



MIAMI BEACH


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LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager 

DATE: March 26, 2009

SUBJECT: CRIME STATISTICS ANNUAL UCR PART I CRIMES REPORTED FOR 2008

This letter to the Commission is to inform the Mayor and City Commission of the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) statistics for Part I Crimes as indexed annually, for calendar year 2008. **Part I Crimes include Homicide, Forcible Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Larceny and Motor Vehicle Theft.** During calendar year 2008, the City of Miami Beach experienced a **+3.69%** increase in total Part I Crimes as compared to 2007. This increase is attributed to a **+5.25%** increase in total property crimes as a result of a significant spike in larcenies of **+9.58%**, despite a **-5.54%** decline in burglaries and a **-6.16%** decline in motor vehicle thefts (the other two Part I Property Crimes). In essence, larcenies account for the overall increase in Part I Crime and include incidents of beach thefts, pocket-picking, vehicle burglaries, and shoplifting. Despite significant efforts to curb beach thefts, such as increased beach patrol via ATV's it is a challenge to cover 7 miles of beach front visited by millions of tourists. Further exacerbating the problem is that the majority of beach thefts and vehicle burglaries involve tourist/visitor victims who may not take simple measures to protect their valuables. Another factor influencing the rise in thefts is that victims are more inclined to report stolen items now for insurance purposes than in the past because of economic factors. Finally, there are instances when persons report items that are perceived as stolen; when it can not be entirely established that the items were either lost or stolen but are reported as stolen to support the victim. (Although the crime of larceny actually occurred may remain in doubt.)

The most significant crime statistic is the **-7.65%** drop in violent crime attributed to a **-13.79%** reduction in rape, **-9.60%** decrease in robberies and a **-5.87%** decline in aggravated assaults. These crimes involve violent confrontations with the offender often resulting in injury to the victim. This is truly noteworthy when compared to other cities. In a nationwide survey and analysis of 233 police agencies conducted by the *Police Executive Research Forum*, 44% indicated that there is a perceived correlation with the collapse of the national economy and increases in crime. Of those police agencies surveyed, 39% reported an increase in robberies, 32% an increase in burglaries, and 40% an increase in larcenies.

The chart below further depicts that **five of the seven** Part I UCR categories **declined** from calendar year 2007 to 2008.

Type of Crime	2007	2008	Percent Difference from 2007
Homicide	4	6	+50%
Rape	58	50	-13.79%
Robbery	448	405	-9.60%
Aggravated Assault	562	529	-5.87%
Total Violent Crime	1,072	990	-7.65%
Burglary	1,354	1,279	-5.54%
Larceny	5,607	6,144	+9.58%
Motor Vehicle Theft	844	792	-6.16%
Total Property Crime	7,805	8,215	+5.25%
Total Part I UCR Crimes	8,877	9,205	+3.69%

In addition to the crime statistics, the following are highlights of some of the proactive crime prevention initiatives and or noteworthy case investigations that took place during 2008.

- Although the total homicides in 2008 have increased by 50% (from 4 to 6), it is important to note that **four (4)** of the cases have been cleared by arrest, **one (1)** was exceptionally cleared, when the offender took his own life, and **the remaining case is pending an arrest** with the subject having been identified by our investigators. It should be noted that the annual median number for this category during the period of 2000-2007 is 5.2 homicides a year.
- The Auto Theft/Economic Crime Squad broke up a sophisticated criminal conspiracy ring defrauding bank customers out of 2 million dollars from ATM machines with the arrest of four subjects.
- Violent Crimes Section Detectives working with Patrol personnel arrested a serial rapist that was committing sexual batteries in the South Beach area.
- Robbery squad Detectives made numerous arrests of subjects for violent robberies where victims were attacked and in some cases injured.
- Special Victims Detectives made several arrests for internet child pornography crimes.
- Safepark Patrols by uniformed police officers deployed at Flamingo Park, Open Space Park, Marjory Stoneman Douglas Park, and Lummus Park netted several arrests.
- During the months of November and December, Operation Rolling Thunder was implemented. This operation consisted of a Task Force utilizing uniform patrol and plainclothes personnel deployed at peak times to known locations where specific types of crimes were occurring in an effort to reduce auto burglaries, robberies, residential burglaries, and larcenies throughout the City. As a result of this proactive anti-crime initiative, a remarkable 119 felonies and 1087 misdemeanors were made.
- Patrol Division personnel apprehended several subjects involved with in-progress burglaries, robberies, and other crimes as a result of their effective tactical response.
- Department personnel were recognized for their heroic efforts in saving lives on several occasions including a burning vessel and residential structural fires.

Proactive short term special crime abatement efforts which included:

- *Beach Theft Task Force* targeting beach thefts,
- *North District Anti Gang Initiative* designed to identify and apprehend subjects involved in graffiti, robberies and aggravated assaults,
- *Bicycle Boardwalk Patrol* implemented to arrest persons on the boardwalk committing petty thefts, public intoxication and urinating in public,
- *North District Collins Avenue Corridor Bicycle Detail* formed to arrest subjects involved in drug and gang activity along 71 Street and surrounding areas
- *Crime Suppression Robbery Apprehension Team* implemented to apprehend subjects committing robberies in progress and purse snatches.

As a result of these proactive crime initiatives, numerous individuals were arrested and a significant number of property items were recovered.

Although total Part I UCR Crime increased for 2008, it can not be over emphasized that **five (5)** of the **seven (7)** categories showed a significant decline, particularly overall violent crime which is of primary concern. This includes a significant drop in rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults. Just as impressive was the decline in burglaries and vehicle thefts.

In keeping with our commitment to making the City of Miami Beach a safer place to live, work, play and visit as well as maintain the crime rate at or below national levels, the MBPD will continue to be innovative and effectively develop proactive anti crime measures by appropriately deploying resources. Our efforts in this area will include maintaining and strengthening our partnerships with other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. As a result of this global economic decline however, it should be noted that criminologists as well as police chiefs across the nation are bracing for what is expected to be an increase in crime. The MBPD stands ready to take responsible measures to efficiently manage existing personnel resources to proactively stop this potential for greater crime.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

C: Carlos Noriega, Chief of Police

JMG:CN:tr