

# GRA STATEMENT

## Alarm over Garda ICT and training cuts as report shows weakness in DNA management

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The Garda Representative Association has expressed alarm at reports that training and ICT budgets will be cut to pay for last month's visit of President Donald Trump, following an internal Garda report showing failings in the management of DNA testing.

The Garda Professional Standards Unit identified a number of issues in how the National Forensic Coordination Office (NFCO) manages and monitors the recording of DNA material.

It found current staffing levels within the section are inadequate and that a quarter of gardaí are taking DNA samples without being properly trained.

The estimated cost of the Trump visit is €10 – €12 million; and further additional costs will arise if US Vice President Mike Pence visits in September, as reported.

GRA General Secretary Pat Ennis said: "DNA profiling is one of the most powerful techniques in the identification of offenders and missing persons. It is an essential tool in crime investigation.

"This is the Garda Síochána's own internal report highlighting under investment in training, ICT, staffing and facilities.

"We have been warning about this for years, yet now we see reports that the budget in these areas could be cut to pay for the visit of President Donald Trump and presumably Vice President Mike Pence, if he comes.

"Irish people will be rightly annoyed if cases are not being detected or prosecuted due to the inadequate management of DNA testing. But to then hear that the cost of policing President Donald Trump's visit could prevent these systems weaknesses being addressed will cause a justifiable public outcry.

"The GRA and others have already made the case that placing volumes of training material on the Garda portal without an adequate and corresponding classroom-based programme is not the way to deliver training.

"This should be a wake-up call for government that it needs to put money into training and ICT not cut it. The visit of President Trump will have to be paid for from some other source - not the Garda Síochána's budget."

**ENDS**