



Vice Admiral Mark Mellett,  
Chief of Staff.

15th March 2021

Re: Allegations of sexual abuse and bullying in the Defence Forces

Dear Chief of Staff,

There has been much coverage recently across the print and broadcast media on the issue of sexual abuse and bullying within the Defence Forces. These allegations appear to be historical rather than current and appear to cover all three elements of the Permanent Defence Force. They have been highlighted by a retired member of the Defence Forces and it is acknowledged that except in relation to his own experiences, they are not first-hand accounts. While that brings its own difficulties, they cannot be discounted completely on that basis and if proven, would constitute serious criminal offences. The allegations are also set out in numerous emails sent to my office, the Defence Forces and an Garda Síochána.

The details provided are disturbing and need to be addressed in some form to ensure that they can be replied to in a sensitive and appropriate manner. There is a need to ensure that processes and procedures withstand some scrutiny. For these reasons, could you please provide me with a detailed report setting out:

- whether the Defence Forces were aware of these or other similar type allegations prior to current media coverage,
- the actions that were taken in relation to them,
- the outcome of those actions,
- what and how many similar type issues are outstanding within the DF and
- courses of actions in relation to these outstanding matters and timeframes.

I am aware that some of these issues, on which I received a full brief recently, were treated within the Protected Disclosures framework.

Yours sincerely,

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Simon Coveney TD  
Minister for Defence and  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Leas-Cheann Foinne (Tacaíocht)  
Deputy Chief of Staff (Support)  
Major General Seán Clancy

16 June 2021

Chief of Staff  
Irish Defence Forces

Report on Defence Forces' Historical Case Investigations

Sir,

In accordance with your direction, a thorough examination has been completed of all historical case investigations concerning crimes of a sexual nature undertaken within the Defence Forces Military Police (MP) post 1980.

The attached report is based on the key statistical information reflecting the cases brought to the attention of the MP. The investigations were initiated in accordance with regulations and instigated through the chain of command. No case details or personal information is contained within this report.

The report outlines the background, classification and categorisation of cases in accordance with the victim status: military (permanent or reserve), civilian or minor.

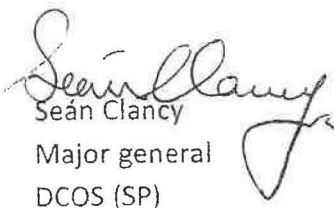
Accepting that any case of this nature in any given year is one too many, it is noted that the trend from 1980 to date shows a significant decrease in case numbers. This, I suggest, is a reflection of more robust and proactive processes to deal with such offences in addition to more awareness being generated within the Defence Forces and within society, coupled with a heightened sense of intolerance of such behaviours.

The tangible processes and initiatives developed within the Defence Forces and which have supported this trend include: Administrative Instruction A7, Chapter 1 Complaints procedures, the proactive engagement of three (3) successive Independent Monitoring Groups, publication of the Defence Forces Dignity Charter, development of a Women's Network, development of LGBTQI+ Network and a far more accessible Personnel Support Services, amongst others.

This report is forwarded as directed and provides situational awareness as well as an assurance that progress to eradicate such behaviours within the Defence Forces is continuing. Behaviours and offences of this nature are incompatible with our core values and constant vigilance and maturity of approach on this issue must remain to the fore within the Defence Forces.

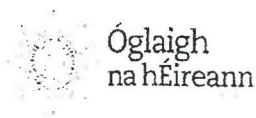
I would advise that a copy of the attached is forwarded to the Minister and the Secretary General for their situational awareness and understanding.

For your consideration.

  
Seán Clancy  
Major general  
DCOS (SP)

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REPORT ON DEFENCE FORCES' HISTORICAL CASE INVESTIGATIONS  
CONCERNING CRIMES OF A SEXUAL NATURE 1980-2021  
CONDUCTED BY MILITARY POLICE

**BACKGROUND**

1. An examination has been completed of all historical case investigations concerning crimes of a sexual nature that were conducted by or referenced to the Defence Forces Military Police (MP) post-1980 to the present date. This consisted of a trawl of all investigation files, current and archived, which referenced a crime with circumstances of a sexual nature including those that involved elements of indecency.
2. All related cases were classified into five criminal offences against the person:
  - a. **Rape**
  - b. **Indecent/Sexual Assault**
  - c. **Sexual Harassment**
  - d. **Indecent Exposure**
  - e. **Inappropriate Behaviour**
3. All related cases were analysed to distinguish where either or both of the alleged victim and/or alleged suspect belonged to one of the following categories:
  - a. **PDF personnel ONLY** - both the alleged victim and alleged suspect were serving members of the Permanent Defence Forces (PDF) at the time of the occurrence.
  - b. **RDF personnel ONLY** - both the alleged victim and alleged suspect were members of the Reserve Defence Forces (RDF) who were subject to military law at the time of the alleged occurrence.
  - c. **PDF and RDF personnel** – both the alleged victim and alleged suspect were either a serving member of the PDF and a member of the RDF respectively, or, a member of the RDF and a serving member of the PDF respectively, the member of the RDF being subject to military law at the time of the alleged occurrence.
  - d. **Civilian** – both the alleged victim and alleged suspect were either a serving member of the PDF/member of the RDF and a civilian adult respectively, or a civilian adult and serving soldier in the PDF/member of the RDF respectively, at the time of the alleged occurrence.
  - e. **Minor** – the alleged victim was a civilian minor and the alleged suspect was a serving member at the time of the occurrence.
4. For the purposes of this report, and to consolidate analysis into a more cohesive understanding, where the overarching term '**DF Personnel**' is used it is taken to include those categories above concerning 'PDF personnel only', 'RDF personnel only' and also cases which involve both 'PDF and RDF personnel', since all were subject to military law at the time of the alleged occurrence.



## RESTRICTED

### REFERRAL PROCEDURE

5. Specific attention was noted to investigations where An Garda Síochána (AGS) were involved and where cases were referred for remedy. AGS alone have jurisdiction for ANY and ALL investigations involving civilian adults and minors. There is NO obligation to inform AGS of investigations where military law alone is determined by our Legal Service as a sufficient remedy.
6. It is standard MP policy that AGS **MUST** be informed of ALL cases where at least one party involved is either a civilian adult or a minor, or in any case where military law cannot be applied.

### SCOPE

7. This examination involved accessing details of all investigations which contained a reference to an alleged crime committed with circumstances of a sexual nature. This included all crimes listed in the extant Crime Register dating from 1985, as well as archived files back to 1980 which existed in either unit archives or Military Archives. Any miscellaneous document discovered that made reference to a crime involving circumstances of a sexual nature has also been captured even though files may not exist to elaborate on details.
8. A total of **one hundred and forty six (146) cases** met the criteria of being an investigation conducted by or referenced to the MP post-1980, and which contained an allegation of a crime that was sexual in nature.
9. Files were examined on the basis of the description of the investigation classified at that time, and it is worth noting the following:
  - a. Some cases were classified as a sexual assault but proved to be 'common assaults'.
  - b. Some cases were examined as sexual assaults but involved consensual activity.
  - c. Cases that dealt with specific consensual homosexual acts as criminal offences at that time are treated in this report the same as other consensual sexual acts, i.e. inappropriate behaviour.

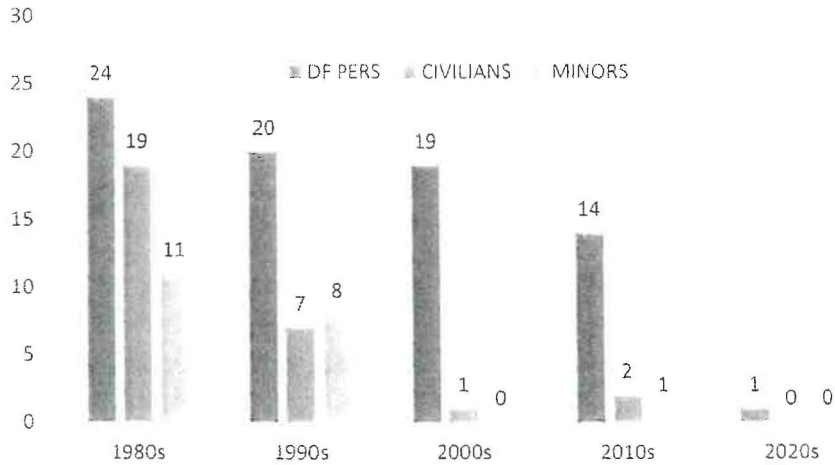
### OUTCOME

10. The following breakdown pertains:
  - a. **One hundred and twenty seven (127) cases** were relevant to either the domestic military or civil jurisdiction - the alleged offence(s) occurred within the Republic of Ireland and both the alleged victim and the alleged suspect were subject to either military law and/or civil law.
  - b. **Seven (7) cases** were relevant ONLY to military law as they occurred overseas where AGS have NO jurisdiction.
  - c. **Twelve (12) cases** involved NO DF personnel but were cases that were reported to MP or investigated as a result of some military connection.
11. The following overall summary pictures emerge with analysis of essential information regarding historical case investigations conducted by MPs that concerned circumstances of a sexual nature and which dated from 1980 to present:

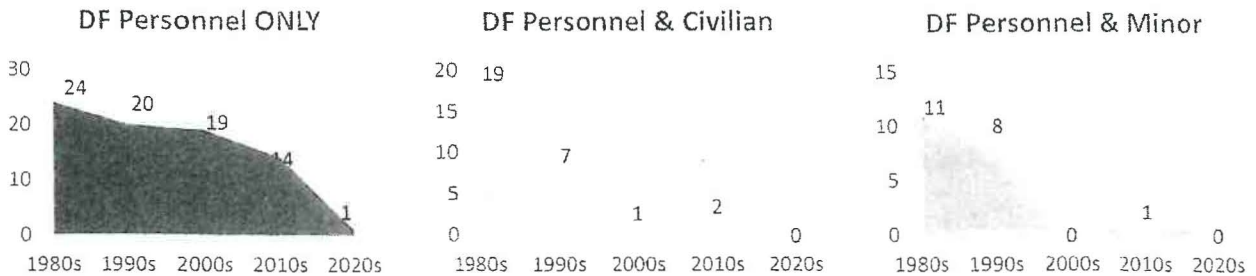
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**HISTORICAL CASES BY DECADE**



DECADE	Cases Involving DF Personnel ONLY	Cases Involving DF Personnel and a CIVILIAN	Cases Involving DF Personnel and a MINOR	DECADE SUBTOTAL
1980s	24	19	11	54
1990s	20	7	8	35
2000s	19	1	0	20
2010s	14	2	1	17
2020s	1	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>127</b>

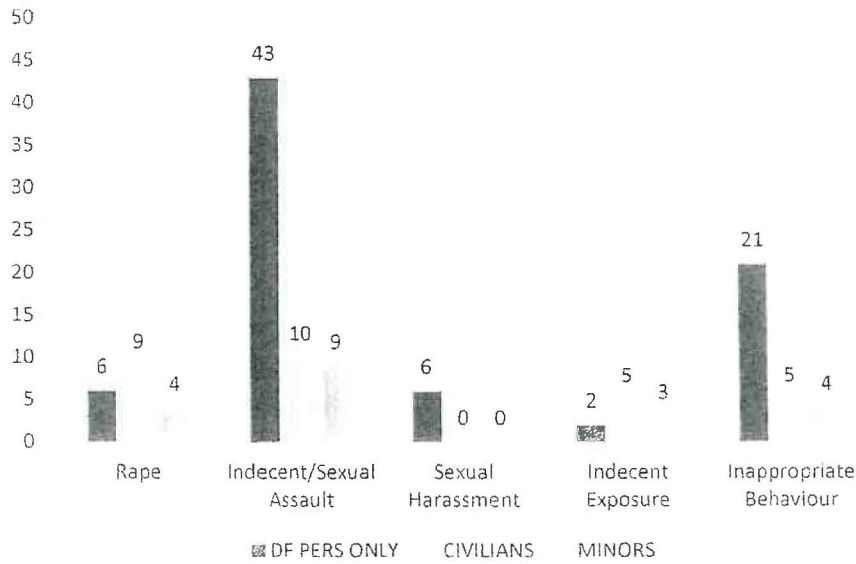


**Comments:**

- i. A total of 127 cases were found to involve an alleged victim and alleged suspect where there were circumstances of a sexual nature within the offences as outlined in paragraph 2 above; 78 involved members of the DF only (both PDF and RDF), 29 involved a member of the DF and at least one civilian, and 20 involved a member of the DF and at least one minor.
- ii. The trend indicates a significant decrease in totals through the decades; 54 in 1980s, 35 in 1990s, 20 in 2000s, and 17 in 2010s. Only 1 has occurred so far in 2020s.
- iii. The change in culture within the DF, in association with increased external societal awareness, has altered the quantity, nature and extent of MP investigations into alleged offences with circumstances concerning a sexual nature.

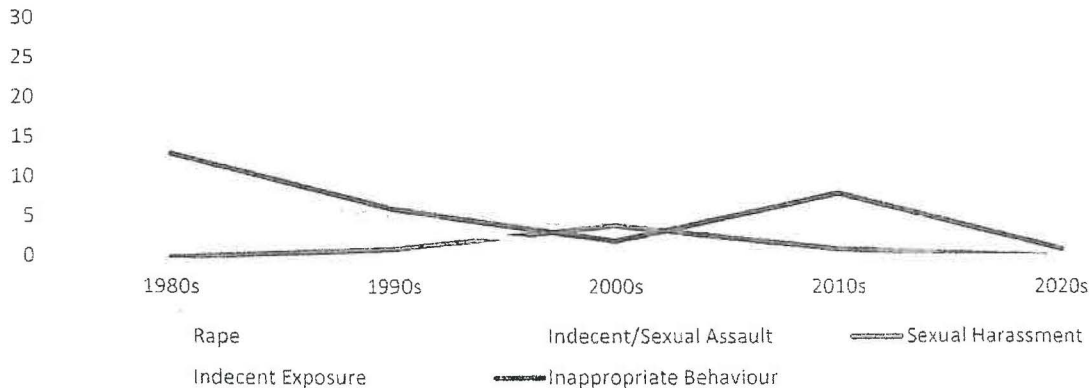
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**HISTORICAL CASES BY OFFENCE**



OFFENCE	Cases involving DF Personnel ONLY	Cases Involving DF Personnel and a CIVILIAN	Cases Involving DF Personnel and a MINOR	CRIME SUBTOTAL
Rape	6	9	4	19
Indecent/Sexual Assault	43	10	9	62
Sexual Harassment	6	0	0	6
Indecent Exposure	2	5	3	10
Inappropriate Behaviour	21	5	4	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>127</b>

**Offence Trend Over Time**



**Comments:**

- i. A total of 127 cases were found to involve crimes of a sexual nature; 19 alleged rape, 62 alleged indecent or sexual assault, 6 alleged sexual harassment, 10 alleged indecent exposure, and 30 alleged inappropriate behaviour.
- ii. All trends have decreased significantly over time, apart from a slight increase in 'inappropriate behaviour' during 2010s.
- iii. The predominant investigations concerned indecent/sexual assaults, however it is noteworthy that this figure has decreased from 27 in 1980s, 19 in 1990s, 9 in 2000s, 7 in 2010s to none thus far in 2020s.
- iv. The majority of cases concern alleged offences involving DF personnel only.



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**HISTORICAL CASES REFERRED**

The MP policy is to inform An Garda Síochána (AGS) immediately upon discovering alleged crimes where either the victim or suspect is determined to be a civilian adult or a minor, as these cases are the specific domain of civil law and fall under the jurisdiction of AGS.

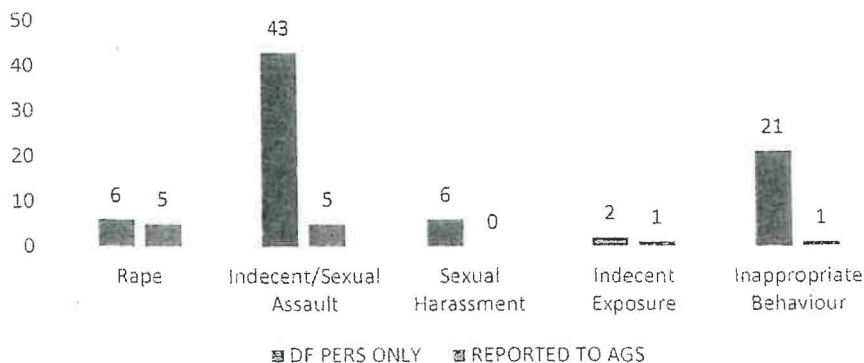
Should the alleged offence concern DF personnel only (PDF and RDF personnel who are subject to military law) AGS are informed in cases of a serious nature, or where there is a determination that the necessary competency to investigate the matter judiciously only exists outside the military.

Once AGS or in some cases social services are informed, the DF investigation immediately ceases and the case is referred over for appropriate action under that jurisdiction.

OFFENCE	DF Pers ONLY	Civilians	Minors	Offences Committed	Offences Referred
Rape	6	9	4	19	18
Indecent/Sexual Assault	43	10	9	62	21
Sexual Harassment	6	0	0	6	0
Indecent Exposure	2	5	3	10	8
Inappropriate Behaviour	21	5	4	30	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>52</b>

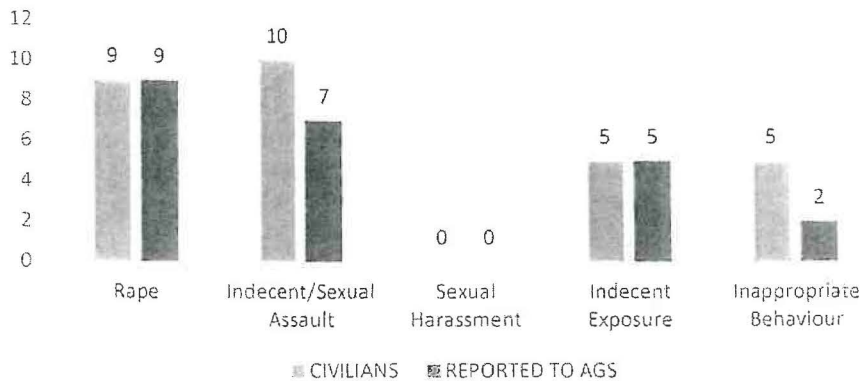
DECADE	DF Pers ONLY	Civilians	Minors	Offences Committed	Offences Referred
1980s	24	19	11	54	23
1990s	20	7	8	35	19
2000s	19	1	0	20	6
2010s	14	2	1	17	4
2020s	1	0	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>52</b>

**Historical Investigations of DF Personnel ONLY  
Reported to AGS Involving Alleged**

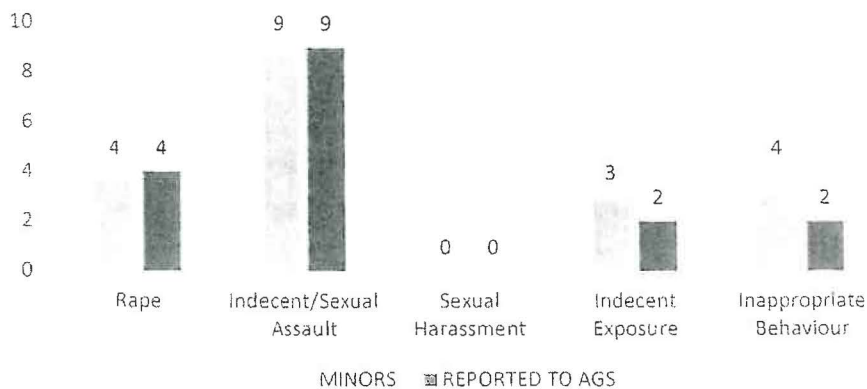


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Historical Investigations of DF Personnel and Civilians  
Reported to AGS Involving Alleged



Historical Investigations of DF Personnel and Minors  
Reported to AGS Involving Alleged



**Comments:**

- i. Of the total 127 cases found to involve crimes of a sexual nature 52 were reported to AGS; 18 alleged rape (95%), 21 alleged indecent or sexual assault (34%), 8 alleged indecent exposure (80%), and 5 alleged inappropriate behaviour (17%).
- ii. The more serious the alleged crime and the nature of the offence, the more likelihood of referral. Only 1 alleged rape was NOT reported due to NO formal complaint being lodged.
- iii. ALL cases involving Minors were reported to the AGS/Child Sexual Assault Unit except in (3) three instances:
  - one (1983) involving a verbal interaction;
  - one (1983) where NO MP investigation took place as it involved a civilian minor but no record of AGS involvement;
  - one (1994) involving an inappropriate [sic] 'prank'.
- iv. One case involving a Minor has occurred since 2000 which involved a social media interaction.
- v. ALL cases involving Civilians as either the victim or the suspect were reported to the AGS except in six (6) instances:
  - one (1980) concerned an alleged indecent assault involving an RDF member where report was sent to the Unit Commander.
  - three (3) explainable as consensual homosexual activity with one (1983) involving a member of the civilian work staff, and two (1983, 1985) involving a civilian;
  - one (1987) concerned alleged sexual assault involving a member of the RDF where the report was sent to the Unit Commander.
  - one (2019) concerned the inappropriate placing of a hand upon a shoulder of a civilian medical employee.

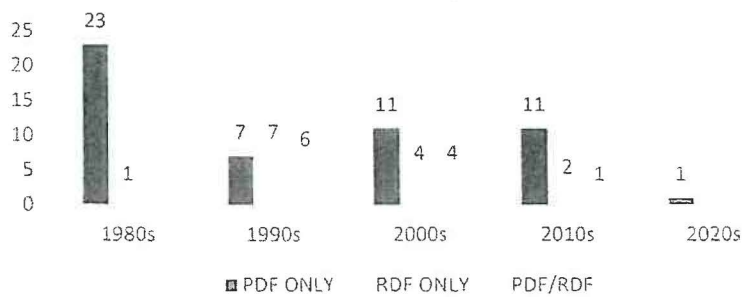


HISTORICAL CASES CONCERNING DEFENCE FORCES PERSONNEL ONLY

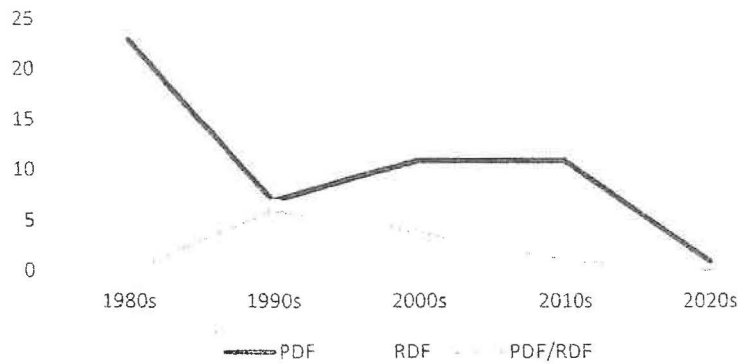
BY DECADE

DECADE	PDF ONLY	RDF ONLY	PDF/RDF	TOTALS
1980s	23	1		24
1990s	7	7	6	20
2000s	11	4	4	19
2010s	11	2	1	14
2020s	1			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>78</b>

DF Breakdown by Decade



DF Trends Over Decade



**Comments:**

- i. The total numbers of cases involving investigations for alleged crimes of a sexual nature, which occurred within the DF and involving ONLY DF personnel has decreased consistently throughout the decades; 24 in 1980s, 20 in 1990s, 19 in 2000s, and 14 in 2010s. There has been only 1 investigation to date in 2020s.
- ii. There was a slight increase in PDF investigations during the 2000s and 2010s from 7 to 11, resultant from an increase from 1 to 4 cases of sexual harassment being reported.
- iii. The peak involvement of RDF personnel involved in crimes of a sexual nature occurred throughout 1990s and 2000s when the rate of personnel attending training camps was significantly higher. The nature of training camps as it existed at that time is NO longer experienced, demonstrated by the numbers of investigations since 2010.

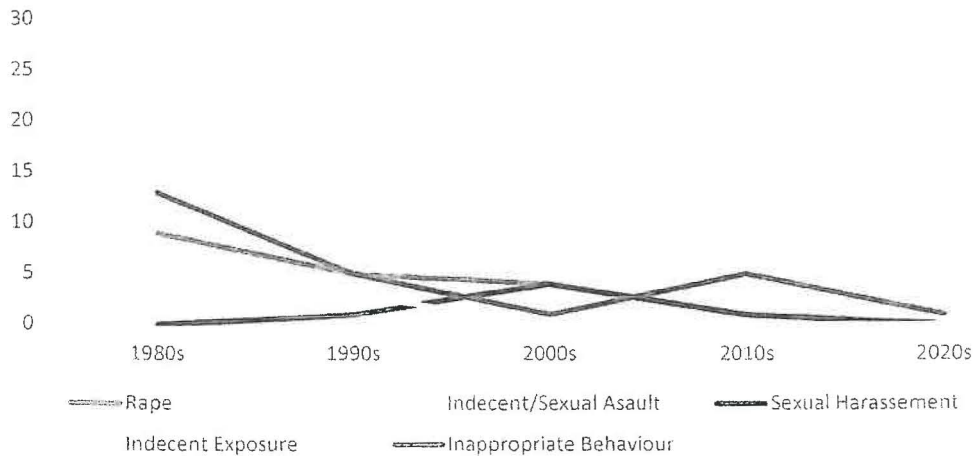
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**HISTORICAL CASES CONCERNING DEFENCE FORCES PERSONNEL ONLY**

**BY OFFENCE**

OFFENCE	PDF ONLY	RDF ONLY	PDF/RDF	TOTAL
Rape	4	2	0	6
Indecent/Sexual Assault	29	7	7	43
Sexual Harassment	2	2	2	6
Indecent Exposure	0	2	0	2
Inappropriate Behaviour	18	1	2	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>78</b>

Offence Trend Within DF Over Time



OFFENCE	Rape	Indecent/Sexual Assault	Sexual Harassment	Indecent Exposure	Inappropriate Behaviour	TOTAL
1980s	0	15	0	0	9	24
1990s	1	14	1	1	3	20
2000s	4	8	4	1	2	19
2010s	1	6	1	0	6	14
2020s	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>78</b>

**Comments:**

- i. Regarding the most serious offence of alleged rape, of the total number of 6 investigations which took place since 1980, 3 were dismissed by the DPP, 1 withdrew the complaint and 1 refused to make a formal complaint.
- ii. The most common investigation of cases of a sexual nature involved the 43 indecent and sexual assaults.
- iii. All alleged offences have generally trended downwards since 1980 apart from a slight increase in allegations of sexual harassment in 2000s and of inappropriate behaviour in 2010s.
- iv. Over the forty years examined the majority of offences occurred prior to 2000 recording a 56% total, with 19% of the total alleged crimes occurring since 1980 being investigated post-2010.

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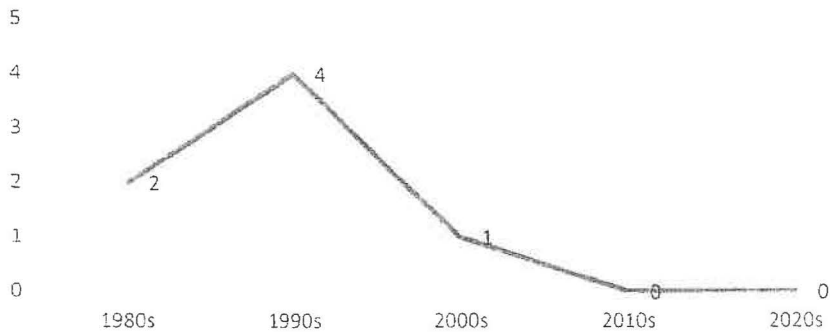
**HISTORICAL CASES CONCERNING DEFENCE FORCES PERSONNEL ONLY**

**ON OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENT**

It is important to note that jurisdiction for investigation of overseas crimes rests **ONLY** with MPs and the following summary table reflects those cases.

<b>Overseas 1980-Date</b>	<b>DF PERS</b>	<b>CIVILIANS</b>	<b>MINORS</b>	<b>OFFENCES</b>
Rape	1	1		2
Indecent/Sexual Assault	2		1	3
Sexual Harassment	1			1
Indecent Exposure				0
Inappropriate Behaviour			1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>

Overseas Trend 1980-Date



<b>DECADE</b>	<b>INVESTIGATIONS</b>
1980s	2
1990s	4
2000s	1
2010s	0
2020s	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>

**Comments:**

- i. A number of cases were subsequently reported to AGS and brought to the DPP resulting from alleged offences which occurred on overseas deployments, however, DPP confirmed NO civil jurisdiction existed for such offences outside of the Republic of Ireland.
- ii. The last investigation overseas concerning an alleged offence of a sexual nature took place in 2004.