

Crime situation in the Algarve for 2017

Introduction

The annual Relatório Anual de Segurança Interna (RASI), (Internal Security Report) (RASI), for 2017, approved on 28th March 2017 by the Assembly of the Republic, consolidates the figures of all police, and enforcement agencies, as well as other information concerning the state of internal security in Portugal.

Overall crime showed an increase in Faro District (the Algarve) from 21,505 in 2016 to 21,907, i.e. 1.8%). Violent crime decreased very slightly by 0.3% to 994 cases, well below the national decrease of -8.7%

Safe Communities Portugal has undertaken an initial analysis of the report and more detailed figures provided by Direção – Geral da Política de Justiça, to determine the crime situation for Faro District and identify any noticeable crime trends.

It is important to note that these only relate to reported crime.

Objective

Through the identification of trends in various municipalities, to help communities have greater awareness of crime patterns thus helping them take appropriate crime prevention measures.

Overall crime

The increase in overall crime reverses the general decrease since 2008 when the total of crimes reported stood at 29,248. This is the first increase since 2010. The rate of decrease has been greater than Portugal as a whole.

The highest crime in terms of numbers in the Algarve was again drink driving, which stood at 1761 cases, followed by opportunist theft with 1456 cases; minor assault 1364 cases; and other damage 1293 cases.

In the overall categories of crime in the district, crime against persons stood at 4819 cases up 0.6% against last year and crimes against property 11,772 cases, up 9.1% compared to 2016. The level of property crime is higher than the national average and crime against persons lower.

Violent crime, which includes rape, homicide serious assault and robberies stood at 994 cases a decrease of four cases compared to 2016.

Areas of increased crime

The major specific crimes showing upward trends in several areas of the district are shown in the following table

Crime	No in District	Percentage increase
Burglary without breaking	718	28.6%
Serious assault	53	8.1%
Theft from supermarket	62	51.2%
Other fraud	962	34.5%
Street robbery with snatching	278	6.9%
Opportunist theft	1456	24.4%
Street robbery with snatching	278	11.1%
Drug trafficking	393	7.3%
Pickpocketing	625	12.6%

The increase in the number of burglaries without break-in and opportunist theft shows that people are failing to take simple crime prevention measures to protect property. This sort of crime can be reduced.

In terms of crimes against pet animals, a total of 86 cases of cruelty were recorded compared to 74 in 2016. In addition, there were 31 cases of abandoning pets, down eight from the previous year.

Areas of decreased crime

Conversely the following table shows the main crimes where there were general decreases throughout the year

Crime	No in District	Percentage decrease
Bank Fraud	106	-19.7%
Burglary with break-in	1148	-23.8%
Street robberies without snatching	292	-12.0%
Computer fraud	411	-2.3%
Drink driving	1761	-2.3%
Minor assault	1364	-4.2%
Threats and coercion	892	-1.7%
Metal theft	61	-30.6%
Other thefts	713	-7.5%
Theft from Motor vehicle	1252	-14.7%
Theft of motor vehicle	401	-10.5%
Thefts from annexes of properties	204	-3.3%

The decrease of -14.7% in theft from motor vehicles is a very welcome trend as this is against the national trend where such crime increased by 5.5% compared to 2016. It appears that the message about leaving

valuables in cars is getting across. This is noteworthy as there has been a significant increase in tourism in 2016 and hire cars are often the targets for this type of criminality.

The vast reduction in metal theft (non-precious metals) is in line with national trends due to crackdowns on scrapyards who were receiving the goods.

The reduction by almost a quarter of burglaries of residencies with break-ins, is a welcome trend, although it appears that burglaries without breaking are increasing.

Violent crime

The number of violent crime in the Algarve stood at 994 cases in 2016, a very slight decrease of four cases increase compared to 2015, and the second highest increase in percentage terms in the country after Beja. Of the 18 districts on the mainland, 14 showed a decrease and four an increase. The main violent crimes for the district and comparison with 2015 are shown in the following table

Violent Crime	2017	2016	% change since 2016
Street robbery without snatching	292	332	-12.0
Street robbery with snatching	278	260	6.9
Residential robbery	56	35	-60.0
Other robberies	28	22	27.2
Robbery at petrol stations	6	5	20.0

The increase in residential robberies (with violence or the threat of violence) from 35 to 56 cases is of some concern. This is the highest since 2014 and goes against the national trend where there has been a reduction of 3.7%. Approximately 10% of all residential robberies in Portugal are in the Algarve, which is disproportionate to the number of residents which is only 4.3% of the population.

During 2017 there were no robberies at banks, pharmacies, or on public transport in the Algarve. The number of Bank robberies stood at three, the first cases since 2013.

There were 47 cases of rape recorded (up 56%) and 47 cases of sexual abuse against children an increase of four compared to 2016.

Domestic violence stood at 1437 cases a slight increase from 1366 the previous year.

Fraud

The total number of other Fraud cases stood at 962, an increase of 34.5% compared with 2016 and a three-fold increase compared to 2008, when it stood at 473 cases. These include, fraudulent adverts in newspapers; door step sellers and other miscellaneous frauds.

In addition, Computer/communications Fraud amounted to 411 cases, a decrease of -2.3% compared to the previous year. In 2008 this type of fraud amounted to just 15 cases! Such on-line fraud includes on-line shopping fraud; villa letting scams etc.

Geographical distribution of crime

The following table shows in alphabetical order the number of reported crimes by municipality and the changes compared to 2016 and 2008. Compared to 2016, seven municipalities showed a decrease, seven showed an increase and two remained about the same.

Municipality	No in 2017	No in 2016	% change since 2016	% change since 2008
Albufeira	3277	3366	-2.7%	-39.3
Alcoutim	89	100	-11.0%	12.6
Aljezur	255	264	-3.4%	-23.6
Castro Marim	203	222	-8.1%	-34.3
Faro	3118	2861	8.9%	-12.0
Lagoa	789	804	-1.3%	-51.2
Lagos	1176	1056	11.3%	-34.5
Loulé	3755	3790	-0.9%	-6.8
Monchique	157	169	-7.1%	-7.0
Olhão	1927	1902	1.3%	-11.1
Portimão	2712	2640	2.7%	-27.7
Sao Bras	371	322	15.2%	-6.3
Silves	1399	1355	3.2%	-28.2
Tavira	934	932	0.0%	-25.6
Vale do Bispo	270	271	0.0%	-30.9
V.R.S.Antonio	768	749	2.5%	-19.1

The municipalities where there has been a decrease in overall crime are shown in red. The increases/decreases can be compared with the overall increase for Faro of 1.8% compared with 2016 and the national increase of 3.3%. There are, however, wide variations between municipalities.

In 2017 a total of 46.3% of overall crime was concentrated in the central Algarve in the three municipalities: Albufeira, Loulé and Faro. In 1993, 53.7 of crimes were concentrated in these three municipalities and in 2001 - 49.3%.

Although crimes are lower in the western and eastern Algarve, the distribution over the last 23 years has tended to shift slightly in those directions, probably in line with population expansion.