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Given Name:	█
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Type:	Web
Title of Submission:	Gardaí are a political football
Comments:	<p>I am not a member of the Gardaí and am merely an observer. In recent years, members of the Oireachtas have used the AGS as a political football by making the most outrageous allegations against Gardaí (e.g █ which are then repeated in the media and accepted as fact by the public. As the members are prohibited from responding in real time, it takes a Tribunal of Inquiry or a court case to establish the truth. An example of this is the █ where the investigating Gardaí were castigated by the likes of █ and many many others and when the civil case proved the truth, there was never an acknowledgment by anyone. █ went to great lengths to highlight the complaints that were examined by the IRM but there was never a follow up on the outcome of the investigations. Facts are often sidestepped to produce an alarmist and exaggerated headline. The result of such negative and often unfounded criticism has a detrimental effect on the moral of the force and puts their safety on the streets in jeopardy. The lack of respect for the truth by TDs who describe the force as corrupt etc. make them fair game for those involved in anti-social behaviour resulting in a huge increase in the incidents of violence against members. There should be an independent mechanism put in place whereby the truth could be established quickly instead of waiting months or years for it to come out. Academics and journalists couch their ferocious criticism in terms of the State and forget that behind the uniform is a tortured man/woman who maybe did their very best in terrible circumstances. I also recognise that much reform is needed and much criticism is valid but some is also unfair.</p>