

## **Submission to Joint Policing Committee Re Strategy to Combat Rural Crime.**

Rural Crime is invariably perpetrated via the use of motor vehicles to and from the **Crime Scene**

This category of crime appears endemic, is currently on a serious surge and has widespread negative effects which include:

- **Theft:** of money, household valuables, motor vehicles (cars, tractors, lorries), DIY and professional tools and machinery of all kinds. Much is sold locally and the higher value material is exported and sold.
- **Perpetrators of Crime operating under the influence of Drugs:** This is particularly insidious as the perpetrators often are completely dissociated from all trauma inflicted on the victim. These perpetrators are in trumped up irrational states of mind invariably and brutally demand money to feed their addiction and or to pay off drug debts.
- **Physical assault and injury to victims**
- **Psychological Assault and injury:** The fear and consequences of uninvited intrusion into homes and workplaces is extensive on individuals and families.
- **Sense of Security in Communities is severely damaged through erosion of Trust as this criminality becomes endemic.**

### **PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS TO MITIGATE THIS CATEGORY OF CRIME**

1. **Mandatory loss of Driving licence** for anybody driving or a passenger, to or from such crime. Loss of licence has proven very effective against 'drink driving' for a wide variety of well understood reasons. This penalty also enables Gardai to repeatedly seize vehicles of those violating this sanction, without further recourse to or 'time wasting' of the courts time and resources. This could be a '*super efficient penalty*' measure in itself if used judiciously with discretion by the Gardai.
2. **Mandatory loss of Passport** for the more serious property and drug offences. Many of these criminals freely travel to expand their trade overseas in drugs and stolen property. Instant suspension of passport would be a deterrent. The aberrant wealth and power of the current 'drugs gangs' would never have arisen had such deterrents been in place and applied in the past. The US uses 'any conviction' to deny entry to would be visitors very effectively. Withholding of 'Free travel' for criminals should be more widely used here as a 'tool' to reduce the scourge of crime whether of the 'import' or 'export' kind. Apart from the benefits in crime reduction 'at home,' 'respect for the neighbours' should induce Ireland to ensure 'other countries' should not suffer from our 'exported criminality'.

**These tools of sanction would be simple to administer and are already available to be requested by the Gardai and to the courts but clearly in the main lie unused. The proposal here is that these penalties become 'MANDATORY' as in the very successful 'Drink Driving' Campaign**

