

Homicides increase by 10% in a year

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The number of homicides in Scotland rose by 10 per cent last year, new figures have shown.

There were 64 victims in 2016/17, compared to 58 the year before, meaning it's the first increase in seven years.

Sharp instruments such as knives were the most common method of killing, the statistics revealed, accounting for nearly half the incidents last year.

As it stands, three cases remain unsolved from that period.

However, instead of facing up to the hike in victims, justice secretary Michael Matheson chose to compare current data to that of 10 years ago, hailing it as a success for the Scottish Government.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

"Whichever way the SNP wants to spin it, there has been an increase over the past year in homicides in Scotland.

"Instead of messing around with the statistics, Michael Matheson should be outlining to victims' families what he intends to do to stop this increase.

"This rise in killings comes at a time when the SNP has never been softer on crime.

"Instead of confronting dangerous criminals head on, the nationalists want to get rid of jail terms of less than a year.

"Their conference even wants to focus on the legalising of drugs, which is further indication of their skewed priorities.

"The SNP should ditch the false boasting, and start giving hardworking police officers the support they deserve to tackle serious crime."

Notes to editors:

The full Scottish Government publication is here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00525786.pdf>

For more on the story, visit:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-41564973>