

THE “RESIDENCIA SEGURA” PROGRAMME - FARO

Operation of Safe Residence Program and Tips on Alarm Systems

This programme, formed on January 12, 2010, had as its main objective to provide the GNR with appropriate tools to better respond to, and combat, the increase in insecurity in which the citizens of the most isolated residences in some zones in the Faro district found themselves due to a surge of violent break-ins at the end of 2009.

This type of crime was characterised by great cruelty in its form of execution and with excessive violence. It began in October 2009, with increasing incidence in the abovementioned areas, based on the fact that these houses were isolated and had the appearance of relative luxury and great wealth contained therein. These are always an attractive target for this kind of criminal. The need to equip teams that would be able to fight and prevent this type of crime is the basis for the “Residência Segura” programme.

The Territorial Detachment of the Faro GNR, together with Olhão and Sao Brás de Alportel, employed 2 military officials for the exclusive introduction and execution of this programme in these areas. By entering into and maintaining regular contact with residents in isolated villas, and by alerting the owners to the possible dangers they could face, the officials are making the residents familiar with the programme and are at the same time able to register all necessary information relative each property making thus an assessment of the individual degree of vulnerability/risk possible. Based on this information, an identifying system can be set up that would enable the GNR to react to alarm calls in an accelerated and more efficient way.

At the moment this work has been completed in the areas of Quinta da Raposeira and Goldra (Concelho de Faro), in Cerro de Mesquita (Concelho de Sao Brás de Alportel) and in Sito do Canal. These are areas with a number of isolated residences. We intend to add other areas in the near future.

Over and above these precautions it is most important to start a neighbourhood watch initiative as it is of course not possible to have a GNR detail standing by the door of every house. We have learned by way of this work that it is extremely important to make people aware of the fact that they are themselves the best vigilantes and alarm systems.

For the benefit of the information platform available to us we would like to take this opportunity to give some advice that can be passed on to your associates with regards the installation of private security systems. We have noticed that there is quite a general lack of valid information on this subject:

- It is important to determine the quality and type of service a private security company offers, especially making sure what is included in the service before becoming a victim of a crime, as the majority of citizens then notice that certain elements are not included in such contracts with private security companies.
- Be aware of the legal implications that the owner of a sound alarm system or an automatic contact system has vis a vis the local authorities. Notify the local authorities (GNR or PSP) of the installation within 5 working days.
- Provide and keep updated sufficient contact and other data (e.g. GPS coordinates) so that in case of an alarm the responsible monitoring company can enter into contact with the authorities by giving all the necessary facts for a rapid and adequate emergency intervention.

By following these and other directives of the “Residência Segura” Programme, particularly maintaining and encouraging vivid neighbourhood vigilance cooperation in matters of safety and by communicating all suspect occurrences immediately to the authorities, it will be possible to create and enjoy a secure environment.

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