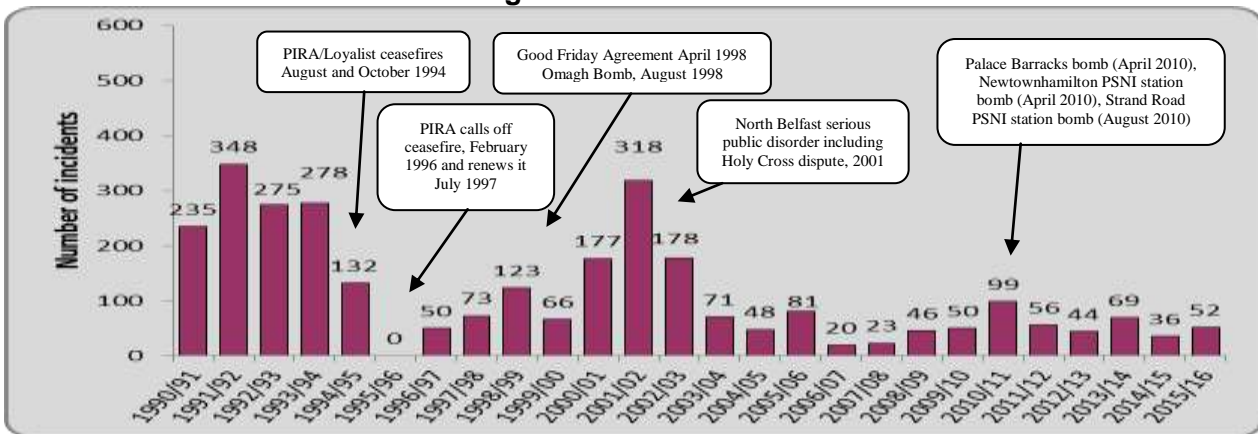
**Deaths Due to the Security Situation 1990/91 – 2015/16**



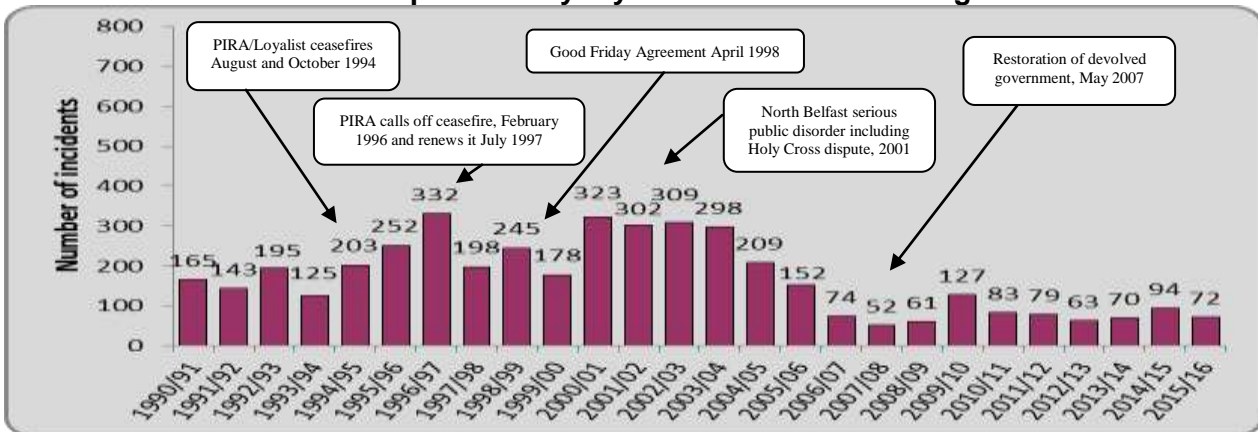
**Shooting Incidents 1990/91 – 2015/16**



**Bombing Incidents 1990/91 – 2015/16**



**Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style assaults and shootings 1990/91 – 2015/16**



## 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.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/northern-ireland-terrorism-legislation-annual-statistics-201415>

[www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/The-Sense-of-Safety.pdf](http://www.community-relations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/The-Sense-of-Safety.pdf)

[www.cain.ulst.ac.uk](http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk)

[www.conflictresearch.org.uk](http://www.conflictresearch.org.uk)

[www.wavetraumacentre.org.uk](http://www.wavetraumacentre.org.uk)