



## **History of the Residência Segura (Safe Residence Program) - Loulé**

### **Background**

The SRP was launched in Alfeicao, Loulé in January 2010 following a number of violent indoor residential robberies targeted mainly against foreign householders in this area. The idea arose from discussions held between village residents and the GNR on how best to respond to this rise in crime through closer engagement between the community and the GNR.

Following these discussions the GNR in Loulé took the initiative to form a dedicated team with English speaking personnel exclusively to develop the program. This was approved by Coronel Francisco Matos Sousa Commander of the GNR Faro District at the time. Despite limited resources this was accorded a high priority with officers specially selected for this role. One of the first actions taken by the team was to visit residents in the area in order to promote closer engagement and provide a direct contact number in case assistance was required.

The aim of the Program was to provide a faster means of response to emergencies by the GNR through using maps, GPS coordinates and through the numbering of households in the villages concerned.

Residents in other villages also volunteered their services, and within the first few months of operation, other villages including Vale de Telheiro, Poco Geraldo, Cruz Do Assumada and Alfontes had joined the scheme. The SRP in Loulé now covers some 32 villages and over 2300 households are registered.

### **Operation**

The way in which the SRP operates in Loulé is through a village by village or group approach which is aimed at fostering a spirit found in traditional neighbourhood watch schemes. This requires the production of a map, a list of residents and their details together with GPS coordinates. This information is then carried in GNR response vehicles so that they can respond to incidents quickly. Villages so far formed comprise of between 12 – 160 dwellings each.

### **Key milestones**

In January 2014 a celebration was held in Querenca for the 4th Anniversary of the SRP. Some 28 SRP leaders from various villages took part. The event was hosted by Capitão Abel Arcanjo de Sousa Adriano, Commandante do Destacamento Territorial da GNR de Loulé and overall in charge of the SRP which operates in the area. Also participating were the team themselves led by Cabo Dias who took over from Chef Coutinho in August 2012. This was followed by the departure of team member Frederico Sousa Fragosa "Freddie" who has been with the team since its inception. Farewell functions for both Chef Coutinho and Freddie were held and attended by many residents.

## **What the GNR Loulé Say**

Over the last four years monthly meetings are held between Safe Communities Algarve and Captain Adriano and the Safe Residents team. This has resulted in a number of refinements such as the idea of using community gatherings to launch the program in each village. During one of these meetings Captain Adriano introduced the expression "Don't be afraid – be aware" which best captures the spirit of the Safe Residence Program

At the 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting Captain Adriano gave a detailed presentation covering the structure of the GNR Loulé, the history of the SRP which was created in Loulé in January 2010 as well as the aims of the programme in particular in improving response times to emergencies. He explained that the number of households registered with the programme had increased from 2138 to 2291 over the year and that the GNR were now gathering further data as part of a nationwide exercise.

He then illustrated some of the good arrests which had taken place over the last year in particular the arrest of a foreign national wanted in connection with some violent robberies which had occurred earlier. He added that 2013 had been a good year as far as crime was concerned with decreases in overall and property crime. He added that despite this people should not be complacent and encouraged people to be on the lookout for suspicious activities and following crime prevention advice which was readily available on the SCA website.

## **How to join the SRP Loulé**

The best way to join the SRP is to contact the GNR SRP Team and speak to Cabo (Daniel) Dias. From this you can establish whether you may already be part of an existing SRP, living very close to one or if not how to create a group. He is very experienced, speaks excellent English and is very helpful. The contact number is 962093196. Alternatively you can contact the team at [ct.far.dlle.npe@gnr.pt](mailto:ct.far.dlle.npe@gnr.pt). Details of creating an SRP group are also available as a download "Guide to joining the Safe Residence Program" from this section under "My GNR"

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