



CrimeMalta Annual Crime Review:

Year 2014

Media Annual Report

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Crime reporting experiences a trend reversal for the first time in 5 years having fallen by more than 5% year on year. The upward trend sustained from 2009 to 2013 was been stemmed during 2014.

Damages, Theft, Fraud and violence against public officer experienced the largest decline in offences.

Forgeries, computer misuse, drugs and sexual offences also declined whilst domestic violence, pornography, bodily harm, prostitution and threats and private violence experienced slight increases.

As part of the CrimeMalta's preparatory activities to launch the Malta Crime Observatory Initiative, this report covers the 2014 annual statistics as elicited from analysis of reported crime, incarceration statistics and spatial analysis. The outputs below pertain to the closed 'accounts' for 2014 crime.

In summary, at slightly higher than 16,600 reported offences, crime analysis has seen a stemming in the previous steady 5 year year-on-year incident increase that was initiated in 2009. A drop of 900 crime reports from 2013 was recorded reaching the 2006 level but has yet to reach the lowest recorded level of 12,000 offences registered in 2009. This higher level is mainly due to the large number of damages reported to the police, which include 4100 incidences that have gone down by 550 incidents from the previous year. 2013 had seen a jump, partially related to one single incident that resulted in a drastic number of damages, which related to the shipping industry blasting activity.

The analysis of crime requires the study of the dark figure of crime and where the proposed EU-SASU has been shelved by the EU, Malta requires the running of the crime victimisation survey, in order to ascertain whether Malta experiences high or low levels of unreported crime incidents.

The causes of the 2014 change are multi-faceted. Social sciences point towards the relationship between crime and poverty (whether absolute or relative). As poverty increases or austerity kicks in, where disposable income decreases, crime experiences an inverse reaction in that it increases. Likewise, easy access or proximity to goods leads to an increase in crime due to the opportunity 'to pick up' that the same goods offer, such as the increase of goods related to tourism and higher numbers of potential victims. In addition, the access to tools for use in 'new crimes' such as computer-related fraud or theft aid offenders.

In turn, crime drops when the returns from crime are diminished, opportunities are lessened through mitigation measures and where society helps in designing out crime, both through physical structures such as gates as well as through an increase in community policing, deterrence, installation of cameras and an increase in social cohesion.

Criminologist Dr Saviour Formosa (www.crimemalta.com) through the analysis of crime trends in Malta since 1949 and through spatio-temporal analysis as from 1998 (270,000 offences) posits that whilst Theft comprises the highest component, followed by Damages, the third highest and significant number relates to Bodily Harm, rankings sustained over the years. Theft and damages have experienced large reductions between them, whilst bodily harm maintained the past year's trend, albeit increasing slightly. The rest comprise 28 different offence categories.

The studies take the form of a rate analysis, as against a count analysis, through the study of a RISC assessment (Relative Index of Spatial Crime), trend analysis and spatio-statistical analysis. The RISC categories that show which towns suffer most from crime, or inversely are safest in Malta and Gozo, can be found below.

Some main figures:

- Thefts have seen a drop of 270 offences from 2013, sustaining a drop for two years in a row. Theft still comprises 58% of all offences;
- Damages constituted the main drop between 2013 and 2014 constituting 550 less offences than 2013, an decrease of 11% over the previous year;
- Bodily Harm averages 1,052 cases per year or 3 incidents per day (average 2004-2013). This statistic shows a consistent occurrence every year, currently at 990 in 2014;
- Fraud has experienced a 31% decrease over the previous year;
- Computer related crime experienced a 9% decrease over the previous year;
- Drugs have gone down slightly from 208 in 2013 to 192 in 2014;
- Prostitution increased from 48 to 123 in 2014, pointing towards wider intervention and deterrence exercises;
- Domestic Violence has continued its steady increase reaching 1046 reports in 2014, which points to a tenfold increase between 2007 and 2014;
- Threats and Public Violence have practically tripled from the lowest figure of 63 in 2008, the year which saw a steady increase year on year to a figure of 265 cases in 2014, up from 185 in 2013, up by 43%;
- Violence against Public Officers has experienced a decline by 25% in 2014, a phenomenon that has experienced nationwide awareness on the phenomenon that had been on the rise since 2008.

In terms of Temporal statistics, the summer months remain the highest offence absorbers, steadily increasing from April to August, declining slightly till December, dropping in January and then slowly increasing till April.

Saturday, followed by Sunday attract most incidences though during the past two years Mondays registered the highest target days. The rest of the weekdays are comparatively stable with circa 42 offences per Monday.

Offences occur mainly at 18:00 or between 10:00 and 14:00.

Prison numbers declining though still very high.

CCF remains inundated with an ever-high number of offenders, held in the Island's only prison that comprises services for both sexes, all categories of offences, all ages, national and international provenance, sentenced and remanded offenders, amongst other categories.

As from 2012, CrimeMalta's research process has also been enhanced to include the prison population statistics, with data going back to 2001.

Some stats: as recorded on a Friday base-date:

- The CCF Psychology Capacity Threshold of 600 inmates was exceeded at the end of September 2012, increasing till April 2014 and decreasing to date where circa 580 inmates reside as at February 2015;
 - The CCF Population as at 26th December 2014 (last Friday): 591 (553 males and 38 females);
 - The CCF Population as at the highest ever recorded Friday - 25th April 2014: 645 (607 males and 38 females).
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RISC Model: League Tables for 2014

As part of a review of RISC Modelling for the Maltese Islands, a number of analytical studies have been carried out for the period between 1998 and 2014.

Grand Total Offences:

In terms of Grand Total Offences, San Giljan maintains its perennial hold at the top of the League, hosting over 5 times the national rate of offences, which is calculated as the observed offences as against those which should potentially occur in those areas under study. At a rate between twice and 5 times the national rate, Floriana followed a close second at 2-5 times the national rate, which group also comprises Mdina, Valletta, Sliema and Marsa. Note that Marsa has entered this category for the first time, having had a position at 1x-2x the national rate in previous years.

At a rate between the national up to twice that rate one can find San Pawl il-Bahar, Ta' Xbiex, Gudja, Msida, Gzira, Zebbug (Gozo) which includes Marsalforn, Mellieha, Paola, Pieta, Ghajnsielem, Munxar (includes Xlendi) and Marsalforn. San Pawl il-Bahar, has maintained its 1x-2x RISC level, having dropped from the 2x-5x in 2013.

All the Other Councils host a lower than national rate, albeit none have a Zero Risk.

Theft from Residences:

Whilst San Giljan, San Pawl il-Bahar, Msida and Swieqi are yearly top graders in the 2x-5x RISC, 2014 registered Sliema and Ghasri as two zones that hosted relative rates of high residential theft incidents. The Sliema episode was very evident in terms of public reaction, whereas Ghasri that registered a higher rate was not afforded media attention, even though it ranked higher in risk rates. In contrast, most other zones have lower than average rates and that San Lawrenz and Mdina again registered zero residential offences in 2014.

Theft of and from Vehicles:

2014 has seen a drop in the highest RISC rates, which was occupied by Floriana in the top spot of the League, hosting over 5 times the national rate of offences. This year, Floriana joins Gudja, San Giljan and Ta' Xbiex as the highest risk areas where one's car could be vandalised, broken into and/or stolen, which towns host between 2 & 5 times. Note that these towns host the largest parking and transport-related activities that attract offenders to high-volume and relatively less monitored opportunities.

At the other end of the scale, Munxar, Qala, Ghasri and Fontana registered zero vehicle-related offences.

Dr Saviour Formosa

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