

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT IN NORTHERN IRELAND 1983-1986

1. Statistics provided by the RUC in relation to motor vehicle thefts and individuals convicted for the theft or taking and driving away of vehicles are presented in Tables 1 to 5. The data refer to the 3 years 1983-1985 and to the first 5 months of 1986.
2. The extent of vehicle theft (mainly taking and driving away) shows no sign of decreasing. Indeed, on the basis of present trends, it is likely that over the 4 year period 1983 to 1986 the incidence of car thefts will have risen from 500 to 600 per month (Table 1). The pattern has remained unremarkably constant with just over three-quarters of thefts occurring in Belfast. About one-half of all cars stolen in NI are recovered in "B" Division (Table 2).
3. The rate of recovery has also remained constant at around 92%/93%. The implication is that joy riding rather than theft for re-sale etc remains the predominant motive in the vast majority of cases (Table 3).
4. The problem continues to be centred in West Belfast with thefts being mainly effected in "A" Division. There is a suggestion in Table 4 of an upward trend in vehicles abandoned in (and hence stolen by persons resident in) "D" Division although it is not possible to come to firm conclusions on the basis of 5 months figures. On the other side of town "E" Division appears to be relatively trouble free in this respect.
5. The evidence on persons convicted for Taking Motor Vehicles Without Authority would suggest that the offence continues to be predominantly associated with young adults rather than juveniles. Despite a general increase in the number of convictions secured in each of the three years 1983, 1984 and 1985, this was not reflected in an increase in the number of juveniles convicted.
6. In conclusion, with the exception of a recent fatal accident in which 3 (adult) joy riders were killed, the problem has had a rather lower profile in recent months. This is probably due to the absence of serious incidents involving the security forces because the figures suggest that the incidence of vehicle theft has continued to show a modest increase. While the police have had some success in securing convictions for Taking Motor Vehicles Without Authority, the risk of rapid detection remains low.

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TABLE

Vehicles Stolen in Northern Ireland 1983-1986

	1983			1984			1985			1986*		
	Cars Stolen	% of NI	% of Belfast	Cars Stolen	% of NI	% of Belfast	Cars Stolen	% of NI	% of Belfast	Cars Stolen	% of NI	% of Belfast
NORTHERN IRELAND	6242	100	-	6743	100	-	6975	100	-	3229	100	-
BELFAST	4817	77	100	5254	78	100	5355	77	100	2520	78	100
'B' DIVISION	1343	22	28	1403	21	26	1474	21	27.5	647	20	26

*Figures from Jan - May 1986

TABLE 2.

Vehicles Recovered in Northern Ireland 1983-1986

*Figures for Jan - May 1986 Only-

	1983			1984			1985			1986*		
	Cars Recov'd	% of NI	% of Belfast	Cars Recov'd	% of NI	% of Belfast	Cars Recov'd	% of NI	% of Belfast	Cars Recov'd	% of NI	% of Belfast
NORTHERN IRELAND	5762	100	-	6263	100	-	6297	100	-	2996	100	-
BELFAST	4378	76	100	5163	82	100	4847	77	100	2424	81	100
'B' DIVISION	2683	46	61	3144	51	61	3176	50	59	1403	47	58

TABLE 3.

	Stolen	Recovered	Recovered as % of Stolen
1983	6242	5762	92.3
1984	6743	6263	92.9
1985	6975	6297	90.3
1986	3229	2996	92.8

TABLE 4.

Vehicles Stolen and located in Belfast by Division

YEAR	1985				1986*			
DIVISION	A	B	D	E	A	B	D	E
STOLEN %	37	27	24	11	38	26	28	9
LOCATED %	13	66	14	7	15	58	22	5

TABLE 5.

Ages of Persons Convicted for Taking Motor Vehicles Without Authority

	1983		1984		1985	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
UNDER 17	106 20.4%	1 0.2%	110 20.8%	1 0.2%	93 15.9%	5 0.8%
17 - 29	384 74.0	4 0.8	400 75.5	8 1.5	459 78.5	11 1.9
OVER 30	24 4.6	0 0	11 2.1	0 0	16 2.7	1 0.2
TOTAL	514	5	521	9	568	17
	519		530		585	