

ANNUAL SECURITY SERVICES PLAN

2025



Minister's priority

'To safeguard the State's security by protecting the State and the people from all forms of terrorism and from any other threats detrimental to the State's security and vital interests.'



An Garda Síochána
Ireland's National Police & Security Service



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Introduction

Ireland is a modern open economy with strong democratic institutions and civic engagement. As a modern society, Ireland faces an increasingly diverse range of threats. These threats are complex and multi-faceted, requiring a dynamic and agile response.

An Garda Síochána is committed to identifying, assessing and countering security threats to our communities, the State and our economic wellbeing from wherever they emanate. We work with partners worldwide at strategic, tactical and operational levels to ensure that our people and democratic institutions are kept safe from the threats we face. We are committed to using the latest technology and techniques to ensure that we stay ahead of the threats we face, anticipate new dangers and are able to effectively counteract threats as they materialise.

An Garda Síochána is committed to fulfilling its national security service responsibilities and

obligations through a modern, dedicated security service, comparable in function to our security service partners across Europe.

An Garda Síochána Security & Intelligence is central to discharging the statutory responsibility of An Garda Síochána to provide security services, to ensure the State's internal security, protect the human rights of each individual, identify and assess threats to national security and advise the Government accordingly.

Security & Intelligence is the Domestic Security Service of the State. As laid out in An Garda Síochána Strategy Statement, the organisational and operational capabilities of An Garda Síochána, in the areas of national security, counter-intelligence and counter-terrorism will continue to be enhanced and partnerships between national and international partners will be developed, maintained and strengthened.



Legal Basis

An Garda Síochána holds a legislative obligation to provide both policing and security services for the Irish State. The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 follows the provisions of the Garda Síochána Act 2005/2015 by setting out the statutory basis on which An Garda Síochána delivers the security service function for the State:

The 2024 Act defined "Security Services" as follows:

(a) protecting the security of the State including, but not limited to, the following:

- (i) preventing, detecting and investigating offences under the Offences against the State Acts 1939 to 1998, the Criminal Law Act 1976, the Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) Act 2005 and the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010 ;
- (ii) protecting the State from—
 - (I) espionage,

- (II) sabotage,
- (III) unlawful acts that subvert or undermine, or are intended to subvert or undermine, parliamentary democracy or the institutions of the State,
- (IV) acts of foreign interference that are, or are intended to be, detrimental to the interests of the State and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person, and
- (V) acts contrary to the economic well-being of the State where such acts have an impact on national security interests, whether directed from, or committed or intended to be committed within, the State or not,
- (b) identifying foreign capabilities, intentions or activities within or relating to the State that impact on the international well-being or economic well-being of the State, and
- (c) cooperating with authorities in other states and international organisations aimed at preserving international peace, public order and security.

Garda Security Service Structure

While the dual policing and security service mandate held by An Garda Síochána provides many opportunities for efficiencies and for each function to compliment and support the other to “keep people safe”, it is important to recognise that the policing and security service functions are distinct functions which bring their own respective international responsibilities and obligations.

The Security Service, of An Garda Síochána, is primarily delivered by Security & Intelligence, with the support of the Special Detective Unit.

Security & Intelligence performs the role of domestic security service, for the State, and interacts with security and intelligence services across Europe and worldwide to deliver upon the legislative security service responsibilities placed on An Garda Síochána. A core function of Security & Intelligence is the development and enhancement of liaison relationships with partner security and intelligence services.

The role of the Special Detective Unit is to investigate threats to State security, with the objective of identifying, investigating and reporting for prosecution.





Annual Security Services Plan

The Annual Security Services Plan is a secret document, drafted on an annual basis by An Garda Síochána, in consultation with the Department of Justice.

The Annual Security Services Plan comprises a number of key initiatives and implementation measurements, which are subject to discussion, review and appraisal between the Garda Commissioner and the Minister for Justice. Key elements of this plan include initiatives in the following areas:

- Strengthening Security & Intelligence Capacity and Capability
- Countering Threats
- Strengthening National and International Cooperation
- Governance

Section 62 of The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 provides that the Minister for Justice may “determine priorities for An Garda Síochána in performing its functions relating to security services”.



Strengthening Security and Intelligence Capacity and Capability

An Garda Síochána has developed a vision for the future development of the Security Service and will continue to implement this vision throughout 2025. This includes continued strengthening of capacity and capability. The plan aims to ensure that the organisation continues to develop the appropriate structures, builds additional capacity and strengthens processes to adequately meet the significant security service obligations of An Garda Síochána to the State, the European Union and our international partners.

In September 2018, the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland produced its report. In respect of the Security & Intelligence capability of An Garda Síochána. The report presents; “An Garda Síochána’s Security and Intelligence capability must be strengthened, in particular by means of a ring-fenced budget provision and an ability to recruit specialist expertise – analytical, technological and legal – directly and quickly. This is a matter of urgency. International terrorism and organised crime are constantly evolving and the risks to the State are serious”.

An Garda Síochána will also strive to take advantage of technological advancements and international best practice, to ensure that the capacity and capability exists to counter the modern day threats faced by Ireland. This will enhance, preserve, protect and strengthen the ability of An Garda Síochána to deliver upon its mission.





Countering Threats

Terrorism, violent political extremism, espionage, sabotage and subversion pose evolving threats to Ireland's national security.

An Garda Síochána will continue to pursue all avenues to combat the activities of individuals and organisations that pose a threat to the security of the State and the safety of our communities.

A number of terrorist attacks perpetrated, in recent years across Europe, and beyond, highlight the continuing threat posed by Terrorism. The proliferation of destructive ideologies poses a direct threat to the values of democratic society, corrupts vulnerable citizens, threatens lives and endangers the freedoms and norms that we have become accustomed to in a secure society. Ireland is not immune to such a threat.

The security challenge posed by self-radicalised 'lone actors', interconnected groupings/individuals displaying extremist and terrorist ideologies present a potential threat to the security of the State and our people. An Garda Síochána Security Service will pursue a multifaceted approach to countering those who threaten the State and will utilise all lawful means to counter Terrorism, monitor the activities of persons

involved, prosecute terrorist related offences, disrupt terrorist financing networks, seize assets and disrupt any recruitment activity.

An Garda Síochána continues to maintain vigilance with respect to violent political extremism, and related activity, occurring in this jurisdiction. Security & Intelligence is cognisant that there is a rise in violent political extremism in Ireland and across Europe. We continue to maintain vigilance in respect of any potential developments in this area, and remain in close contact with our partner European and international Security and Intelligence Services.

Ireland is a potential target of hostile state actors. The threat from these actors, intent on obtaining information on intellectual property, as well as policies and political information of the State, is ever present. Additionally, the ability of hostile state actors to utilise cyber power as an adversarial tool presents an additional threat. An Garda Síochána Security Service will continue to work with international partners in this area in order to synergise with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to counter these threats and protect Ireland's cyber security domain.



Threat Levels

The threat level in Ireland, from terrorism is currently assessed as 'MODERATE'. (meaning that "An attack is possible, but not likely"). This threat level remains under continuing review.

The threat level scale used in our assessments is a five point scale:

LOW - An attack is unlikely

MODERATE - An attack is possible,
but not likely

SUBSTANTIAL - An attack is a strong possibility

SEVERE - An attack is highly likely

CRITICAL - An attack is imminent

Threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of an attack or hostile action. They are based on the assessment of a range of factors, including current intelligence, recent events and knowledge of terrorist intentions and capabilities. Events and trends across the wider international environment are also considered.



National and International Collaboration

An Garda Síochána Security & Intelligence maintains ongoing liaison with international security and intelligence services partners, regarding all matters that pertain to domestic and international security. These partnerships form a vital element of the State's security service capabilities.

As the number of national entities involved in the field of national security in Ireland expands, Security and Intelligence continues to strengthen liaison and cooperation with State entities engaged in activities connected to national security. Cooperation with the Department of Justice, the Irish Military Intelligence Service, the National Security Analysis Centre (NSAC) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and other State entities is crucial to providing a robust defence of our nations security and the security of our people. It is internationally well recognised that a "whole of government approach" is essential to addressing potential threats to national security.



In 2026, Ireland will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for a six-month period from 1st July to 31st of December. This will be Ireland's 8th Presidency of the Council of the European Union having last held the role in 2013. Security and Intelligence, as the domestic security service of the state, is obliged to carry out certain functions to support Ireland's presidency, including assessing threats, security operations and cooperation with our security and intelligence partners across Europe.



Governance

The Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024 established the office of the Independent Examiner of Security Legislation.

Subject to this Act, the Independent Examiner has the following functions:

1. Keep under review the operation and effectiveness of security legislation, including by examining,
 - whether security legislation,
 - Is effective and proportionate in its objectives in so far as they relate to the protection of the security of the State, and contains sufficient safeguards for the protection of human rights, and the ongoing necessity of the legislation for the protection of the security of the State.
 - to carry out reviews (within the meaning of section 240) and issue recommendations under that section;
 - to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of security services;
 - to prepare annual reports, special reports, and reports under section 243;
 - to perform any other functions conferred on the Independent Examiner by or under this Act or any other enactment.

An Garda Síochána looks forward to supporting the work of the Office of the Independent Examiner and to progress our commitment to strengthening our security and intelligence capability in line with our organisational commitments, the Programme for Government and our legislative obligations.

