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“Our Lawless Roads: Road policing, casualties and driving offences since 2010”

A new report from RoadPeace highlights the increasing human costs of austerity. With the disproportionate cuts in traffic police numbers have come a decrease in the prosecution of the more serious driving offences, and a rise in vulnerable road users killed and seriously injured.

This report updates and, for the first time, fully quantifies the changes in law enforcement on our roads by bringing together data in court prosecutions, fixed penalty notices and diversionary courses, such as the National Speed Awareness Course. The analysis shows that between 2010-15 there was:

- A halt to the long term decline in the number of collisions where people were killed or seriously injured. With numbers of vulnerable road users killed or seriously injured increasing in England and Wales, outside London
- A disproportionate decline in the number of traffic police, down 28%
- A drop in fatal collisions by just 5% whilst prosecutions of causing death by driving offences fell by 23% and convictions by 29%
- A drop in “Fail to stop” prosecutions by 32% , despite an increase in hit and run casualty collisions. Hit and run collisions accounted for one in five casualty collisions in London in 2015
- A drop in drink/drug driving prosecutions by 16%

So, why such a decrease in the detection and prosecution of such serious driving offences? Unfortunately, there is no evidence that increasing compliance by drivers could explain these declines.

- Speeding and its related sanctions rose to over 74% of all driving offence sanctions.
- The proportion of motoring sanctions identified using cameras rose from an estimated 45% to nearly 70%
- Diversionary courses have risen from 16% to 46% of the total.
- But with so many speeding drivers being spared penalty points through NDORS, the deterrent effect is feared reduced.

Our Lawless Roads report also commemorates the announcement of our new RoadPeace Patron, Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb. Baroness Jones is a tireless campaigner on road danger reduction and traffic policing, initially at the London Assembly, including on their Police and Crime Committee where an inquiry into the effectiveness of the Met Police Transport Roads Policing Command was held last year, and now in the House of Lords.

The last six years have seen a turn-around in the numbers of vulnerable road users being seriously injured in England and Wales, but not in London where we were able to invest in roads policing. Following years of steady decline across all road users, we have seen a rise in death and serious injuries among pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists - those who have benefited least from advances in crash protection technology. Vehicles have got safer, while our roads have got more dangerous. So I am honored to become a Patron of RoadPeace where I will continue to press for safer and fairer transport system for all road users.

It should not be so hard to find out what the police are doing to keep us safe on the roads—especially while the government is trying to get us out of our cars and onto our feet and bikes. The desired and needed increase in vulnerable road users should come with an increase in traffic law enforcement, not less.

Amy Aeron-Thomas, RoadPeace Advocacy and Justice Manager

For further information, quotes and case studies please contact:

RoadPeace , **020 7733 1603**, during office hours 9am – 5pm

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RoadPeace

RoadPeace is the national charity for road crash victims; an independent national charity, providing practical information, emotional support and advocacy to those affected by road crashes; as well as campaigning for justice for road crash victims and for road danger reduction policies.

RoadPeace was a winner of the Guardian Charity Award in 2008:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/video/2008/dec/04/guardian-charity-awards-roadpeace>

Campaign for Justice: RoadPeace campaigns for justice for road crash victims through calling for improved investigations, effective inquests, appropriate prosecution and sentencing and fair compensation, and equal rights for crash victims.

Road danger reduction: RoadPeace was founded in 1992 on the principle of road danger reduction (RDR) which places a greater duty of care on those that pose the greater threat, and argues for danger to be controlled at source through reducing the speed, volume and dominance of motorised traffic. RDR differs from traditional road safety by adopting a wider approach that considers not only the quantity of death and injury by crashes but also the other negative consequences of inappropriate and excessive motor vehicle use such as fear and intimidation, environmental impact and public health issues.

Crash not Accident: RoadPeace is calling for an end to a language of neglect and denial and for policy makers and the media to stop using the word 'accident' when referring to road crashes, and to adopt an appropriate, constructive and accurate terminology such as crash or collision:

http://www.roadpeace.org/resources/Crash_not_Accident_May_11_2011.pdf