Sorca Clarke TD

Dáil Éireann

Leinster House

Kildare Street

Dublin 2

 30 September 2021

 Dear Deputy Clarke,

I refer to Parliamentary Question number 440 of 6 July 2021 where you asked the number of Gardaí who successfully completed protester removal courses in 2019, 2020 and to date in 2021, in tabular form.

You will recall that the information could not be obtained in the time available and I undertook to consult with An Garda Síochána and to contact you again when the requested information was available.

As you will appreciate, in accordance with the Garda Síochána Act 2005, the Garda Commissioner is responsible for the management and administration of An Garda Síochána including training and development of the Garda organisation.  As Minister, I have no direct role in these matters.

I am informed by the Garda authorities that training courses available from the Garda College are provided on a needs basis, and having consideration for the operational requirements of the Garda organisation.

The purpose of this course is to equip selected members with the skills and training necessary to fulfil the requirements of the National Public Order Protester Removal Team in relation to the policing of non-violent direct action protests.

At the conclusion of the programme participants will,

* Be equipped with the necessary methods and skills to safely remove obstructive protesters,
* Understand the decision making process on use of force options in accordance with the Garda Síochána Decision Making Model (GSDMM) and the overarching Use of Force Policy,
* Fully comply with the relevant articles (2-14) of the European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003, and
* Adhere to the Garda Síochána Code of Ethics.

The number of Garda Members who have successfully completed protester removal courses in 2019, 2020 and to date in 2021 is as follows:

| Year | Number |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Number** |
| 2019 | Nil |
| 2020 | 8 |
| 2021 to   date | Nil |

Protestor Removal Training took place in October 2020 and eight members were trained.

Yours sincerely,

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Heather Humphreys T.D.,

Minister for Justice