

CRIME MALTA OBSERVATORY

ANNUAL CRIME REVIEW

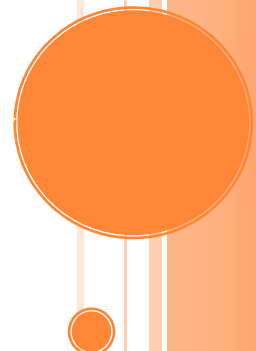
Year 2017

2017 figures depict a long-sought stabilisation in reported crimes following 8 years of steady increase in offences. The year 2017 saw a slight decrease in the number of crimes over the previous year. The Maltese offence profile has maintained the past two years' shift from a public-oriented to a personal-target structure. Crime has evolved from a social-space structure to the invasion of personal-space. Displacement is also very evident as the migration of crimes from one zone to another becomes more pronounced with San Giljan's rate of crime dropping from a height of 19.5 in 2012 to 10.6%, the lowest in the last 13 years. Malta maintained a generic lower than EU average across most crime categories, except for theft. In terms of societal reaction, moral panic played a part this year in rendering a perception that crime is increasing, when the facts depict a stabilised scenario. In terms of predicted crimes for 2017, the difference between the expected and observed crimes was significantly lower, indicating that the number of crimes that should have occurred during the year, did not occur, resulting in a safer scenario.

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CRIMEMALTA ANNUAL CRIME REVIEW

Year 2017

In 2008, CrimeMalta was launched as a conveyor for crime research and reporting in the Maltese Islands. This year, the report is being published through the enhanced CrimeMalta Observatory initiative, which over the next years, intends to expand its reporting to other areas inclusive of environmental, locational and other societal domains. The annual report covers a factual crime review of Malta's interactive spatial technologies and spatial statistics such as published in this year's annual report for 2017.

This report covers the 2017 annual statistics as elicited from an analysis of reported crime, incarceration statistics and spatial analysis. The outputs below pertain to the closed 'accounts' for 2017 crime.

In terms of the European comparison, Malta fares as a very safe place, well below the EU28's average in all serious crimes covering Assaults, Burglary, Drugs, Homicide, Rape, Robberies, Sexual Assault and Sexual offences as published by the UNODC. The only main category that is higher than the EU average pertains to Theft which high rate is accentuated by one sub-category that has dominated crime reporting in Malta over the past years: that pertaining to pickpocketing.

In summary, at **17,136 reported offences**, crime analysis shows a plateauing of the recent years' crime offences, evidenced through a slight decrease in crime reports over the 2016 period comprising an absolute **decrease of 162 crimes or 0.9%**. This is a slowing down from the previous year's 0.9% increase that comprised an absolute **increase of 160 crimes**. Once again the entire crime scenario was absorbed by a single phenomenon falling within the Theft category, which phenomenon had grown by 5 times between 2009 and 2016 but for the first time since 2009, Malta has experienced a 12% dip in this category from 2016 to 2017: **Pickpocketing** has decreased by 303 offences in 2017. In fact, from 450 such reports in 2009, this offence had maintained the league of tables increase in Maltese reporting for a 7 year span and only started showing a decrease in 2017 **comprising 2144 instances or 12.5% of all crimes**, down from 2447 in 2016. **Most other categories of theft have decreased** apart from theft from factories and building sites, hotels, retail outlets, religious temples, occupied residences and theft of vehicle. Theft from beaches experienced a 31 percent increase following a dip the previous year. Theft comprises 48.2% of all offences reported to the Police, down from 51% in 2016.

The second highest reported offence, **Damages**, has seen a **slight but steady decrease** to 22% of all offences. **Domestic Violence has retained its 7% rate** of all offences, again surpassing the fourth highest ranking offence, **Bodily Harm, which has registered a year on year decrease** initiated in 2009 down to 5%, which points to a steadily more tolerant and less violent society in the social realm, a phenomenon that does not reflect its antithesis where Domestic Violence, ensconced within the private realm, has seen a veritable increase in personal and intimate violence, equally split between psychological and slight bodily harm as evidenced since 2007. In turn, **Fraud** again

experienced an increase of 57% over the previous year. These 5 categories of crimes comprise 87.6% of all crime reports.

Causalities, Opportunity and the Expected Increase that did not materialise

The causes of the 2017 change are interesting in criminological terms. As described in previous reports, the foundations that comprise social structures known as **PREFE** (Politics, Religion, Economy, Family and Education) have experienced rapid change such that the impact of values and norms becomes less tangible. Whilst the Political or legal measures have evolved and security implementation has increased in the social arenas resulting in the reduction of such offences as theft from residences, damages, bodily harm and prostitution, the strongest pillar pertaining to the family or household has become increasingly fragile such that the incidence of the personal-security incidents has grown dramatically. This is reflected through domestic violence, irrespective of form or method, whether psychological or physical.

As Economic measures increasingly offer most offenders an opportunity to partake to crime when the rewards far exceed the sanctions, offences such as theft emanating from the invasion of person-spaces increase as they offer a quick intake of funds. The fact that the **recreation and leisure activities offer ripe ground** for offending particularly where the recreational zones are crowded and person space is not possible, the opportunity for dexterous hands offers a high rate of return. Vitaly important is the **expected increase in tourism-related offences**, where tourism offers an opportunity for crimes in terms of numbers and access to the partaking of goods: an **expected increase of 1500** offences that did not occur as expected to reflect the high increase in tourist numbers. Pickpocketing, did decrease but the numbers are large enough to serve be an indicator of such an opportunity being offered, however the crimes potentially predicted as reflective of an increase in **200,000** incoming tourists failed to materialize. This may be due to an alert public, increased awareness, tourism police and better security visibility. The study of pick-pocketing as a comparative analysis of people movements may help one to understand the dynamics pertaining to the relative increase in both the criminal process and the social phenomenon under study as being offered by the opportunity offered by the increase in potential victims.

In terms of crime mitigation, the Maltese society needs to focus further on this phenomenon and change accordingly, even in terms of educational campaigns that target both citizens and visitors, whilst building awareness scales on the measurement of such offences, the relative offender-victim dynamics, the flow of goods and the offence displacement when action is taken by the state and its operational arms.

In terms of the loss of relative offence volume that **San Giljan** experienced over the past years, going down from **19.5% in 2012 to 10.6% in 2017**, a rate even lower than the lowest recorded of 11% in 2005. This scenario, within a national perspective where offences have remained stable, calls for the investigation of the displacement issue. The latter seeks to understand where such offences migrated to and in turn to predict mitigation of predicted crime before it occurs. Revived areas such as Valletta have borne the brunt of such a migration. Offences migrate to the opportunities offered to potential offenders who weigh the risk taken against the reward achieved, where the higher the reward as against

the risk, such an offences becomes more attractive and is partaken to. The **revived city of Valletta** and its mushrooming recreational and retail outlets are offering increasingly lucrative options for offenders, thus migration from other localities become a conscious choice for offenders.

Emphasis should be now taken to the next level through an **educational awareness campaign** starting from the early ages to elder adults. The implementation of the 2017 Crime Prevention Strategy is a veritable vehicle for such a process.

MORPHING OF THE MALTESE CRIME SCENARIO

Offences in the Maltese Islands have morphed from a multi-thematic to a spatial structure:

From a Social-Space scenario to a Private-Space scenario

Whilst homicides once again took media precedence, such was not based on volume but on method. The method, particularly the employment of explosive devices raised concern and increased calls for mitigation. In fact, such was the major contribution to the perceived fear of crime as published in conjunction with the perception of corruption and bribery. All other perceptions report low or very low concern on both violent and non-violent crime.

The past year has again seen an increased awareness process on Domestic Violence as well as the uptake of initiatives projects that study the phenomenon. The Crime Prevention Strategy (Formosa Pace, 2017) sought for a focus on raising awareness towards the mitigation of crime that integrates further community policing aimed at decreasing the social-space offences further, have been taken up by the relevant entities. The need to focus on the movement away from the perception that the mitigation is simply a role that the Police Force must be solely responsible for is erroneous, but one needs to view such as rather a call for collective Social Responsibility.

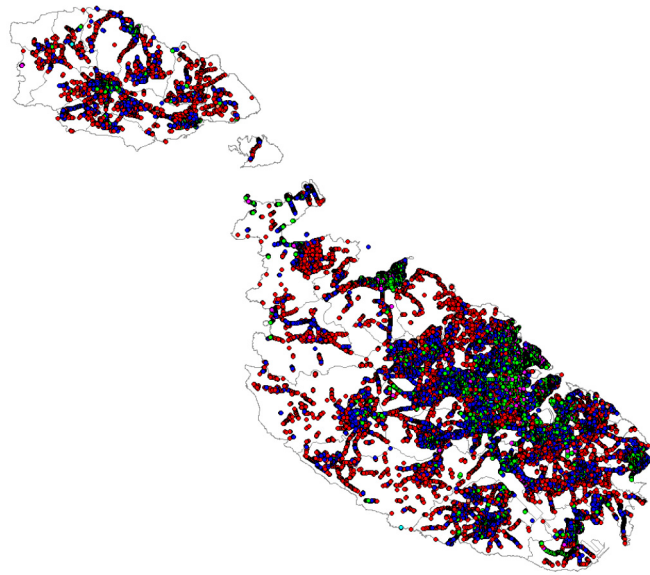
Previous CrimeMalta reports pointed towards a depiction where Social Capital is provided through the PREFE structures, of which the Police Force form a part. However, the essential aspects that will pivot towards offence mitigation lies in the enhancement of Social Cohesion through awareness raising, values redefinition, self-respect and the will to report and stop offences. Such a process requires a sea change in both the Police Force and relative enforcement agencies remit as well as civil society through NGOs and self-help groups.

One cannot continue to observe crime as the arena for uniformed officers but one where such are enhanced through social and publicity activity run by social entities to ensure knowledge on crime, rescue and support functions as well as personal safety and security increase. It is imperative that offences are viewed as a personal domain issue as against that pertaining to the police. The latter are tasked with securing social spaces but the individual is tasked with securing their private spaces. This is to be enhanced through the implementation of measures emanating from the Crime Prevention Strategy.

On a regional/locality level, crime reports need to be taken seriously as they posit a comparative approach to research methodology that would allow one to make information-based policy and in effect take realistic measures to mitigate crime fluctuations.

Criminologist Professor Saviour Formosa (www.crimemalta.com) has been publishing crime statistics and reviews since 2008 through the analysis of crime trends in Malta as of 1949 and through spatio-temporal analysis as from 1998 (322,973 offences). Crime studies in Malta comprise 36 main categories of crime and 214 sub 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.



Over the years a spatial depiction was developed to aid users to visualise crime through maps, where due to the increasingly available mobile technologies, users can interact with their location and identify safety zones as well as offence areas. The 2017 report comprises the publication of interactive maps highlighting graduated maps, heat maps and choropleth maps as well as variable high-level cluster maps that users can review and understand safety and security in the Maltese Islands. The categories comprise Main Category Offences, Sub-Category Offences and RISC.



FIGURES TO PONDER

- **Crimes that Increased** (in descending percentage change order): homicide, immigration, pornography, fraud, drugs, arson, infanticide/abandonment of child and violence against public officer, drugs
- **Crimes that Decreased** (in percentage change order): prostitution, abuse of public authority, forgery, sexual offences, perjury and false swearing, theft, threats and private violence, damage, computer misuse, bodily harm and domestic violence
- **Thefts** have seen an overall decrease in most categories, dropping by 567 cases in 2017, mainly related to Pickpocketing which in turn decreased by 303 cases (12.4% drop). The categories that did register increases in theft include theft from factories and building sites, hotels, retail outlets, religious temples, occupied residences and theft of vehicle. Theft from beaches experienced a 31 percent increase following a dip the previous year. Overall, Theft comprises 48.2% of all offences, of which pickpocketing comprises 12%, a decrease of 2% over the previous year record.
- **Damages** constituted a stabilisation of reports between 2016 and 2017, decreasing slightly
- **Bodily Harm** dropped to 879 cases in 2017 which results in a 2.5% drop, though still registering an average of 2.4 incidents per day.
- **Fraud** has experienced a massive 57% (287 cases) increase over the previous year, having been experiencing a steadily annual rate of increase
- **Computer** related crime experienced a 3% decrease over the previous year
- **Drugs** reporting increased by 43% in 2017 to 310, the highest figure ever reported since 2004
- **Domestic Violence** has for the first time since 2007 dipped slightly by 1% to 1257 cases in 2017 down from 1272 reports in 2016, which still points to a 180% increase between 2008 (450 reports) and 2017, when specific statistics on Domestic Violence became available due to changes in legislation (2007)
- **Threats and Public Violence** has for the second year running, decreased to 296 (5%) between 2016 and 2017
- **Sexual Offences** decreased by 9% (102 cases) in 2017, a trend initiated since 2015 and continued in 2016, which decreases averaged 10% per year

- **Violence against Public Officers** increased by 12% in 2017 to 238 cases
- **Theft from Residences** has again increased by 40 cases or 7% as compared to 2016 reaching 592 cases which is also registered for vacant dwellings 34% and theft from residence's exterior (9%)
- **Pretended Rights** has for the first time been recorded and registered 142 cases

Temporal Statistics

In terms of Temporal statistics, the summer months remain the highest offence absorbers, steadily increasing from April to **July**, declining slightly till January and then slowly increasing till April, though March experienced a spike not previously evidenced.

Monday, followed by Sunday attract most incidences though during the past years Mondays registered the highest target days. The rest of the weekdays are comparatively stable with circa 54 offences per Monday.

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

PRISONS IN MALTA

Prison numbers registered a return to the situation experienced in 2012 when high rates went beyond the Psychological Threshold of 600 residents. On the 08 December 2017, 599 residents were registered.

CCF remains inundated with a high number of inmates, 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. Youths have been transferred to Mtaħleb.

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

The latest figures till 2017 were depicting a steady decrease in CCF population, as reviewed on a year-to-year basis, which trend was inverted in 2017 when on the 8th December 2017, the CCF registered 599 residents.

Some statistics recorded on a Friday base-date:

- The CCF Psychological **Capacity Threshold** of 600 inmates was exceeded at the end of September 2012, increasing till April 2014 and decreasing to 539 inmates in June 2015;
 - The CCF Population as at **27th December 2017** (last Friday): 592 (534 males and 58 females);
 - The CCF Population as at the **highest ever recorded Friday** - 25th April 2014: 645 (607 males and 38 females).
-

RISC MODEL: LEAGUE TABLES FOR 2017

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 2017. Domestic Violence and Commercial Activity-related RISC has been included as from 2015.

Grand Total Offences

In terms of Grand Total Offences, Mdina pushed San Giljan to second place where it maintained its perennial hold at the top of the League, with Mdina 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 2 and 5 times the national rate, San Giljan followed a close second, which group also comprises Valletta, Floriana, and Gudja, a rank similar to the 2016 report.

At a rate between the national up to twice that rate one can find Marsaxlokk, Marsa, Sliema, Paola, San Pawl il-Bahar, Ta' Xbiex, Bormla, Msida, Hamrun Zebbug (Ghawdex), Pieta, Ghajnsielem, Birgu, Isla and Gzira.

All the other Councils host a lower than national rate, albeit none have a Zero RISC.

Theft from Residences

Whilst this category of offences registered no councils having over 5 times the national rate of offences, in 2017, the relative RISC still appears for one town experiencing the phenomenon. Ghasri, registered within the 2x-5x RISC. The rate between the national up to twice that rate category includes San Giljan, Msida, Santa Venera, Paola, Marsa, Swieqi, Marsaxlokk, Tarxien, Gzira, Hamrun, Ta' Xbiex, Floriana, Zebbug (Ghawdex), Xghajra, Pembroke, Bormla, Zejtun, Isla, Pieta, San Pawl il-Bahar, Valletta, Mosta, Sliema, Qrendi, In contrast, most other zones have lower than average rates and that Fontana registered zero residential offences in 2017.

Theft of and from Vehicles

During 2017, Floriana took top spot, followed by Marsa, Marsa, Paola, Mdina, Bormla, Pieta, Ta' Xbiex and San Giljan as the highest RISC areas where one's car could be vandalised, broken into and/or stolen, which towns host between 2 and 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, Ghasri, Fontana and Sannat registered zero vehicle-related offences.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence reports pertain to stalking, slight bodily harm, grievous bodily harm and psychological harm. Bormla, Xghajra, Isla, Marsaxlokk, Safi and Kalkara host between 2 and 5 the national rate. With diminishing rates of RISC, it is imperative to note that a

Council
MDINA
SAN GILJAN
VALLETTA
FLORIANA
GUDJA
MARSAXLOKK
MARSA
SLEIMA
PAOLA
SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR
TA' XBIEX
BORMLA
MSIDA
HAMRUN
ZEBBUG (Ghawdex)
PIETA
GHAJNSIELEM
BIRGU
ISLA
GZIRA
MELLIEHA
LUGA
ZEJTUN
MUNXAR
BIRZEBBUGIA
XGHAJRA
QORMI
RABAT (Victoria)
SANTA VENERA
MOSTA
RABAT (Malta)
KALKARA
GHASRI
BIRKIRKARA
MGARR
PEMBROKE
MARSASCALA
GHARGHUR
TARXIEN
QRENDI
ZABBAR
FGURA
SANTA LUCIJA
KIRKOP
SAN GWANN
SAFI
SAN LAWRENZ
NAXXAR
ATTARD
ZEBBUG (Malta)
XEWKJA
GHAXAQ
SWIEQI
ZURRIEQ
KERCEM
IKLIN
SIGGIEWI
XAGHRA
NADUR
BALZAN
LJIA
MQABBA
DINGLI
SANNAT
MTARFA
GHARB
QALA
FONTANA

significant number of councils exhibit some form of domestic violence that is above the national rate (yellow in the RISC maps depicted in the CrimeMalta website) at 1-2 times the rate. In effect all towns have incident reporting but may register lower than national rates.

At the other end of the scale, Fontana registered zero offences, a phenomenon also found in rural and small areas where the changes in legislation may yet have an effect in terms of encouraging victims to report.

Commercial Activity-related

San Giljan hosted the highest RISC rates, which at the top of the League, host over 5 times the national rate of offences. Gudja (also due to the MIA activity) and San Pawl il-Bahar was registered at second place hosting between 2 and 5 times the national rate of offences, indicative of their proximity to the main economic centres such as the San Giljan recreational zone and the Gudja airport. The least RISC registering towns at zero RISC include Xaghra, Kerzem, Qala, Mqabba, Ghasri, Fontana and Gharb.

Grand Total	Residential	Vehicle	Domestic	Commercial
Council	Council	Council	Council	Council
MDINA	GHASRI	FLORIANA	BORMLA	SAN GILJAN
SAN GILJAN	SAN GILJAN	MARSA	XGHAJRA	GUDJA
VALLETTA	MSIDA	PAOLA	ISLA	SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR
FLORIANA	SANTA VENERA	MDINA	MARSAXLOKK	SLIEMA
GUDJA	PAOLA	BORMLA	SAFI	SAN LAWRENZ
MARSAXLOKK	MARSA	PIETA	KALKARA	GHAXAQ
MARSA	SWIEQI	TA' XBIEX	GUDJA	SAFI
SLIEMA	MARSAXLOKK	SAN GILJAN	BIRGU	TARXIEN
PAOLA	TARXIEN	HAMRUN	ZEJTUN	PEMBROKE
SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR	GZIRA	VALLETTA	FLORIANA	ZEJTUN
TA' XBIEX	HAMRUN	QORMI	ZABBAR	MUNXAR
BORMLA	TA' XBIEX	LUQA	GHASRI	PAOLA
MSIDA	FLORIANA	PEMBROKE	MDINA	VALLETTA
HAMRUN	ZEBBUG (Ghawdex)	FGURA	BIRZEBBUGIA	KIRKOP
ZEBBUG (Ghawdex)	XGHAJRA	KALKARA	KIRKOP	MELLIEHA
PIETA	PEMBROKE	GUDJA	QORMI	LIIJA
GHAJNSIELEM	BORMLA	ISLA	SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR	GHAJNSIELEM
BIRGU	ZEJTUN	ZABBAR	VALLETTA	IKLIN
ISLA	ISLA	QRENDI	FGURA	TA' XBIEX
GZIRA	PIETA	SANTA LUCIJA	ZEBBUG (Malta)	MARSASCALA
MELLIEHA	SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR	XGHAJRA	MGARR	LUQA
LUQA	VALLETTA	MSIDA	TA' XBIEX	BIRZEBBUGIA
ZEJTUN	MOSTA	ZEBBUG (Ghawdex)	GHARGHUR	GZIRA
MUNXAR	SLIEMA	TARXIEN	PIETA	GHARGHUR
BIRZEBBUGIA	QRENDI	SANTA VENERA	MARSASCALA	SANTA VENERA
XGHAJRA	BIRKIRKARA	ZEJTUN	BIRKIRKARA	FLORIANA
QORMI	MARSASCALA	MARSAXLOKK	GZIRA	ATTARD
RABAT (Victoria)	BIRZEBBUGIA	SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR	PAOLA	XGHAJRA
SANTA VENERA	NAXXAR	BIRZEBBUGIA	SANTA VENERA	MTARFA
MOSTA	SANTA LUCIJA	SAN GWANN	SIGGIEWI	BIRKIRKARA
RABAT (Malta)	GUDJA	GZIRA	HAMRUN	MGARR
KALKARA	LUQA	BIRGU	GHAXAQ	MSIDA
GHASRI	GHAXAQ	IKLIN	SANTA LUCIJA	FGURA
BIRKIRKARA	LIIJA	MUNXAR	SAN GWANN	MDINA
MGARR	SAN GWANN	SAN LAWRENZ	MOSTA	QORMI
PEMBROKE	QORMI	MGARR	MQABBA	NAXXAR
MARSASCALA	ZEBBUG (Malta)	ZEBBUG (Malta)	LUQA	MARSA
GHARGHUR	BIRGU	MOSTA	NAXXAR	ZEBBUG (Ghawdex)
TARXIEN	GHARGHUR	BIRKIRKARA	TARXIEN	SAN GWANN
QRENDI	MUNXAR	SIGGIEWI	MELLIEHA	SANNAT
ZABBAR	ZABBAR	NAXXAR	BALZAN	HAMRUN
FGURA	MELLIEHA	SLIEMA	MTARFA	KALKARA
SANTA LUCIJA	BALZAN	ZURRIEQ	MARSA	ZABBAR
KIRKOP	GHARB	BALZAN	SAN GILJAN	SWIEQI
SAN GWANN	SAFI	GHARGHUR	ZURRIEQ	RABAT (Victoria)
SAFI	SIGGIEWI	KIRKOP	ZEBBUG (Ghawdex)	MOSTA
SAN LAWRENZ	ATTARD	GHAJNSIELEM	PEMBROKE	MARSAXLOKK
NAXXAR	NADUR	MARSASCALA	SWIEQI	BORMLA
ATTARD	FGURA	XEWKJJA	QRENDI	ZURRIEQ
ZEBBUG (Malta)	RABAT (Victoria)	MTARFA	SAN LAWRENZ	RABAT (Malta)
XEWKJJA	IKLIN	DINGLI	GHAJNSIELEM	PIETA
GHAXAQ	KALKARA	ATTARD	RABAT (Victoria)	SIGGIEWI
SWIEQI	QALA	SWIEQI	MSIDA	ZEBBUG (Malta)
ZURRIEQ	XAGHRA	MELLIEHA	SLIEMA	QRENDI
KERCEM	MTARFA	RABAT (Victoria)	NADUR	DINGLI
IKLIN	KIRKOP	RABAT (Malta)	KERCEM	SANTA LUCIJA
SIGGIEWI	MGARR	NADUR	RABAT (Malta)	XEWKJJA
XAGHRA	RABAT (Malta)	KERCEM	IKLIN	BALZAN
NADUR	GHAJNSIELEM	XAGHRA	ATTARD	NADUR
BALZAN	MQABBA	GHAXAQ	QALA	ISLA
LIIJA	KERCEM	GHARB	LIIJA	BIRGU
MQABBA	ZURRIEQ	LIIJA	DINGLI	XAGHRA
DINGLI	XEWKJJA	MQABBA	MUNXAR	KERCEM
SANNAT	DINGLI	QALA	GHARB	QALA
MTARFA	SAN LAWRENZ	SAFI	XAGHRA	MQABBA
GHARB	MDINA	GHASRI	XEWKJJA	GHASRI
QALA	SANNAT	FONTANA	SANNAT	FONTANA
FONTANA	FONTANA	SANNAT	FONTANA	GHARB

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REFERENCE MAPS:

Main site: <http://www.crimemalta.com>

Main Crime Categories Interactive Map: <http://crimemalta.com/qgis2017/main>

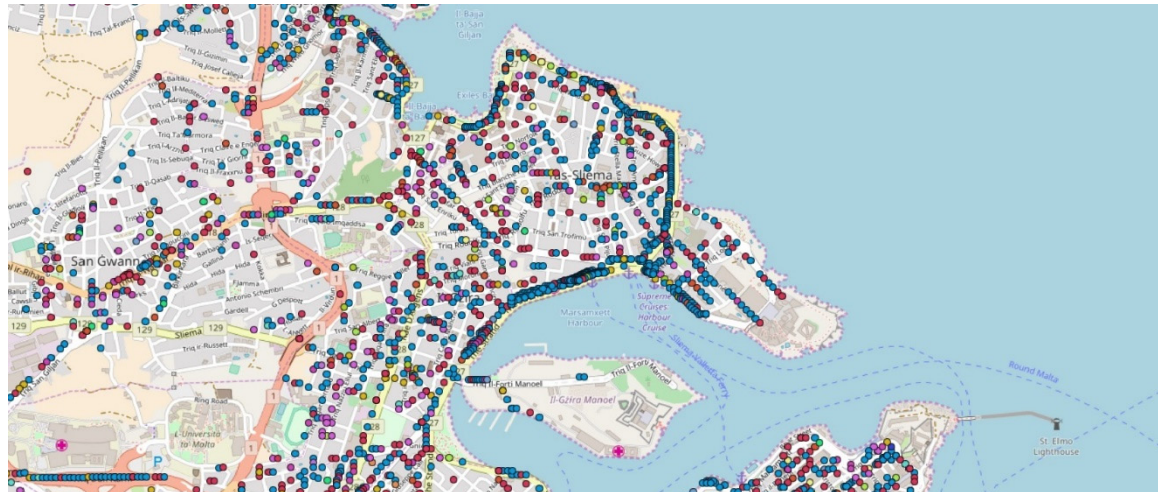
Main Crime Sub Categories Interactive Map: <http://crimemalta.com/qgis2017/subselected>

RISC Map: <http://crimemalta.com/qgis2017/risc>

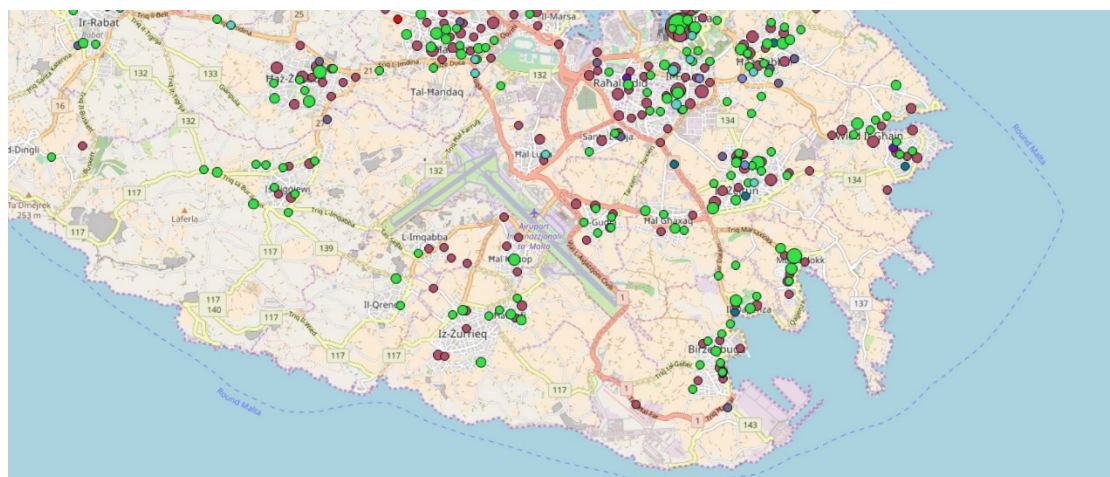
Heat Maps: <http://crimemalta.com/qgis2017/heat>

Sample Imagery

Point Map



Interactive Cluster Map



Interactive Heat Map

