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# SUCCESSFUL SECURITY INITIATIVES FOR A SAFER PUERTO RICO

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COMMONWEALTH OF  
PUERTO RICO

ALEJANDRO GARCÍA PADILLA  
GOVERNOR

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## Introduction

This decade began as the bloodiest decade in Puerto Rico's history. The murder rate in 2010, 2011, and 2012 exceeded 1,000 per year, surpassing the record set in 1994. Meanwhile, the reduction of other types of violent crime (Class 1 Felonies) observed since the early 1990s suffered a sudden halt. To make matter worse, the Police confronted an institutional crisis amid accusations of human right violations and a lack of resources consequence of the previous government's austerity measures. Puerto Rico was losing ground in the fight against crime.

When we took office in January 2013, we were able to implement measures that were necessary to revert this horrible tendency and make the island a safer place to live in.

A year later, we can affirm that Puerto Rico is indeed safer. We reduced Class 1 Felonies almost 7%. Class 1 Felonies include offences against the person (murder, rape, battery, aggravated assault) and offences against property (burglary, illegal appropriation, car theft). This translates to 4,229 Class 1 Felonies less than in 2012. This becomes more significant if compared with the past 50 years. Doing so reveals that **2013 was the year with the least amount of violent crimes since 1965**. If demographic changes are taken into account and the crime incidence is measured per 100,000 inhabitants, then 2013 was the year with the least amount of violent crimes since 1962.

The murder rate also fell 12% in 2013. Unlike other types of Class 1 Felonies, the murder rate has shown an increasing trend during the past 40 years. This trend, however, suffered a significant relapse in 2013. For the first time in four years there were less than 1,000 murders. More significantly yet, **for the first time in five years there were less than 900 murders**.

The correlation between our initiatives and these results is notable. This report summarizes many of these initiatives and explains how they contributed to make Puerto Rico safer. We believe that these changes are not coincidental. They are also not due to a reduction of Puerto Rico's population or limited to the areas where the Federal Government has intervened.

## **ACTIONS THAT PRODUCE RESULTS**

Our actions produced results during 2013. These results cannot be attributed to a single action. Each action contributed, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, to build a safer Puerto Rico. This is a summary of our results and the actions that contributed to them.

### **1. We fulfilled our promise with the Police force**

- \$100 raise: \$75 for salary y \$25 for health care
- Paid sick leave
- Paid overtime
- Toll fare exemption
- Income tax exemption for overtime income
- New patrol cars

### **2. We created a more professional Police force**

- Promotion by merit, exam, and record
- Restricted promotion of officers with unresolved filed complaints

### **3. We enacted more restrictive gun control legislation**

- Mandatory prison time for gun law violations, including under plea bargains.
- 61 arrests in the first month

### **4. We organized a firearm amnesty collection**

- Collected 566 weapons y 17,478 rounds of ammunition in three weeks

**5. We implemented ShotSpotter**

- Shot detection system that triangulates a gunfire incident's location in seconds.
- Produced its first arrests in December

**6. We began a hot spot policing program**

- Identifies trends in location, days and hours of major crime incidence to help organize preventive patrolling and resource assignment.

**7. We increased the conviction rate and crime**

- 70% of crimes solved
- 84% guilty conviction rate

**8. We designed a successful campaign against celebratory gunfire**

- Zero injured for the first time in more than 10 years

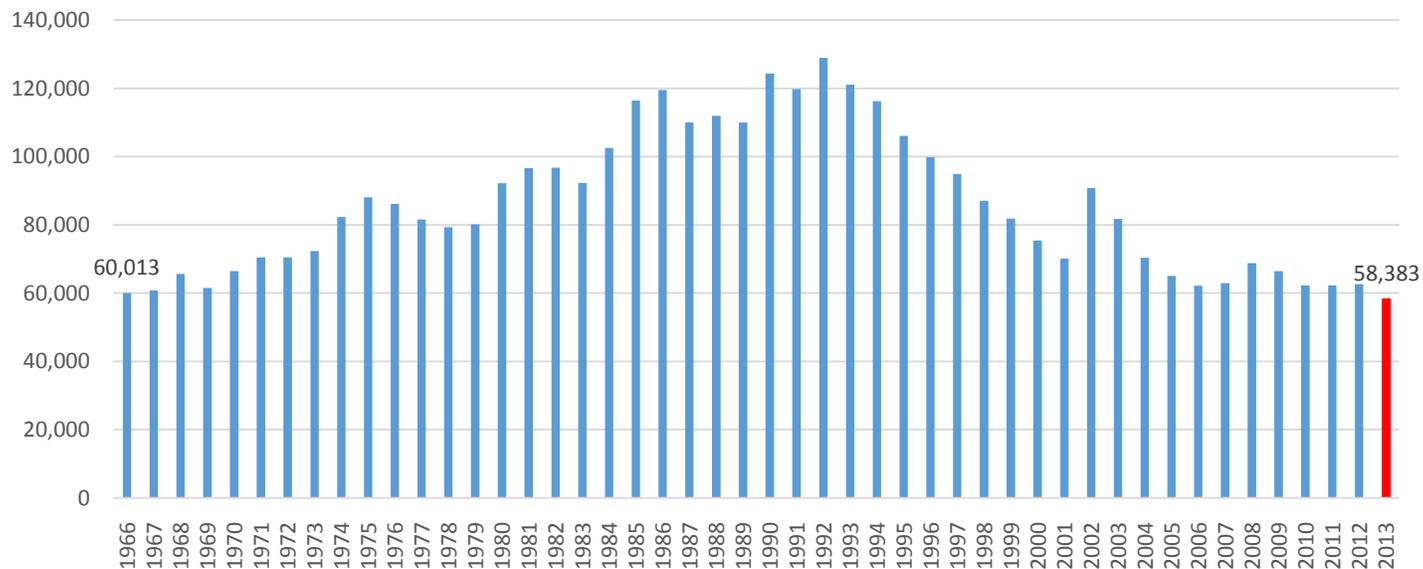
**9. We increased drug seizures**

- Activated the National Guard to patrol coasts
- Agreement with the federal government for airport surveillance
- Canine unit in the east coast
- Created an assistant superintendent position for the main airport

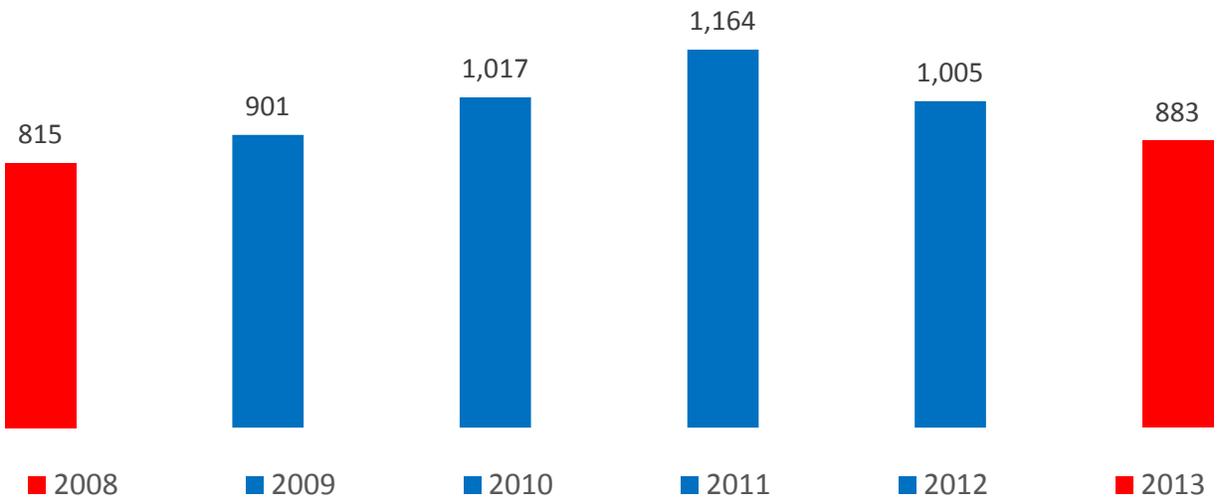
**10. We achieved a historic reduction of Class 1 Felonies**

- Least amount of Class 1 felonies in 48 years
- Least amount of Class 1 felonies per 100,000 inhabitants in 51 years.
- Least amount of aggravated assaults in 53 years
- Least amount of offences against property in 44 years
- Least amount of car thefts in 46 years
- Least amount of burglaries in 52 years
- Least amount of murders in 5 years

### Class I Felonies



### Murders



## Murders

Life is any being's most valuable treasure. We worry about the high murder incidence that has affected Puerto Rico during the past 40 years. For that reason, the murder rate's reduction is our main priority when it comes to fighting crime.

We witnessed significant progress in 2013. **There were 122 murders less than in 2012, a 12.1% reduction.** The drop was more significant in the biggest regions such as San Juan (-17.9%), Bayamón (-13.8%), and Caguas (-29.8%). It was the first time in four years to finish with less than 1,000 murders and the first time in five years to finish with less than 900.

The month of December evidenced the impact of our initiatives like no other month. There were 50% less murders in December 2013 than in December 2012. This is the highest month-to-month reduction on record. This change was not due to chance. December was one of our most active months in the fight against crime. The new Superintendent, James Tuller, began his term on November 16. Two weeks later, on December 3, the Governor signed into law greater gun control regulations to guarantee prison sentences for violators, thus closing the plea bargains escape valve. This led to 61 arrests in one month. He also signed into law a firearms amnesty where people could deposit unwanted or illegally owned firearms without penalty. It ran from December 13-28 and collected 566 firearms and 17,478 rounds of ammunition.

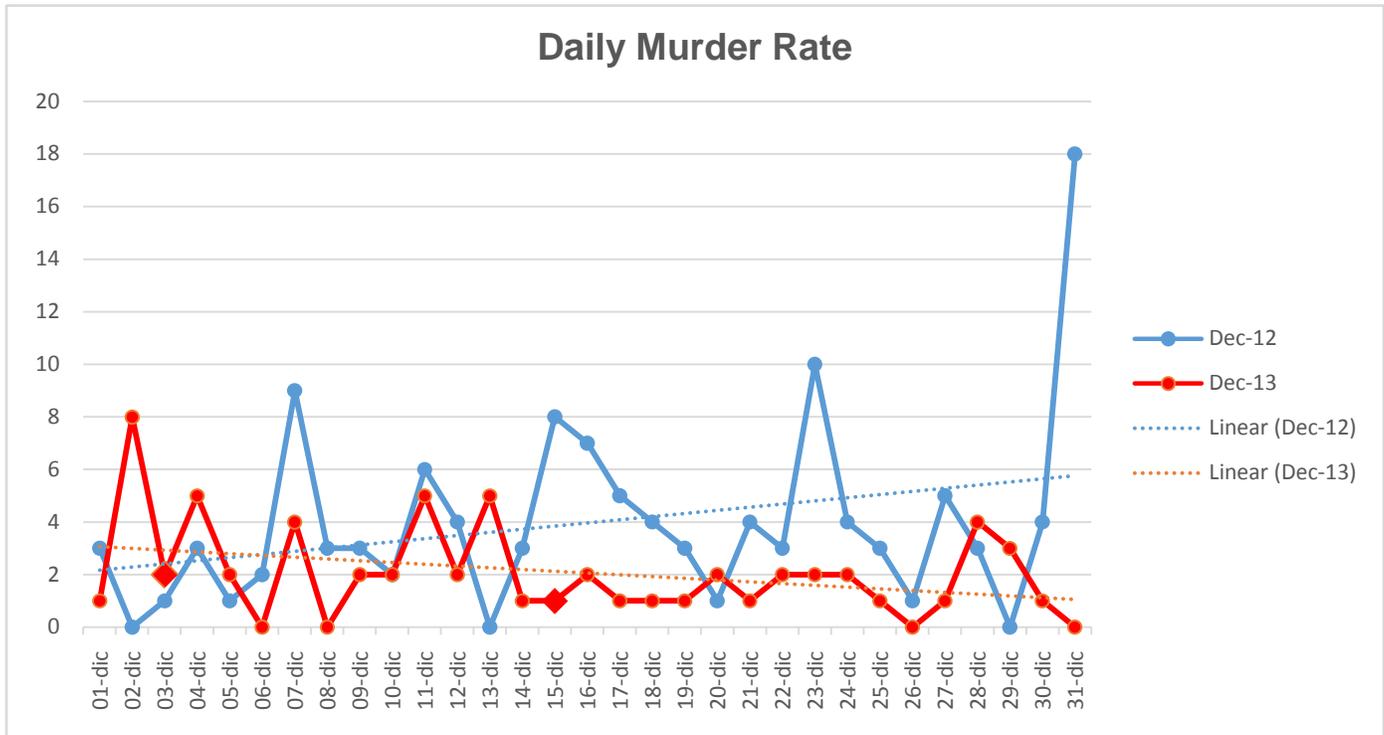
The Police made the first arrests using ShotSpotter, a gunfire detection system, on December 15. The news spread at an unusually high rate: 8,200 shared the news article on social media.<sup>1</sup> From December 15 onwards, there was a significant reduction in the average daily murder rate. During the second

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<sup>1</sup> *El Nuevo Día*, "Policía detecta disparos al aire con tecnología," 15 diciembre 2013, <http://www.elnuevodia.com/policiadetectedisparosalairecontecnologia-1667408.html>

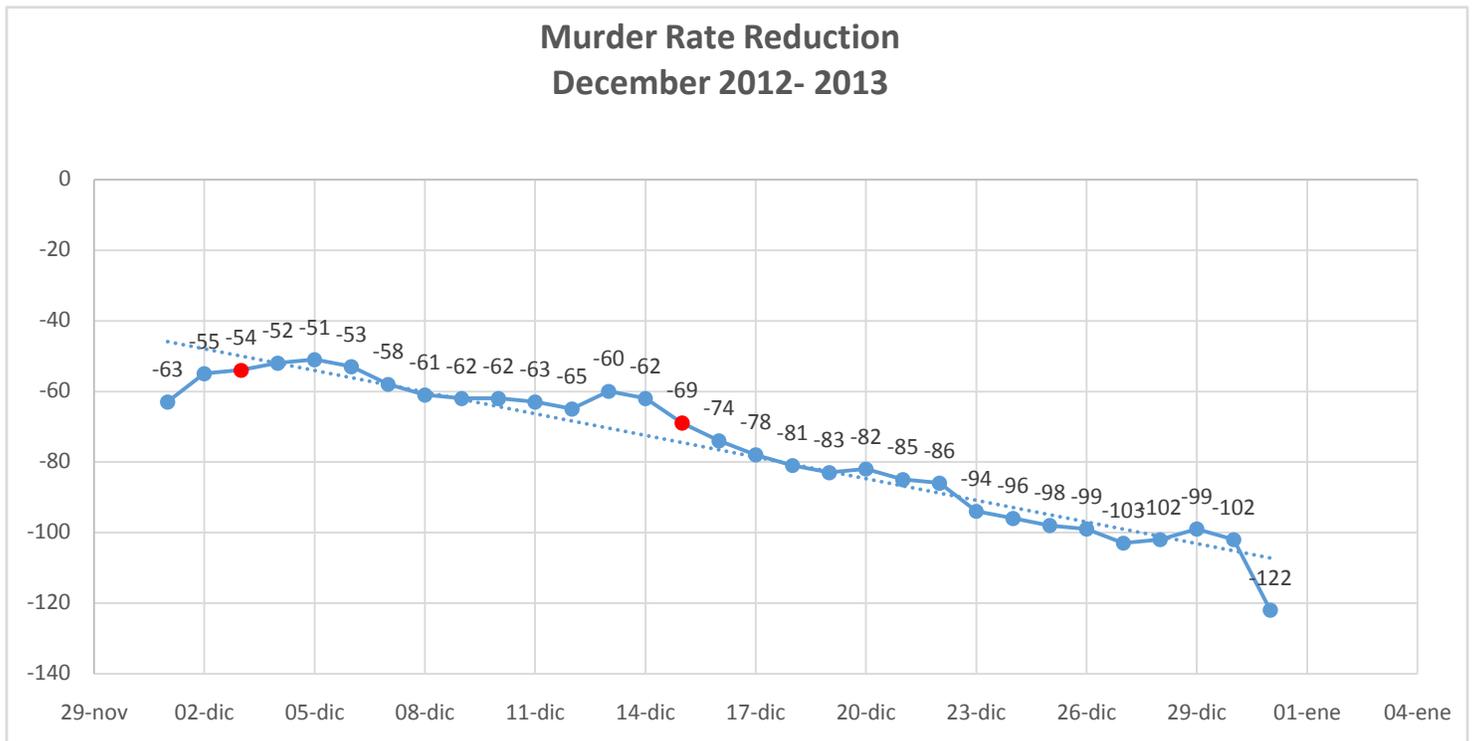
half of December 2012, the average daily murder rate increased 43% compared to the first half. Yet in December 2013, after the new Superintendent had taken office; stricter gun control punishments had been enacted; a firearm amnesty had begun; and Shotspotter had produced its first arrests; there was a 40% reduction in the daily murder rate during the second half of the month.

<i>December</i>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<i>1-15</i>	48	40
<i>16-31</i>	57	24
<i>Change</i>	43%	-40%



December began with 63 murders less than 2012. That difference dropped to -54 when the gun control amendments were signed. From thereon, the gap began to widen. On December 15, when ShotSpotter led to its first arrests, the difference stood at -69. After that, it increased consistently until reaching -122 on December 31. Although December 2012 was unusually violent, December 2013 was significantly below the average December murder rate for the past six years.

December 2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Average	
Murders	70	61	95	90	125	64	84



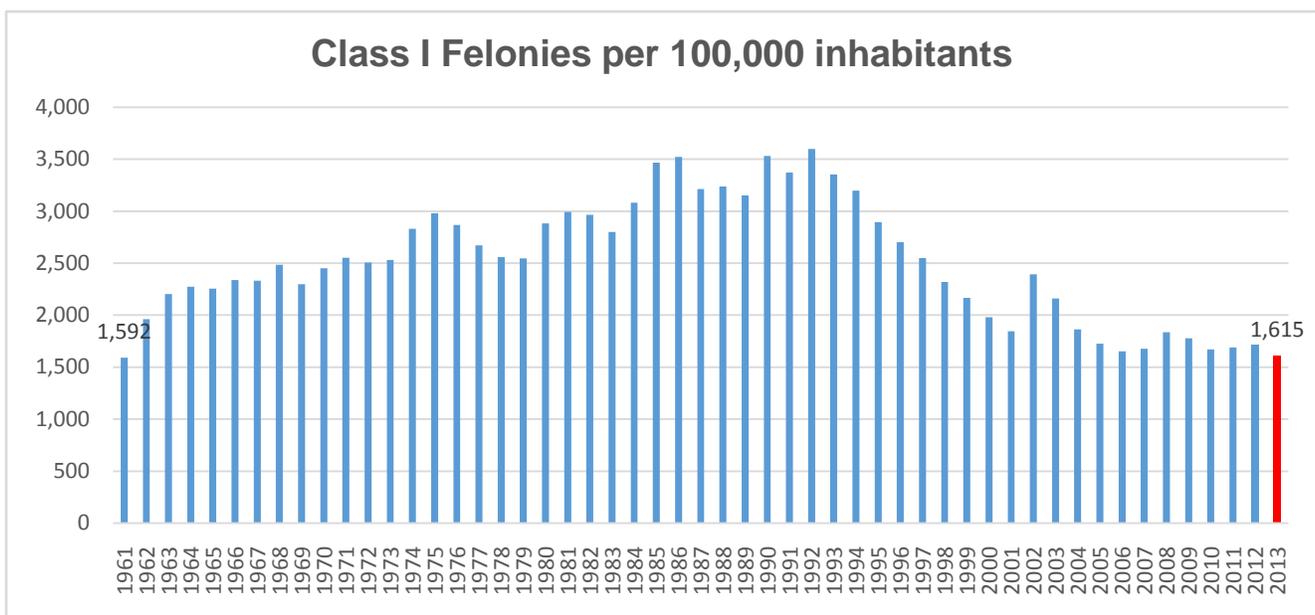
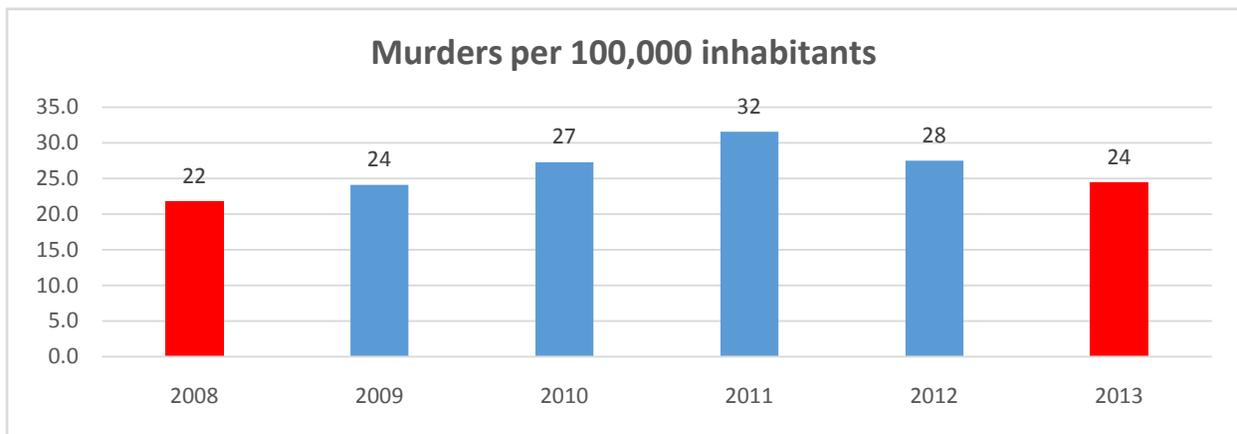
## Celebratory Gunfire

Celebratory gunfire has been a historic problem for Puerto Ricans on New Year's Eve. In 2013, we launched an aggressive campaign against it. The campaign was very successful. For the first time in more than ten years there were zero injuries and zero deaths due to celebratory gunfire.

<i>Year</i>	<b>Injuries</b>	<b>Deaths</b>
<i>2002</i>	10	1
<i>2003</i>	22	1
<i>2004</i>	8	0
<i>2005</i>	2	0
<i>2006</i>	1	0
<i>2007</i>	3	0
<i>2008</i>	1	0
<i>2009</i>	3	0
<i>2010</i>	2	1
<i>2011</i>	3	1
<i>2012</i>	3	0
<i>2013</i>	0	0

## Discounting Demographic Change

The reduction of the murder rate and other types of Class I Felonies coincides, but is not due to Puerto Rico's population drop. When criminal incidence is measured per 100,000 inhabitants, one finds that Class 1 felonies are at their lowest point since 1961. Likewise, murders are at their lowest point since 2009.



## Collaboration with the Federal Government

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with the Federal Government in July has benefitted Puerto Rico. Under the MOU, the Federal Government assumes jurisdiction over certain Class 1 Felonies in nine of the island's 13 regions. It would be wrong and unfair to our police officers, prosecutors and judges to assert, however, that the progress achieved in the fight against crime is limited to the areas covered by the federal government. Class 1 Felonies dropped 8.3% in the regions under the Federal Government's partial jurisdiction. On the other hand, Class 1 Felonies dropped 9.1% in the four regions under the Commonwealth's exclusive jurisdiction.

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<b>US</b>	<b>PR</b>
<i>Class I Felonies</i>	-8.3%	-9.1%

## Drug Seizure

To a great extent, the root of our security problem lies in drug trafficking. During the past few years, Puerto Rico has become the main bridge for drug trafficking between Latin America and the United States. We have been aware from day one that in order to halt the increasing crime rate we had to intercept drug shipments and traffickers, and create the conditions to deter them from using Puerto Rico as a transshipment port. We activated the National Guard to patrol our coasts, assigned greater resources to our rapid response unit, and partnered with the Drug Enforcement Agency to intercept shipments in our main airports.

We have increased our seizures across the board. Among the total amount of drugs seized, there are 4,000 kg of cocaine; 900 kg of marihuana; 32,000 crack capsules; and almost 1,250 kg of heroine. To the extent that we demonstrate that Puerto Rico captures and punishes drug trafficking, the enemies of peace will be dissuaded from doing business in Puerto Rico.

## CLASS 1 FELONIES 1960-2013

AÑOS	TOTAL	OFFENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	MUDERS	RAPE	BATTERY	AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	OFFENCE AGAINST PROPERTY	BURGLARY	ILLEGAL APPROPRIATION	CAR THEFT	POPULATION	CLASS 1 FELONIES/100,000 INHABITANTS	MURDERS/100,000 INHABITANTS
1960	33,272	6,442	168	313	531	5,430	26,830	10,692	14,013	2,125	2,349,544	1,416	7.2
1961	37,982	9,725	171	375	513	8,666	28,257	12,056	14,131	2,070	2,385,793	1,592	7.2
1962	47,514	13,066	215	293	795	11,763	34,448	14,371	17,195	2,882	2,422,042	1,962	8.9
1963	54,159	13,833	216	326	894	12,397	40,326	16,768	19,501	4,057	2,458,291	2,203	8.8
1964	56,746	14,835	237	339	1,170	13,089	41,911	17,028	20,490	4,393	2,494,540	2,275	9.5
1965	57,117	14,511	209	366	1,353	12,583	42,606	17,623	19,581	5,402	2,530,789	2,257	8.3
1966	60,013	15,003	202	432	1,774	12,595	45,010	19,164	20,028	5,818	2,567,038	2,338	7.9
1967	60,735	14,185	185	484	1,393	12,123	46,550	18,189	22,901	5,460	2,603,287	2,333	7.1
1968	65,616	14,955	205	507	1,478	12,765	50,661	20,663	21,548	8,450	2,639,536	2,486	7.8
1969	61,480	13,650	183	534	1,634	11,299	47,830	19,894	20,853	7,083	2,675,785	2,298	6.8
1970	66,470	14,327	192	607	2,061	11,467	52,143	23,100	22,564	6,479	2,712,033	2,451	7.1
1971	70,438	15,749	283	551	2,900	12,015	54,689	24,914	21,908	7,867	2,760,482	2,552	10.3
1972	70,423	15,355	319	629	2,536	11,871	55,068	22,711	21,695	10,662	2,808,931	2,507	11.4
1973	72,363	15,640	421	667	3,549	11,003	56,723	23,030	20,896	12,797	2,857,380	2,532	14.7
1974	82,293	15,429	519	681	5,013	9,216	66,864	31,598	22,245	13,021	2,905,829	2,832	17.9
1975	88,095	16,606	499	695	5,391	10,021	71,489	35,062	25,209	11,218	2,954,278	2,982	16.9
1976	86,079	16,597	444	647	5,453	10,053	69,482	31,653	27,703	10,126	3,002,727	2,867	14.8
1977	81,544	16,835	467	792	5,636	9,467	64,709	30,151	25,344	9,214	3,051,176	2,673	15.3
1978	79,343	15,150	485	684	5,785	8,196	64,193	28,239	25,965	9,989	3,099,625	2,560	15.6
1979	80,181	15,355	476	674	6,192	8,013	64,826	26,712	26,841	11,273	3,148,074	2,547	15.1
1980	92,180	16,853	472	569	8,286	7,526	75,327	35,817	28,565	10,945	3,196,520	2,884	14.8
1981	96,640	16,321	522	463	8,510	6,826	80,319	37,648	30,323	12,348	3,229,072	2,993	16.2
1982	96,738	15,167	485	473	7,929	6,280	81,571	35,582	32,736	13,253	3,261,624	2,966	14.9
1983	92,252	15,559	421	453	7,905	6,780	76,693	32,527	30,729	13,437	3,294,176	2,800	12.8
1984	102,525	17,410	483	457	8,559	7,911	85,115	35,914	33,210	15,991	3,326,728	3,082	14.5
1985	116,432	22,452	572	415	12,925	8,540	93,980	40,745	34,212	19,023	3,359,280	3,466	17.0
1986	119,522	26,097	719	436	16,545	8,397	93,425	39,161	32,706	21,558	3,391,832	3,524	21.2
1987	110,018	23,616	509	496	14,500	8,111	86,402	35,546	32,567	18,289	3,424,384	3,213	14.9
1988	111,947	22,526	596	452	12,903	8,575	89,421	36,227	34,692	18,502	3,456,936	3,238	17.2
1989	110,027	21,853	467	509	13,230	7,647	88,174	33,721	37,979	16,474	3,489,488	3,153	13.4
1990	124,371	29,912	600	426	20,923	7,963	94,459	34,781	39,795	19,883	3,522,037	3,531	17.0
1991	119,731	28,145	817	424	20,003	6,901	91,586	33,649	38,916	19,021	3,550,694	3,372	23.0
1992	128,874	32,286	864	433	24,242	6,747	96,588	35,415	42,315	18,858	3,579,351	3,600	24.1
1993	121,035	26,342	954	401	18,181	6,806	94,693	33,636	43,468	17,589	3,608,008	3,355	26.4
1994	116,263	25,400	995	396	17,625	6,384	90,863	31,160	42,062	17,641	3,636,665	3,197	27.4
1995	106,088	22,450	864	324	15,753	5,509	83,638	27,689	39,960	15,989	3,665,322	2,894	23.6
1996	99,788	20,147	868	316	13,900	5,063	79,641	27,866	35,652	16,123	3,693,979	2,701	23.5
1997	94,876	19,596	724	278	13,642	4,952	75,280	26,942	32,715	15,623	3,722,636	2,549	19.4
1998	87,020	16,439	652	243	11,448	4,096	70,581	24,512	30,493	15,576	3,751,293	2,320	17.4
1999	81,880	14,206	593	223	9,827	3,563	67,674	23,033	30,206	14,435	3,779,950	2,166	15.7
2000	75,379	12,406	695	228	8,757	2,726	62,973	21,057	28,940	12,976	3,808,610	1,979	18.2
2001	70,120	11,406	747	187	7,999	2,473	58,714	19,931	26,140	12,643	3,800,328	1,845	19.7
2002	90,790	13,478	781	241	8,978	3,478	77,312	24,737	39,640	12,935	3,792,046	2,394	20.6
2003	81,788	11,893	787	204	7,737	3,165	69,895	20,857	36,827	12,211	3,783,764	2,162	20.8
2004	70,418	10,062	797	199	6,036	3,030	60,356	18,333	31,889	10,134	3,775,482	1,865	21.1
2005	65,050	9,584	771	169	5,550	3,094	55,466	17,191	28,976	9,299	3,767,200	1,727	20.5
2006	62,135	8,938	748	118	5,245	2,827	53,197	16,668	27,936	8,593	3,758,918	1,653	19.9
2007	62,882	8,945	731	97	5,134	2,983	53,937	17,160	28,955	7,822	3,750,636	1,677	19.5
2008	68,746	9,492	815	95	5,467	3,115	59,254	19,138	33,113	7,003	3,742,354	1,837	21.8
2009	66,429	10,492	901	65	6,093	3,440	55,937	18,521	30,584	6,832	3,734,072	1,779	24.1
2010	62,269	10,396	1,017	39	6,590	2,750	51,873	17,880	27,182	6,811	3,725,789	1,671	27.3
2011	62,279	10,562	1,164	45	6,465	2,888	51,717	16,591	29,273	5,853	3,688,888	1,688	31.6
2012	62,612	10,123	1,005	26	6,353	2,739	52,489	15,492	31,142	5,855	3,651,987	1,714	27.5
2013	58,383	9,423	883	23	6,048	2,469	48,960	14,014	29,483	5,463	3,615,086	1,615	24.4

Table prepared at the Office of the Secretary of Public Affairs, Governor's Mansion, La Fortaleza.

**Sources:**

Statistics from 1960-2011: "DELITOS TIPO I AÑO 1960 AL 20 DE AGOSTO DE 2013," Centro de Análisis y Monitoreo de la Superintendencia Auxiliar en Operaciones Estratégicas de la Policía de Puerto Rico

Statistics from 2012 and 2013: "Incidencia Global del 1ro de enero a 31 de diciembre de 2013," Centro de Análisis y Monitoreo de la Superintendencia Auxiliar en Operaciones Estratégicas de la Policía de Puerto Rico.