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# Gardai set to up protest ante

Garda representative associations look set to up the ante in their fight against pay cuts following remarks made by the justice minister, who accused them of doing a disservice to their members by holding protests.

The fallout from Alan Shatter's speech at the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) annual conference continued yesterday as representatives of Garda middle management said their members were extremely angry with what he said.

Assistant general secretary Joe Jacob said his members were upset with the tone of Mr Shatter's speech on Monday night, which he described as "condescending and disingenuous".

"I did feel the minister was disingenuous telling us as an association that we didn't have the right to protest," said Mr Jacob.

"We will continue to protest. Delegates here are very angry and inclined to look at further action which won't impact on our service to the public."

Meanwhile, the president of the Garda Representative Association, John Parker, accused Mr Shatter of "showing a total disconnect from reality".

"He showed an intransigence which is inexcusable and an arrogance we have come to expect from him."

He said the minister had "abused his invitation" to speak at the conference and had treated AGSI members "like national school children who were

being chastised".

Mr Parker said more protests were planned by his members and threatened that his organisation would "incrementally increase" the measures they were taking in the fight against cuts to pay and resources.

Mr Shatter got the silent treatment from AGSI delegates after his address. However, they treated **Garda Commissioner** Martin Callinan to a round of applause after he addressed them yesterday evening.

Mr Callinan watched a six-minute video showing the pressures some **AGSI** members were already experiencing and said he was "aware of the pain, hardship, anger, and frustration" being experienced by the force's middle management.

He also agreed to a question and answer session with delegates, which was held in private.

Mr Callinan said he experienced difficult times "in the 1980s when things were tough and it was difficult to make ends meet".

However, he pointed out that he expected gardai of all

ranks to continue to do their duty and warned their representative organisations not to do anything to jeopardise the force.

Mr Callinan criticised four AGSI delegates from the Carlow/Kilkenny division who walked out as he began his speech. They did the same the previous evening to Mr Shatter.

They had been mandated to do so by their area's 42 sergeants and inspectors.

He said he did not expect such behaviour from gardai of those ranks, adding that showing such "disrespect to the minister or commissioner of the day was not on".

**SEAN  
O'RIORDAN**





**Delegates at the AGSI conference in the Clarion Hotel in Sligo yesterday.**



## FURY AS FOUR STORM OUT OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**GARDA Commissioner** Martin Callinan reacted furiously last night after four delegates at the annual conference of the AGSI walked out when he began to address them. The four were the same gardai, of sergeant and inspector rank, who mounted a similar protest when

Justice Minister Alan Shatter addressed the conference in Sligo on Monday.

The officers carried out their protests, they said, after they were mandated to by the Carlow-Kilkenny branch of **AGSI**, where they are all based.

Speaking after he addressed the 150 delegates who stayed, the Commissioner said: "It is regrettable that has happened."

"Not for a moment do I condone that, nor do I expect it from a member of sergeant or inspector rank. "That should not have happened."



● Alan Shatter





# Callinan's anger at officers' walkout in front of Shatter

**GARDA commissioner** Martin Callinan has told gardai that showing "disrespect" to himself or Justice Minister Alan Shatter is "not on".

The commissioner made his comments after four garda supervisors walked out of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) conference as he was about to speak.

Last night's action followed a similar move made by members on Monday as Mr Shatter was about to make his address.

"Not for a moment do I condone that - nor do I expect that from inspector rank or sergeant rank in An Garda Síochána," the commissioner said on Morning Ireland earlier today.

"That shouldn't have happened - it was inappropriate."

When asked if he will take further action, he said: "I will take a look at that in the cold light of day."

## HANDGUN

"These are emotive times. But showing disrespect to the minister of the day or to the commissioner of the day is not on as far as I'm concerned and I don't expect it."

The commissioner also hit out at the suggestion that he was supporting Government policy only, and not supporting members of the gardai.

"Well I disagree with that."

"I certainly lead from the front and I do so every day in a whole variety of ways."

"The station closure programme is part of suite of changes that are made within An Garda Síochána that we have had to make necessarily with shrinking human resources and financial resources," he said.

The commissioner pointed to the upcoming promotion of 82 gardai to sergeant rank, and to 44 inspectors coming on stream. Mr Callinan also revealed that they are looking at permanently arming the Regional Response Unit.

"It will be a major change if

it happens certainly but it's time to start looking at the environment and of course this is a constant policing change.

"It's an unescapable fact that ... there is always a demand for an armed unit."

Separately, the conference heard that murdered Detective Adrian Donohoe might have survived his confrontation with a credit union hold-up gang if he had been armed with an Uzi submachine gun.

AGSI delegates unanimously backed a demand for the return of the Israeli weapon which had been in use in the force for more than 40 years before its withdrawal two years ago.

Det Garda Donohoe was ambushed by raiders as he was sitting in an unmarked patrol car escorting cash from the Lordship Credit Union, outside Dundalk, in January.

He had stepped out of the vehicle to investigate why the exit to the car park had been blocked by a car, when members of the gang jumped over a wall and opened fire.

At the time he was armed with a handgun, which has replaced the Uzi since a review by the garda authorities.

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By Jane Last



**ANGRY: Commissioner Martin Callinan**



# Gardaí clash with Shatter over cuts

A war of words has broken out between the minister for justice and Garda representative associations over pay cuts and resourcing.

The Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI), which represents more than 2,000 members of the force's middle management, accused Alan Shatter of "lies" for not fulfilling a promise to keep gardaí informed about the second round of station closures.

AGSI national executive member Larry Brady, speaking at the organisation's 35th annual conference in Sligo last night, issued a veiled threat of increased garda action by referring to an incident in 1961.

A meeting was held that year in the Macushla ballroom in Dublin where members of the force "stood up to the conditions they were being forced to work in" and "were sacked for believing that they were human beings and entitled to a fair day's pay, for a fair day's work", Mr Brady said.

He said today's members had seen their pay packets reduced by 20%, couldn't tolerate more cuts, and were now "at a crossroads".

"This is about survival, survival for themselves and their families. Enough is enough. I stand here prepared to fight any more cuts to my pay packet and those of my colleagues.

"You and your Government colleagues have decided that I and my colleagues must pay for other people's wrongdoing. This is the Ireland we live in today.

"The middle and working class people bail the rich out of the mess they made of our country. These people take no responsibility and walk around protected by the few. They have vast pensions from many sources all provided by Government and they are the untouchables of our modern Irish society," he told Mr Shatter.

Mr Brady claimed that on Mar 29 last, the minister had promised to keep AGSI updated about further station closures. But he said the AGSI appeared on Twitter before his organisation were formally informed.

Mr Shatter said he thought the use of the word 'liar' by the AGSI was unfortunate. He criticised AGSI and the GRA, which represents rank-and-file members of the force, for "having lost their way" and not looking after their members' interests by withdrawing from pay talks.

Mr Shatter said he intended to recruit more gardaí this year to ensure the force didn't fall below 13,000.

The minister's speech was greeted with silence from AGSI members. He maintained this wasn't unusual and that previous ministers had suffered similar fates.

**SEAN  
O'RIORDAN**



# Shatter greeted by gardai with 'wall of silence'

By Niall O'Connor

JUSTICE Minister Alan Shatter was met by a wall of silence when he arrived for the annual conference of garda sergeants and inspectors.

Officers conveyed their fury at stringent cuts to the force by sitting in absolute quiet as the minister entered the room for a keynote speech.

But the frosty reception didn't stop Mr Shatter from defending his record - and accusing some officers of abusing their positions.

The Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) has accused the minister of overseeing station closures, fleet depletions and increased workloads for officers which it says is significantly damaging morale.

## CURIOSITY

But the Fine Gael minister accused some officers of using the force's Pulse system like a 'social network'.

Mr Shatter was referring to the scandal surrounding the alleged removal of penalty points from driving licences.

He accused some gardai of accessing the Pulse system in order to satisfy their curiosity.

"The system is a crucial tool, but it should in no circumstances be used as some sort of social network to be accessed out of curiosity in circumstances in which such access has no real connection with their duties or work in which they are engaged," Mr Shatter told the conference.

The Justice Minister defended his record on several occasions during the speech in Co Sligo last night.

He said "things would be a hell of a lot worse for the force" had he not secured an additional €90m in funding.

"I would have had €90m less a year available to me for An Garda Síochána for each of the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 but fortunately we succeeded in having the figures recalibrated and these sums restored," he said.

"I have no hesitation in saying that

things would be a hell of a lot worse for the force if I had not secured the additional funding and the Commissioner was forced to operate with an average of €90m per annum less than he has."

## STATION

On the issue of station closures, Mr Shatter pointed to the fact that Stepaside Garda Station in his own constituency was recently shut.

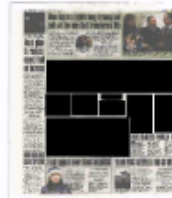
This, he said, "must surely support my contention that the public interest, and not any individual interest, must be paramount".

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QUIET PLEASE: Alan Shatter and AGSI General Secretary John Redmond





# GARDAI BRAND SHATTER A LIAR

## Minister says the leaders of Garda bodies lost their way

■ By MICHAEL O'TOOLE  
 Crime Correspondent  
 at the AGSI conference

**RELATIONS** between a Garda body and Justice Minister Alan Shatter reached a new low last night — with the two sides throwing insults at each other in public.

Mr Shatter was labelled a liar at the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) annual conference — while the minister accused the Garda bodies of losing their way.

*Mr Shatter was greeted with a silent protest by members at the Sligo conference when he took to the podium to make his speech yesterday evening.*

Four members from Carlow-Kilkenny staged a walk-out when the minister started speaking.

Despite the anger of members — who say they have had a 20 per cent reduction in their take-home pay in the last three years — the minister was in no mood for reconciliation.

### Pickets

He rounded on members of the AGSI and the Garda Representative Association, which caters for rank and file members, and accused their leaders of having lost their way.

Mr Shatter said: "Just last week, members of both the GRA and AGSI conducted a protest outside Leinster House.

"I believe both bodies have lost their way, lost sight of the specific purposes for which they were formed and seem to be under the belief that by presenting themselves as some sort of protest movement, they are acting in the interest of members.

"I believe the approach taken is a disservice to members of the Force."

AGSI president Tim Galvin then accused the minister of being a liar.

Mr Galvin was referring to the decision to **close** almost 100 **stations** last month — and said members were not consulted.

*"You told us the lack of consultation in relation to the first series of closures would not be repeated and that we would be updated and kept informed."*

"Twelve months on and nothing has changed... Your words were lies," Mr Galvin added.



**GREAT DIVIDE:** Mr Shatter and AGSI General Secretary John Redmond at yesterday's conference in Sligo.



# Walkout as Shatter accuses garda groups of doing force 'disservice'

■ Anger at  
AGSI conference  
■ Minister is  
accused of lying

Tom Brady  
Security Editor

**JUSTICE Minister Alan Shatter sparked fury by telling the main garda representative bodies that their approach on the latest Croke Park talks was a "disservice" to members of the force.**

In a hard-hitting assessment of their decision to walk out of the talks on pay and allowances, he told the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) and the Garda Representative Association (GRA) they had lost sight of their original purpose.

"I have to say to you, quite frankly, it would have been much better if your representatives had been at the negotiating table during the recent pay talks," he told delegates at the AGSI annual conference in Sligo last night. "I believe the approach taken is a disservice to members of the force."

Four delegates, from the Carlow-Kilkenny branch, walked out as Mr Shatter began his address and the rest greeted his comments with stony silence.

An AGSI leader had earlier accused Mr Shatter of telling lies about station closures.

But Mr Shatter was not concerned by the reception he received. He said there were very few ministers for justice who had not been given the silent treatment by one or both of the associations.

Mr Shatter said he was delighted to be invited to address the conference and had been met with courtesy and he appreciated that. But it was also important that the gardai should be informed about the economic reality, he said.

Mr Shatter said the public pay and pensions bill could not be insulated from cuts in the current economic climate.

He rejected claims the garda associations had been sidelined and could have played no meaningful part in discussions.

Mr Shatter also pointed out that the Prison Officers' Association had been successful in renegotiating the original proposals to the benefit of its members.

## Promotion

He told the conference he had secured a partial lifting of the ban on promotion to permit the immediate appointment of 82 new sergeants and 34 inspectors from the current panels.

He also hoped to shortly conclude a more general agreement on the strength in those ranks.

Earlier, President Tim Galvin had claimed Mr Shatter had told "lies" over stations closures. He said Mr Shatter had promised the gardai last year they would be consulted and kept informed about plans for more shutdowns.

"Your words were lies," he said. "Twelve months on and nothing has changed. One hundred stations were earmarked since then and despite numerous requests to garda management and to you, we found out what stations were closing from an internal garda system while you stood in the Dail making the announcement."

He said the closure of stations had destroyed the bedrock of the garda organisation, which was the ability of people to live and work in their communities.

Mr Galvin, whose speech was delivered by national executive

member Larry Brady as he was unable to attend the conference, said the local garda was a vital link between the organisation and the public it served.

Mr Galvin also claimed there were no deterrents to attacks on gardai and other frontline service members and there seemed to be carte blanche acceptance they could be assaulted.

He cited attacks on gardai including the fatal shooting of Detective Garda Adrian Donohoe and a young garda slashed in the face in Tallaght. He said morale in the garda force was at an all-time low.

Asked afterwards about the accusation that he had told lies about station closures, Mr Shatter said it was unfortunate that the remark had been made.

He said he had made it clear in talks last October that it would not be physically possible to consult individual gardai about proposed station closures in their areas.

Mr Shatter also said he would shortly receive the report from the garda authorities on the investigation into allegations about penalty points being waived by garda officers, and promised that the findings would be published.



Publication: Irish Independent

Date: Tuesday, March 26, 2013

Page: 4

Extract: 2 of 2

Circulation: 123.981

Author: Tom Brady, Security Editor

Headline: Walkout as Shatter accuses garda groups of doing force 'disservice'



Justice Minister Alan Shatter and AGSI General Secretary John Redmond at the annual conference in Sligo. BRIAN FARRELL



# Gardai want machinegun returned to detectives

Tom Brady

**GARDA supervisors are demanding the return of the Uzi sub-machinegun for use by detectives.**

The Israeli-made weapon had been deployed by sections of the force since 1967.

But it was withdrawn from use over the past few years following a review of firearms by the authorities and has been replaced by a handgun.

However, the move has not been universally welcomed within the force and a group of officers has been lobbying for its return.

The annual conference of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors, which gets under way in Sligo this evening, will debate a call on Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan to "immediately reissue the Uzi sub-machinegun to detective branch personnel".

Some senior officers argue that the Uzi was not the most suitable weapon for an urban environment and say that its replacement in the Special Branch and district detective units, the Sig semi-automatic handgun, is a much better weapon for garda use.

However, opponents say gardai on escort duty felt more secure with an Uzi lying on their lap in a patrol car rather than having to draw a handgun from their hip.

The emergency response unit and the regional response units are now all armed with Heckler and Koch MP7s, a more modern sub-machinegun, which is capable of firing ammunition that can penetrate body armour.

Meanwhile, delegates are expected to give a hostile reception to Justice Minister Alan Shatter when he arrives to address the conference this evening.

A number of association branches were not in favour of inviting the minister this year.

Some delegates may decide to protest as he arrives.

The conference agenda focuses mainly on the ongoing protests over proposed cuts to garda wage packets.



An Uzi sub-machinegun





## AGSI members to vent anger over pay cut plan at conference

by Cormac O'Keeffe

Cuts to pay and allowances will dominate the agenda for middle-ranking gardai as they begin their three-day annual conference today.

Delegates attending the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors conference will be in grim mood as they debate what strategy to adopt in relation to the Croke Park II agreement.

More than a third of the 27 motions to be debated at the conference in Sligo relate to pay and conditions.

"The depth of feeling surrounding proposed pay cuts to our members will be palpable during our 35th annual delegate conference," said John Redmond, general secretary of the AGSI.

Mr Redmond said members will eagerly await the address from Justice Minister Alan Shatter later today and Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan tomorrow afternoon.

"We sincerely hope they alleviate some of that anxiety," said Mr Redmond.

Two motions from Cork — Cork West and Cork City — call on the AGSI executive "not to engage" with Garda management if pay cuts are being implemented.

The Clare branch calls on the executive to reject the agreement, while Dublin North Central demands the executive point out to Mr Shatter and the commissioner the "detrimental and damaging effect" the cuts will have on the welfare and morale of members.

Elsewhere, the Donegal branch is calling for the Uzi submachine gun, removed from the force last year, to be reissued to detectives.

The Sligo branch is demanding that all members engaged in plain-clothes duties in unmarked vehicles be armed.