

FOUR CALLS YOU SHOULD MAKE THIS WEEK

Fiona Reddan
Your Money



🔴 The annual Gaybo Christmas call was a necessary national ritual, one that turned private pain into public joy. It was poignant and tear-jerking but also deeply strange

Fintan O'Toole
Opinion



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 back because they do not meet the criminal standard for prosecution.

Under regulations introduced in April 2023, the Defence Forces is obliged to refer all cases against serving members to the Garda for investigation and possible prosecution in the civilian courts.

Previously, these cases were dealt with under military law through the court martial system.

The new measures were introduced following allegations of widespread abuse and misconduct in the Defence Forces made by a group of female veterans known as the Women of Honour, as well as allegations that complaints were 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 due to a lack of evidence of a criminal offence.

When a case is referred back, the military police must reinvestigate and assess if the case meets the standard of criminality under military law.

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 equivalent 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 investigators as the passage of time often makes it more difficult to gather evidence for their inquiries.

"The personnel of Óglaigh na hÉireann are held to a higher standard of accountability than civilians, reflecting the unique responsibilities of military service," a Defence Forces spokesman said when asked about the issue.

"The main purpose of military law is to regulate the behaviour of military personnel, having regard to the unique requirements and demands of military life, in order to ensure that the required standard of discipline is maintained at all times. Members of the Permanent Defence Forces are subject to military law at all times."

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

"In some instances, the threshold is not met to warrant an An Garda Síochána investigation. However, given the high standards expected of our personnel, these cases will then be investigated by the military police and appropriate 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 place.

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 year.

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



Troy to the world Ireland star lands back in Dublin

■ 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

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 person to be arrested as part of the homicide investigation.

Gardaí believe the boy was killed in 2021, when aged 3½ years, and his remains buried in open ground just outside Donabate, 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

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

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

greater powers for securing search warrants and court orders.

It allows them to seek legal permission to access phones and social media accounts, and to check messages and phone calls in recent years.

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 alive.

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.



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

Weather

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

THE IRISH TIMES
24-28 Tara Street, Dublin 2.
D02 CX89
Telephone: (01) 9203900
Online: irishtimes.com
The recommended retail price of THE IRISH TIMES in the Republic of Ireland is €2.70
Subscriptions: Tel: (01) 9203901
Email: subscribe@irishtimes.com



9 771393 351024 52
Vol. No. 52474. Tuesday, December 23, 2025

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

World News



Chris Rea: The singer-songwriter, whose songs include the festive hit *Driving Home For Christmas*, has died at the age of 74. Page 7

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 households drank nearly one million bottles of prosecco last Christmas, new figures show. Page 12

Sports Tuesday

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

NCH

An Coiláras Náisiúnaí National Concert Hall

Gift Cards

National Concert Hall Gift Cards

Dearbhán Bronntanais ón gCeoláras Náisiúnta

Enjoy the magic of music in 2026

Bain sult as draíocht an cheoil in 2026



nch.ie or 01 417 0000