



CIGIREACHT AN GHARDA SÍOCHÁNA
GARDA SÍOCHÁNA INSPECTORATE

Press Release

Transnational Organised Crime – A Review of the Structures, Strategies and Processes in the Garda Síochána

- The Garda Inspectorate recognises the considerable success of the Garda Síochána in targeting high-profile crime groups and seizing large volumes of drugs and other criminal assets, however this should be enhanced through the introduction of a domestic and transnational organised crime strategy and implementation of a National Criminal Intelligence Framework informed by a strategic threat and risk assessment.
- In addition, recommendations are made to create a National Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy, deliver diversionary work through a Youth Justice Agency and better support victims through a trauma informed framework and a National Victims' Strategy.
- Also, recommendations are made to address legislative gaps, maximise international co-operation and enable multi-agency sharing of information and collaborative investigation through partner agreements and the establishment of a National Crime Centre.

5/11/2024

The Garda Inspectorate's report "*Transnational Organised Crime – A Review of the Structures, Strategies and Processes in the Garda Síochána*" was published today.

Commenting on the inspection, Chief Inspector Mark Toland said "*As organised crime impacts significantly on the most vulnerable people in society, prevention and investigation should be key priorities. This requires international cooperation and a strategic cross-government approach to enhance community safety, support victims and reduce recidivism through diversion and disengagement from organised crime*".

The Garda Inspectorate acknowledges the considerable success the Garda Síochána has had in targeting high-profile crime groups and seizing large volumes of drugs and other criminal assets. However, disruption is often temporary and does not address the harmful effects on individuals and communities. Children as young as eight are being groomed by organised crime groups and coerced into involvement in drug related intimidation and collection of debts. Victims of human trafficking and intimidation shared their harrowing experiences and the Inspectorate found that in the

absence of a National Victims Strategy support can be inconsistent and uncoordinated. While the Garda Síochána has developed excellent relationships with international bodies such as Europol and Interpol, domestically the effectiveness of multi-agency working would be enhanced by the establishment of a National Crime Centre as a forum for agencies to meet and share information on organised crime. In addition, to effectively disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups, the Garda Síochána needs to become more data-informed, intelligence-led and technology-enabled.

To address the threat posed by organised criminal networks, the Inspectorate has made 68 recommendations to the Garda Síochána, the Department of Justice and other agencies. Key recommendations include –

- Strategic and operational changes to deliver a better understanding of the threat and risk of domestic and transnational organised crime and to use this to prioritise and co-ordinate operational activity.
- Enhancement of collaborative working including development of an all-island Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment and strategy to tackle transnational organised crime.
- Addressing legislative gaps, maximising international co-operation and enabling sharing of information through access to existing legal instruments available to other international law enforcement agencies.
- Better supporting victims and vulnerable members of society through the development of a National Victims' Strategy and a National Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy.
- Creating a cross-government Youth Justice Agency, an organised crime unit and a post-detention family support model to divert and support people engaged in organised criminal networks.

With regard to the recommendations, Chief Inspector Toland said *“If fully implemented, they will help the Garda Síochána and other agencies to work more collaboratively to prevent domestic and transnational organised crime, tackle the crime groups that cause most harm in communities, and better support the victims of these crimes”*

In conclusion, Chief Inspector Toland stated; *“I would like to express my appreciation to those victims of trafficking, exploitation, intimidation and violence who shared their deeply personal experiences with the inspection team. It was critically important that this report captured the experiences of people and communities who are affected by domestic and transnational organised crime”*.

Ends

Notes for Editors

Please see link to press pack <https://www.gsinsp.ie/media-kit-enquires/>, and link to report <https://www.gsinsp.ie/transnational-organised-crime/>

The 39 recommendations for the Garda Síochána and 29 recommendations for the Department of Justice are contained at page **XXXVI** in the report.

For any follow up requests for information, please contact: Mr Gerry McDonagh – 087 9373459, GAMcDonagh@gsinsp.ie.

Additional information

The terms of reference are available here - <https://www.gsinsp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Transnational-Organised-Crime-Terms-of-Reference.pdf>

A short video outlining the main findings in this report is available at <https://youtu.be/BF4YYjNgy7g>

Key Findings

This was a self-initiated inspection to examine how effective the Garda Síochána is at preventing and investigating domestic and transnational organised crime and disrupting and dismantling organised crime groups.

- The Garda Síochána has neither an organised crime nor a transnational organised crime strategy.
- There is no Joint Agency Task Force strategic threat and risk assessment or strategy to tackle transnational organised crime on the island of Ireland.
- Delays in implementing a national intelligence model and incomplete crime data make it difficult to fully understand the demands presented by organised crime groups and prioritise work to tackle them.
- The absence of a garda workforce plan and a human resource information system hampers effective decision-making in relation to resources.
- The Garda Síochána has a strong international presence enhanced through the deployment of their liaison officers.
- The process for accessing critical evidence from other jurisdictions is slow and bureaucratic and the number of requests has increased significantly.
- There were good examples of interagency working but some partner agencies were frustrated with the reluctance of garda members to share information in the absence of formalised agreements.

- Domestically, the absence of an established forum for agencies to meet and share information on organised crime is a weakness.
- The Garda Síochána needs a policy for undercover deployments to enable the use of the full range of covert policing tactics, and some compliance issues were found with the management of Covert Human Intelligence Sources.
- Many members investigating serious crime lacked training in core investigative skills.
- The Garda Síochána does not have a trauma-informed framework or a programme to train its workforce in trauma-responsive approaches.
- Outside of the probation process, there are no post-conviction orders specifically relevant to any aspects of serious organised crime.
- Many victims and victim services perceived that some members of the garda workforce were not sufficiently trained or suitably equipped to support victims of serious and complex crimes.
- While the Criminal Justice (Engagement of Children in Criminal Activity) Act 2024 is welcomed, there is no legislative definition of child criminal exploitation or an understanding that such exploitation is human trafficking of young people.
- Many members of organised crime groups continue to operate and direct their criminal enterprise from prison and there is a lack of structured post detention care and family support.