

SAFER SCOTLAND ANTI-VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN
POLICE RECOVER MORE THAN 1,000 KNIVES DURING
ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGNS

Police across Scotland have now seized 1,110 knives and over 918 other weapons during anti violence enforcement campaigns.

In the latest Safer Scotland Enforcement phase officers across Scotland were out in force between 4th December and 31st December 2006 targeting people carrying weapons.

A total of 18,528 people were stopped and searched by officers with 236 knives and 182 other weapons being seized.

This was the **THIRD** crackdown following a five-week long nationwide knife amnesty earlier this year, which saw more than 12,600 weapons surrendered across Scotland.


The first enforcement campaign between June 30 and August 6 involved more than 25,000 people being stopped and searched and the recovery of 575 knives and 492 other weapons, including swords, machetes and meat cleavers.

The second enforcement phase in November saw 299 knives and 244 other weapons seized from individuals across Scotland.

Police officers across Scotland have been using the 1,000 hand held metal detectors, which were distributed to forces as part of the Safer Scotland anti-violence campaign during their searches.

They have also been using other search methods including the use of metal detecting Kevlar gloves, which were used in Falkirk and the east end of Glasgow, and the Ferroguard poles which were used in Inverclyde and Renfrewshire. British Transport Police also joined forces with their colleagues in Lothian and Borders and Strathclyde where the scanners were deployed at Maryhill and Hawick. They also deployed them at Glasgow Central station. Chief Inspector Alex McGuire from the Safer Scotland co-ordination unit, said:

“We said that after the amnesty, forces across Scotland would make continued and concerted efforts to tackle the issue of knife and weapons carrying within our communities. Officers are



proactively targeting those individuals who chose to ignore our advice and are intent on carrying weapons in our communities. The latest enforcement continued into the Christmas and the New Year period. Officers have been carrying out intelligence-led searches in areas which are known to have problems with violence or disorder.”

Despite the high numbers of knives and weapons seized by officers, Chief Inspector McGuire said he remained disappointed that the message still wasn't getting through to many individuals. He added:


“Despite our repeated warnings that we are actively searching for knife carriers more than 400 knives and weapons have been recovered in the month of December, this is in addition to the knives and other weapons which were recovered during the July and November enforcement periods. This shows the extent of the problem. These figures clearly demonstrate that there are still individuals out there in our communities who choose to ignore our warnings and continue to think it's acceptable to carry a weapon on the streets of Scotland. Let me make it quite clear, knife and weapons carrying is not acceptable in our communities”

“These people clearly think they are above the law. However, I want to warn them, once again, that we are not going away. These enforcement campaigns will continue. Weapons carriers need to realise that when they are caught and they will be caught they will be held in custody and could face a lengthy spell in jail.”

“I would again ask for your assistance. Any one of these knives or weapons recovered could have been used to kill, injure or maim a friend or relative. I would appeal to all of you to help to make a difference in your communities- if you know someone who carries a knife or weapon then please tell us. You can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 ”

Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson said:

“At the end of 2006 we launched a new campaign – ‘Knives – Let's Not Scar Another Generation’ – which called on parents, family members and friends to challenge the notion that knife carrying is normal or acceptable. That was another positive step in what is going to be a long-term initiative to create a climate in which respect is earned by the way someone leads their life – not by what they carry in their pocket.



“The police are playing a very important part in both enforcing the law and reinforcing that message. I want to pay tribute to their work in taking further weapons off our streets – weapons which cannot now be used to kill or maim. But of course I remain concerned that these positive results also show that some individuals are clearly ignoring the warnings about carrying knives and other weapons.

“I have a very clear message for them to think about early in this new year – carry a knife and you are now more likely than ever to be caught, more likely to face being locked up until you appear in court, and if convicted to face up to four years in jail.”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION –

Breakdown of seizures by Forces from midnight on December 4th to midnight on December 31st.

Total number of knives seized ;


British Transport Police – 3
Central – 14
Dumfries and Galloway – 7
Fife – 1
Grampian – 34
Lothian and Borders - 27
Northern – 14
Strathclyde – 130
Tayside – 6

Total number of other weapons seized;

British Transport Police – 0
Central – 21
Dumfries and Galloway – 18
Fife – 0
Grampian – 11
Lothian and Borders – 22
Northern – 8
Strathclyde – 96
Tayside – 6

NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS –

This is the latest stage of the year-long Safer Scotland campaign, previous strands have included a blitz on youth alcohol and an educational phase.



For information on individual force figures or operations during the enforcement period, please contact respective force press offices for more details.or all.”