



**Press release – 559/07/2020**

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page 1 of 4

## **Corona: 23 per cent reduction in crime**

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**Minister Reul: Less happens when public life is slowed down. This also applies to almost all types of crime**

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**The Ministry of the Interior has issued the following statement:**

Less crime in North Rhine-Westphalia: since the coronavirus pandemic began, the number of crimes has sunk well below the previous year's figures. Between early March and late June of this year there was a total of 365,676 criminal charges. This is 107,954 fewer charges than that same period last year. This is a nearly 23 per cent decrease. "Less happens when public life is slowed down. Fewer criminal charges is a positive development. Even though the numbers are only preliminary, we are able to see some initial trends. This reduction applies to almost all types of crimes," says Minister of the Interior Herbert Reul in a "coronavirus progress report" issued shortly after the first half of 2020. This concerned the development of criminality during the pandemic as well as police dispatches pertaining to violations of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance.

The number of home break-ins decreased by 30 per cent from 7,561 to 5,290. The number of robberies decreased by 26 per cent from 3,819 to 2,821 in that same period. The number of pick-pocketing incidents sank by 39 per cent, from 10,638 to 6,511. Crimes in which the elderly were the victims decreased by 11 per cent, from 13,550 to 12,104.

With regard to domestic violence, there was a 21 per cent decrease between March and June of this year, from 13,230 to 10,479. "We have to be very cautious in our estimates of domestic violence and monitor developments closely. But the assumption is clear: if more people are in close proximity over an extended period of time, there will be more domestic violence.

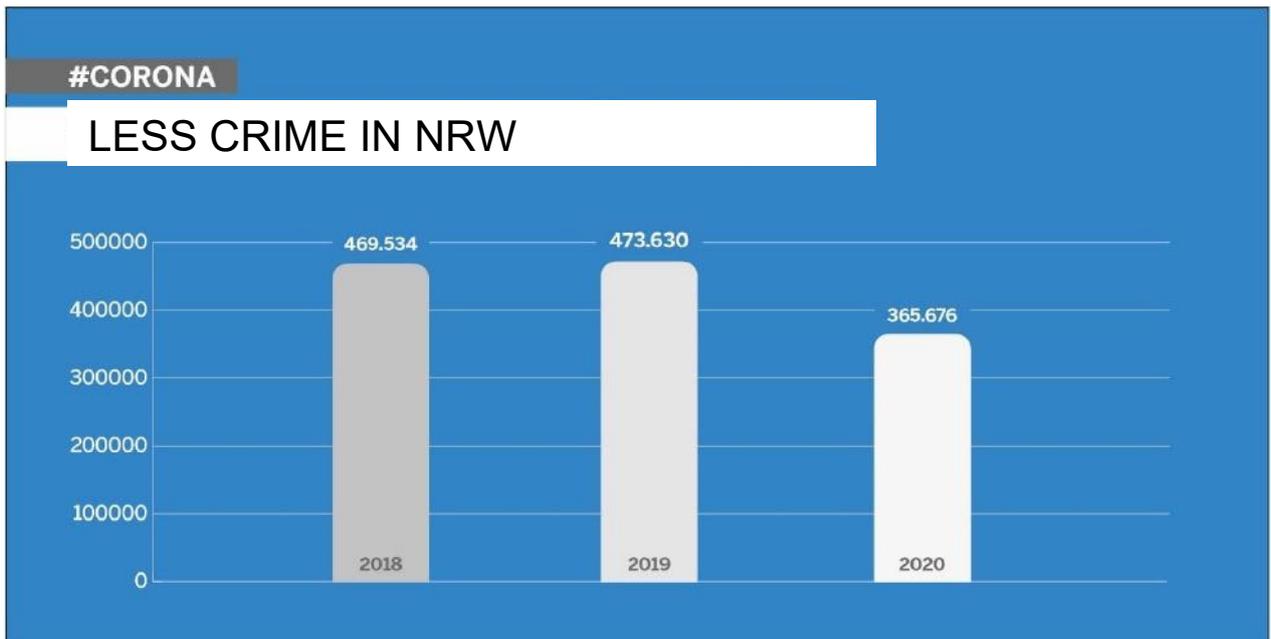
"Yet the numbers have not yet reflected this conclusion. One thing is certain: NRW police are following every lead," says Minister Reul.

There were some changes with regard to fraud and scamming. "There were some cases, especially when the pandemic began, in which fraudsters pretended to be health office employees and tried to sell coronavirus tests. It was the 'grandchild scam' in a white coat," said Reul.

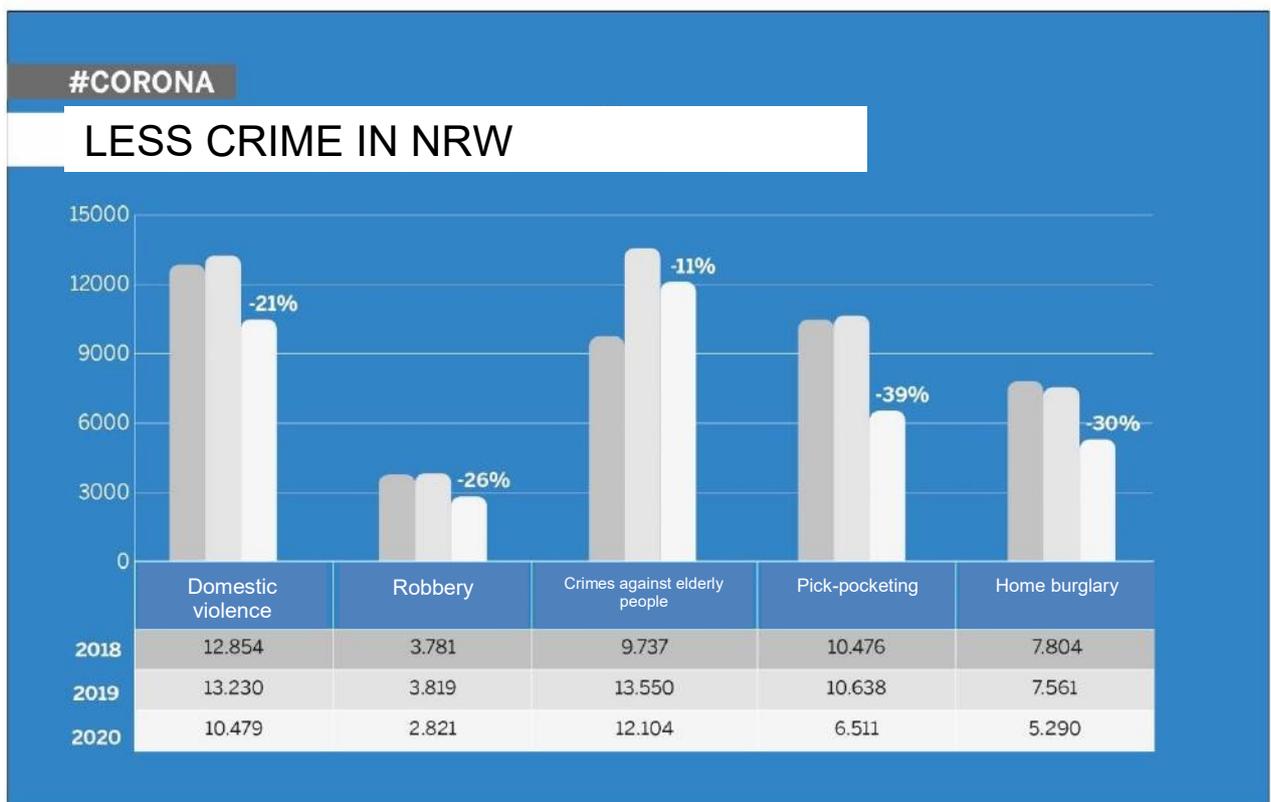
Violations against the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance peaked during the Easter holidays, and most recently over past weekends in the cities. The police reported thousands of violations and identified 50,587 people between 25 March and late June. Among these were 36,837 adults, 11,404 adolescents and 2,346 children. "Most people are acting in an exemplary, disciplined manner. Yet despite the restrictions, there are some who are not following the rules. The urge to get fresh air is understandable, but the pandemic has not ended. There are so many beautiful places in North Rhine-Westphalia and not everyone has to meet up downtown," says Reul.

Minister Reul was impressed by the conduct of football fans during the 'ghost games' of the Bundesliga. Most of these were held without incident. "We were apprehensive about how the fans would react. And we are pleased that the vast majority of them acted properly. Protecting health and enthusiasm for football are certainly not mutually exclusive," said Reul.

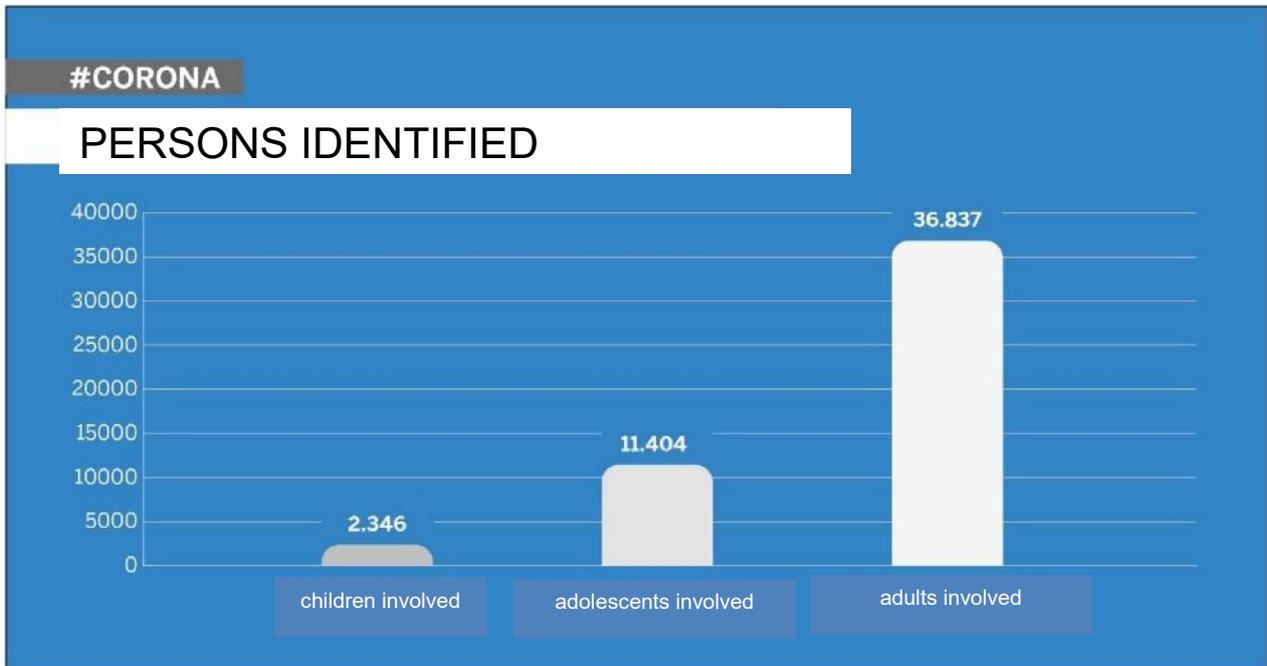
Reul also addressed the gatherings that violated the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance. Right when the pandemic began there were demonstrations in protest against the contact ban. But in May self-promoters, conspiracy theorist ideologues and extremists took advantage of the uncertainty, with some even engaging in criminal acts. Gatherings recently took place due to the restrictions in Gütersloh district. There was a total of more than 850 gatherings in North Rhine-Westphalia from March to June. Almost all of these concerned the restrictions stipulated by the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance.



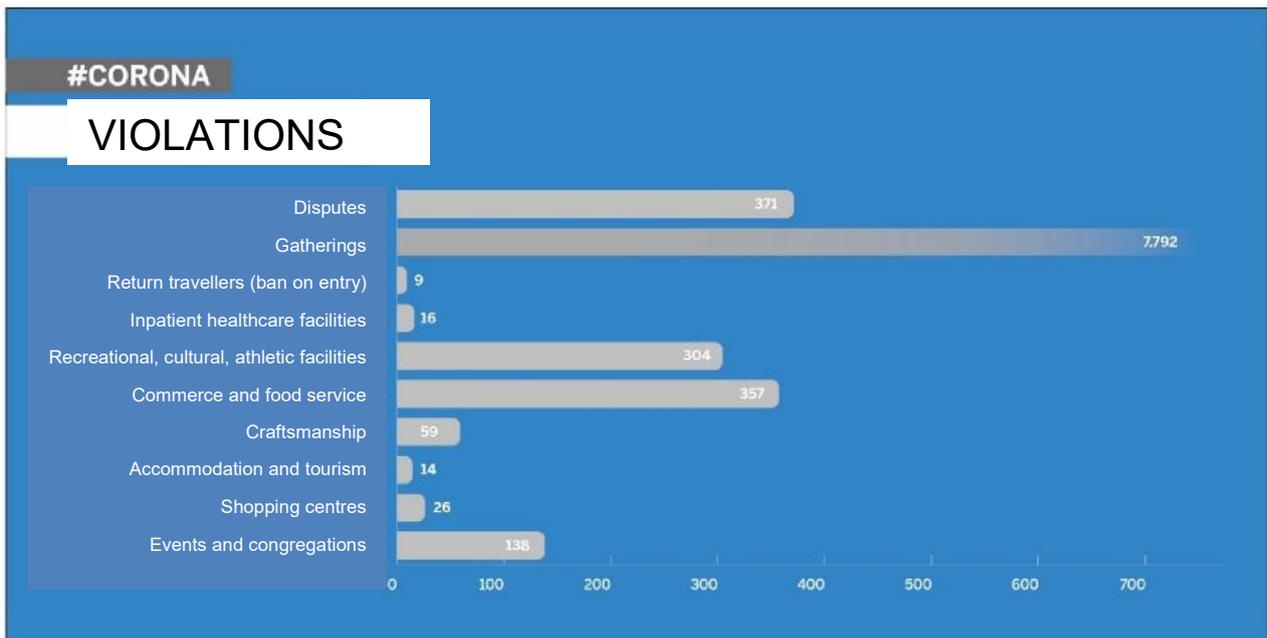
Criminal charges each year from 01/03 to 30/06



Case numbers of select crimes, from 01/03 to 30/06 each year | Source: VIVA/IGVP/FINDUS



Identifications by age group, 25/03. to 30/06/2020



25/03 to 30/06/2020: Identified violations pertaining to the pandemic

**Please send any questions to the press office of the Ministry of the Interior, telephone 0211 871-1111.**

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