Tuesday, December 23, 2025 €2.70 (£2.00 Northern Ireland)

# THE IRISH TIMES

**Opinion** 

**FOUR CALLS YOU SHOULD MAKE THIS WEEK** 

Fiona Reddan **Your Money** 



**La The annual Gaybo Christmas** callwas a necessary national ritual, one that turned private pain into public joy. It was poignant and tear-jerking but also deeplystrange Fintan O'Toole



Ht = w0+w1 CRt+ w2EVt+w3RPE t THE FORMULA **FOR CHRISTMAS HAPPINESS** 

**Ian Robertson Opinion** 

## **Most alleged** sex assaults in military sent back by gardaí

Cases referred under new rules do not meet criminal standard for prosecution

Measures introduced following claims of widespread abuse in Defence Forces

#### **CONOR GALLAGHER**

Crime and Security Correspondent

The vast majority of military sex assault cases referred to gardaí under rules introduced following the Women of Honour controversy are being sent tors as the passage of time ofback because they do not meet ten makes it more difficult to the criminal standard for prosgather evidence for their in-

fence Forces is obliged to refer all cases against serving mem-than civilians, reflecting the bers to the Garda for investigation and possible prosecution tary service," a Defence Forcin the civilian courts.

Previously, these cases asked about the issue. were dealt with under military law through the court martial tary law is to regulate the be-

system. The new measures were inwere covered up and that victims were penalised.

About 17 cases have now been referred by the military to An Garda Síochána for investigation, it is understood.

However, all but a handful of these cases have been sent back to the Defence Forces threshold is not met to wardue to a lack of evidence of a criminal offence.

When a case is referred back, the military police must of our personnel, these cases reinvestigate and assess if the case meets the standard of the military police and approcriminality under military

Military law operates differently to civilian law regarding criminal matters. Incidents which may not amount to an offence in the civilian world are often treated as a criminal offence by military authorities.

"If a civilian touches someone on the back without their consent, they probably wouldn't face charges. In the military, that person could be brought in on a number of charges," a source said.

This includes "conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline", a broad-ranging, vaguely defined charge under military law which has no equiva-

lent in civilian law. It often takes the civilian au-

thorities months to assess if a case meets the standard for prosecution in the ordinary courts before referring it back to the Defence Forces.

This delay is a source of frustration for military investiga-

ecution.

Under regulations introduced in April 2023, the Deduced in April er standard of accountability unique responsibilities of milispokesman said when

"The main purpose of milihaviour of military personnel, having regard to the unique retroduced following allega- quirements and demands of tions of widespread abuse and military life, in order to ensure misconduct in the Defence that the required standard of male veterans known as the times. Members of the Perma-Women of Honour, as well as nent Defence Forces are suballegations that complaints ject to military law at all

#### Tribunal

He said that, since 2023, the military refers all cases "of a sexual nature" to gardaí for investigation.

"In some instances, the rant an An Garda Síochána investigation. However, given the high standards expected will then be investigated by priate disciplinary action will be taken under the military justice system.

He added that, since 2024, the Defence Forces have the power to place serving personnel "who are the subject of cases involving serious assault, sexual assault or rape" on leave with immediate effect while an investigation takes

Meanwhile, a judge-led tribunal set up following the Women of Honour revelations to examine the handling of complaints of abuse within the military is expected to begin hearing evidence next

It is currently in the investigative stage and has interviewed more than 140 people.



■ Dutch-based Republic of Ireland striker Troy Parrott was among the many thousands of people landing in Dublin Airport yesterday ahead of Christmas. Joyful reunions: page 3. PHOTOGRAPH: DUBLIN AIRPORT

# Arrests for drug and drink-driving almost equal

#### SARAH BURNS

Almost as many people were arrested for driving under the influence of drugs as for

drink-driving last week.
Gardaí said yesterday that
170 people were arrested last week for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Supt Stephen McCauley, of the Roads Policing Unit, said the near-even split of those found under the influence of drugs and alcohol was a "worrying trend".

About 56 per cent of the arrests were in connection with alcohol, while 44 per cent were drug related. So far this year, 184 people have died on Irish roads, already exceeding the total of 174 in 2024. Supt McCauley said it was

"hard to put your finger" on the reason for such a rise in road deaths in 2025.

"All I can say is, people are obviously not abiding by the messages that we're delivering," he said.

He also said the number of people found to be driving under the influence of either alcohol or drugs had been "steadily increasing" since gardaí launched their Christmas road safety operation at the beginning of the month.

#### 'Not listening'

"People are not listening," he added. "You cannot take any alcohol before you get behind the wheel of a car or any intoxicant, any drug."

He said this included some prescription drugs, adding: "Please read the label and consult your doctor before you get into your car. If you're taking can have an impact.'

An Garda Síochána is con-

ducting an enforcement operation on the roads throughout the Christmas period, which began on December 1st and will continue until January

There were six fatalities on the roads last week and 13 serious collisions that resulted in a number of people receiving serious and life-threatening inju-

More than 5,393 drivers were detected for speeding offences, with over 2,021 checkpoints carried out. A driver was found to be travelling at 192km/h in a 100km/h zone on the N25 in Kilmeaden, Co Wa-

#### 'Serious increase'

Another motorist was seen driving at 122km/h in a 60km/h zone on the N15 in Oola, Co Limerick.

David Martin, spokesman for the Road Safety Authority, said there had been a "serious increase" in the number of vulnerable road users being killed on the roads, such as cyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists. "We would ask people to really be aware of those vulnerable road users, and again, to back up what the gardaí are saying – no drinking, no taking drugs, just slow down and be safe over the Christmas period," he said.

The 184 fatalities to date this year include 74 drivers, 30 motorcyclists, 43 pedestrians, 20 passengers, 14 cyclists, two e-scooter drivers or passengers and a pillion passen-

An Garda Síochána said the Christmas period was one of the busiest on Irish roads and when road users v highest risk of being involved in a fatal or serious crash.

### Woman arrested as part of toddler homicide inquiry

#### **COLM KEENA**

Gardaí investigating the death of Daniel Aruebose have arrested a woman in her 20s on suspicion of murder.

The investigation was upgraded from a missing person inquiry to a case of suspected murder earlier this month. The woman is the first per-

son to be arrested as part of the homicide investigation. Gardaí believe the boy was killed in 2021, when aged  $3 \ensuremath{\,^{1\!/}_{\!\!2}}$ years, and his remains buried in open ground just outside Don-

abate, north Dublin. "As part of the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Daniel Aruebose, gardaí have arrested a woman aged in her 20s on suspicion of murder," the Garda Press Office said yesterday.

"She is currently detained under provisions of section four of calls in recent years.

the Criminal Justice Act, 1984 at a Garda station in the Dublin

The upgrading of the investigation to a homicide inquiry on December 11th – in advance of what would have been Daniel's eighth birthday - meant the investigation team acquired



Daniel Aruebose: gardaí believe three-vear-old was killed in 2021

greater powers for securing search warrants and court or-

It allows them to seek legal permission to access phones and social media accounts, and to check messages and phone

Concern for Daniel's wellbeing first emerged in August. Officials carrying out checks on a social welfare payment linked to him could find no evidence of his whereabouts or that he was

The officials took their concerns to Tusla, the child and family agency, which escalated the matter to the Garda.

An investigation was started and two key witnesses told gardaí Daniel had been dead for more than four years and his remains buried just outside Donabate.

One of the two took gardaí to a location off Portrane Road and pointed out what they said was Daniel's burial ground

Though the information was not completely accurate, gardaí discovered the boy's remains in September very close by after an operation lasting more than two weeks.

**Sports** 

**Tuesday** 

### An Ceoláras Náisiúnta National Concert Hall

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#### Weather

Mostly cloudy, with patchy rain easing in the afternoon. Highs of 8-11 degrees

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#### Home News

**Congestion:** Dublin is now the 11th most congested city in the world, with a transportation academic warning the capital is 'skating on thin ice'. Page 2

Freed: An Irish woman has spoken of her relief after being released from a US immigration detention centre. Page 4 | the age of 74. Page 7

#### World **News**



er-songwriter, whose songs include the festive hit Driving Home For Christmas, has died at

### **Business** + **Your Money**

**Ardstone:** The Irish property investor and developer has acquired a zoned site in Dublin capable of delivering 1,400 homes. Page 12

Prosecco: Irish house-

holds drank nearly one

colast Christmas, new

figures show. Page 12

million bottles of prosec-

#### Rugby: Ciarán Frawley is set to leave Leinster at the end of the season

and join Connacht, where he will be reunited with coach Stuart Lancaster. Page 16 League of Ireland:

Attendances at Premier Division men's matches in 2025 hit 683,208, an 8% rise. Page 18

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