

Crimes and Place

Is there a crime-free society? Such a utopia will never exist as crime morphs in relation to societal and technological change. As crime mitigation increases, some offences wane (spilling water onto the street) and disappear, whilst new ones appear to reflect new forms of phenomenology and interactionism (cybercrime). The Maltese offence profile is not unique and has changed from a public-oriented to a personal-target dimension with an increasing focus on financial related offences and domestic violence. This led to an upheaval in how we react to crimes.

Police Force enhancement has resulted in a mitigation shift in awareness, personal safety and preparedness in technological advances. This is reflected through diverse initiatives that span over four years of multi-expert research, policy drafting and implementation through an inter-departmental and intra-MPF implementation.

A long-term analysis of crime in the Maltese Islands exhibits a continued generic trend line decrease in reported crime with a sharp covid-19 related decrease between 2019 and 2021. But was this the result of a fluke statistical change? The previous years' effort shows otherwise. 2020 experienced a further reporting decrease where crime reports show a reversal of the 2010-2016 phenomenon by a 16 point decrease. In 2020, 13,087 reported offences were published, down from 17,296 in 2016. As an example, theft from occupied residences dropped for the lowest time since 2007, having experienced a drop of 38% or 243 incidences year on year. On the other dark side, domestic violence increased drastically by 24% (319 cases) from 2019, reaching the highest ever 12.6% weight of all reported crimes, since the 2007 changes in the law. The main increase occurred



in Psychological Harm (316 cases – a 46% increase over 2019 to 2020). This called for alternative interventions by the policy makers and decision takers. There is more work to do as Crime is evolving from a Social-Space structure to the invasion of Personal-Space and into Virtual-Space.

It is imperative that the decrease in crime, perceptions on safety and security as well implementation be enhanced for the community, with the community. The journey has been trodden through a long and narrow path, but the fruit is already in the making. Such was possible through such initiatives driven by the implementation of the 2017 Crime Prevention Strategy, the implementation of the 2019 Community Policing and the implementation of the Malta Police Transformation Strategy 2020-2025.

However, without the community on board such would not have made it to the fore. History has spoken.

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