

WARID: United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)
STARDATE: 1 January 1970¹
ENDDATE: 31 December 1994
Related cases: none
Last update: 15 September 2015
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Conflict overview

The entire Irish Island was part of the British Empire until the Anglo-Irish War was fought over the island's independence from 1919 to 1921. The war resulted in 26 counties coming together to form the Irish Free State, gaining autonomy in the British Commonwealth. The six remaining counties in the island's northeast remained fully integrated within Great Britain and obtained a regional government for what was henceforth called Northern Ireland. In 1949, the Irish Free State became the independent Republic of Ireland, while Northern Ireland stayed with Great Britain.

The majority of citizens in Northern Ireland claimed to have English or Scottish ancestors, insisted on the union with Great Britain, and called themselves Unionists or – the more radical among them – Loyalists. A substantial and growing minority identified itself with Irish roots, demanding secession from the United Kingdom and the unification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland; they called themselves Nationalists or – the more radical among them – Republicans. While most Unionists and Loyalists were Protestant, most Nationalists and Republicans were Catholic.

At the end of the 1960s, a civil rights movement protested against the political and economic discrimination of people with Irish roots. When these protests were suppressed by security forces or attacked by Loyalist groups, the clash escalated into an armed conflict of low-intensity characterized by terrorist violence. It passed the threshold of 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year in 1970.

In the Republican segment, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA, better known as the IRA) was the most important paramilitary group. In a proclaimed war of 'national liberation', it attacked the British Army, the police, Unionist and Loyalist organizations and civil-

1 The UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia does not report best estimates for battle-related deaths before 1989 nor figures on fatalities prior to 1975: http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdata/gpcountry.php?id=163®ionSelect=8-Western_Europe# (8 Oct 2014). Thus, we use the Sutton Index to determine the start date and the end date of the war and consider all calendar years with at least 25 people killed. See <http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Year.html> (8 Oct 2014).

ians in Northern Ireland, in other parts of the United Kingdom and even abroad. The IRA mainly received support from parts of the Irish diaspora in the USA and from Libya. The police in Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, was dominated by Unionists and Loyalists. Moreover, there were Unionist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, equipped with weapons from South Africa and other countries (Bloomfield 1997; Coogan 1995; Kandel 2005; MacGinty/Darby 2002; McKittrick/McVea 2012; Wilson 2010).

Using data provided by the Index of Deaths by Malcolm Sutton, the war lasted until 1994, the year the IRA and Loyalist paramilitary organizations declared a ceasefire [**WARDUR=300**]. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), the war ended due to low activity – with less than 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year – and not due to a victory, a ceasefire or a peace agreement [**WARENDUC=5; WARENDOS=5**]. The “Agreement reached in the multi-party negotiations” (1998), better known as the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement, confirmed the ceasefire and added a comprehensive regulation of the political disputes.² The agreement was signed on 10 April 1998; it incorporated basic principles that had been defined 25 years before and led to a brief power-sharing experiment in Northern Ireland in 1974.³

The UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia – which deems that the armed conflict lasted from 1971 to 1991 – reports 800 fatalities for that period [**FATALUC=1000**].⁴ The detailed Sutton Index gives a figure of 3,531 fatalities between 1969 and 2001. From 1970 until the end of 1994, 3,368 people died in the war.⁵ For the same period, the widely recognized compilation by David McKittrick and his co-authors (1999: 1473-1474) report a figure of 3,500 fatalities [**FATALOS=4000**]. In 1969, Northern Ireland had a population of 1.51 million [**PREWARPO=1500000**].⁶ Using rounded UCDP estimates of fatalities, 0.07% of the pre-war-population died due to the armed conflict [**INTENSUC=0.07**]. Using rounded numbers from the Sutton Index, we find that 0.2% of the pre-war population was killed [**INTENSOS=0.27**].

The military balance at the end of the war

The British Army, the police, and Unionist and Loyalist militias did not defeat the IRA; though the IRA did not win its declared war against occupation, either. According to Roger MacGinty and John Darby (2002: 79), “[n]o side held the capacity to win” [**VICTORY=0**].

2 See the chronology of the peace process at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/pp8893.htm> and <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/pp9398.htm> (9 Oct 2014).

3 Joint Declaration on Peace 1993: Para. 4-5, 7, and 9.

4 The UCDP does not provide estimates for the years 1971-1974. Thus, we calculated each of these years with 25 fatalities, the threshold of armed conflict.

5 <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/tables/Year.html> (17 Feb 2015).

6 http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/Historical_Pop_1841_2013.xls (8 Oct 2014).

Cunningham et al. (2009) register no territorial control by the Provisional IRA. Case-specific literature, however, points out that the IRA, especially in parts of Belfast and Derry, established a civilian presence that influenced the social order in Catholic areas (Kandel 2005: 133, 142, 218, 227). However, this kind of control primarily existed in the 1970s and ended during the 1980s, at the latest. Thus, at the end of the conflict, the IRA had lost the major part of its former territory [**REBTERR= -1; MORETERR=n.r.**]. Throughout the years of fighting, the British force, the police, and Unionist and Loyalist militias controlled more of Northern Ireland. This is reflected in the assessment by Cunningham et al. (2009) of the rebel's relative strength as 'low' [**REBFIGHT= -1**].

At the end of 1994, both sides were able to continue fighting with the same intensity as before [**CONFIGHT=0**]. Neither side eliminated or captured its enemy's top political leadership. In February 1991, a grenade assault by the IRA on the British Government at Downing Street No. 10 failed [**LEADER=0**].⁷

In sum, the armed conflict was characterized by a military imbalance to the disadvantage of the IRA [**WARBAL= -0.4**].

The military balance in the post-war period

We lack data on how many Catholics from Northern Ireland served in the United Kingdom's armed forces. Fortunately, information on the more relevant police force is available. In 1994, less than 8% of police officers were Catholics (MacGinty/Darby 2002: 13). By 2007, following efforts for comprehensive police reform, the Catholics' share passed the threshold of 20% (Northern Ireland Policing Board 2007: 120). In 2012, about 30% of police officers were Catholics (Northern Ireland Policing Board 2013: 76-77). Thus, there was substantial participation of the Catholics after 2006 [**STATEFOR 1995-2006= -1, STATEFOR 2007-2012=0**]. Struggles over the decommissioning of the paramilitary groups resulted in several crises in the peace process; institutions of regional self-government that had been established after the Belfast Agreement were likewise suspended. By 26 September 2005, the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IIDC) announced that the IRA had completed its decommissioning. We assume that there were no separate Republican armed force since then, especially since the IRA was the most important Republican paramilitary group – though the splinter groups Continuity IRA and Real IRA did not participate in decommissioning⁸ [**SEPFORCE 1995-2005=0, SEPFORCE 2006-2012= -1**].

7 Kandel 2005: 317.

8 IIDC 2011: 8-12, 57. Loyalist militias decommissioned their arms in 2009.

The British Army reduced its presence in Northern Ireland from 19,500 deployed troops in 1994 to around 10,000 in 2005, and finally to no more than 5,000 since 2007, the year it officially terminated its operation in the region.⁹ In 1994, the Royal Ulster Constabulary had about 8,500 officers.¹⁰ The reformed Police Service of Northern Ireland employed around 7,100 officers in 2012 (Nolan 2013: 64). As the data in the ‘The Military Balance’ yearbooks (IISS 1994/1995-2013) on the paramilitary organization does not cover the entire period, we cannot compare the troop ratio [**TROOPS 1995-2005=n.d.**]. Being that the IRA was decommissioned, the question regarding the relative troop strength has become irrelevant [**TROOPS 2006-2012=n.r.**]. Likewise, we lack data on the paramilitary organizations’ armament and are not able to compare the ratios [**ARMS 1995-2005=n.d., ARMS 2006-2012=n.r.**].

The British Government had control over Northern Ireland during the entire post-conflict period; for several years after 1972, the region was directly ruled by London. When the government under Prime Minister John Major in Westminster Parliament counted on votes from Unionist representatives in 1997, their influence was strong in Northern Ireland as well as in London.¹¹ Nationalist and Republican parties participated in ruling Northern Ireland during the times in which the institutions of regional self-government established by the Belfast Agreement were not suspended [**TERRCON 1995-1999= -1, TERRCON 2000-2002=0, TERRCON 2003-2006= -1, TERRCON 2007-2012=0**]. As the Nationalist and Republican faction did not control territory at the end of the armed conflict, we code a relative win for their inclusion in the regional self-government [**TERRWIN 1995-1999=0, TERRWIN 2000-2002=1, TERRWIN 2003-2006=0, TERRWIN 2007-2012=1**].

For as long as the institutions of self-government were in power, it would be misleading to differentiate between Nationalist and Republican territory, on one hand, and Unionist and Loyalist territory, on the other. We therefore do not assess whose territory was more vulnerable in terms of geographic properties [**VULNERAB 1995-1999= -1, VULNERAB 2000-2002=n.r., VULNERAB 2003-2006= -1, VULNERAB 2007- 2012=n.r.**].

There were no peacekeeping forces from other countries deployed in Northern Ireland [**PEACKEEP 1995-2012=n.r.**].

The United Kingdom is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It was likely that it would have used all necessary means to prevent the collapse of the peace process. Nevertheless, for most of the violent conflict, the government of the United Kingdom was clearly more

9 <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ni/security.htm#03>, Table NI-SEC-03 (4 Nov 2014).

10 <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ni/security.htm#03>, Table NI-SEC-01 (4 Nov 2014).

11 Members of Nationalist and Republican parties as well of the non-aligned Alliance Party were also elected to Westminster Parliament but only had minor influence. The Republicans objected to accepting the mandate.

a party to the conflict than a third party. Other permanent members of the UN Security Council did not voice an intention to intervene through military means [P5ALLY 1995-2012=n.r.]. In sum, the post-war military balance oscillated between parity and the disadvantage of the former rebels [POSTBAL 1995-1999= -0.6, POSTBAL 2000-2002=0, POSTBAL 2003-2005= -0.6, POSTBAL 2006= -0.8, POSTBAL 2007-2012=0].

The combined scores for the military balance at the end of the war and for the post-war years show a similar pattern and vary between a small and a somewhat greater advantage for the government [BALANCE 1995-1999= -0.5, BALANCE 2000-2002= -0.2, BALANCE 2003-2005= -0.5, BALANCE 2006= -0.6, BALANCE 2007-2012= -0.2].

Economy

Though exact data on the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is not available for the entire period, it is safe to say that Northern Ireland had the strongest economy of all the post-civil war societies that experienced the end of a war between 1990 and 2009. Its economy steadily grew until 2007.

Table 1: GDP per capita in current USD

Year	Population ¹²	GDP per capita (approximated) ¹³
1995	1,649,100	16076
1996	1,661,800	16866
1997	1,671,300	18750
1998	1,677,800	19960
1999	1,679,000	20438
2000	1,682,900	20036
2001	1,688,800	19846
2002	1,697,500	21568
2003	1,704,900	24385
2004	1,714,000	29247
2005	1,727,700	30362
2006	1,743,100	32238
2007	1,761,700	36807
2008	1,779,200	34355
2009	1,793,300	28009
2010	1,804,800	28892
2011	1,814,300	30752
2012	1,823,600	30533

12 See http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/Historical_Pop_1841_2013.xls (8 Oct 2014).

13 Data for 1996-2010 suggests that Northern Ireland's GDP per capita varied between 76% and 83% of the GDP per capita for the entire United Kingdom (Murphy 2012: 10-11). In 2011, Northern Ireland's GDP per capita was at 75% of the countrywide level (Eurostat 2014: 4). For the sake of simplicity, we assume that Northern Ireland's GDP per capita was at 79% of the national level on average. Thus, we use the World Bank data for the United Kingdom and multiply the reported numbers by 0.79.

The scale of compromise after the war

Prior to the Belfast Agreement, the government in London ruled Northern Ireland directly. The peace agreement prescribed democratic institutions of self-governance in Northern Ireland and “safeguards to ensure that all sections of the community can participate [...] and [...] are protected”. For that purpose, ministers must be allocated in proportion to the relative strength of parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Northern Ireland Executive is to be led by a First Minister and a Deputy First Minister who are jointly elected by “parallel consent, i.e. a majority of those members present and voting, including a majority of the unionist and nationalist designations present and voting”.¹⁴ The Agreement at St Andrews (2006: Annex A.9) amended the democratic institutions of Northern Ireland without abandoning the power-sharing principle. It demanded that the largest party in the largest designation (i.e. the Unionist, the Nationalist or other sections) nominate the First Minister, and the largest party in the second-largest designation nominate the Deputy First Minister.

The power-sharing arrangement was not implemented in the entire period since the first post-conflict Assembly election in June 1998. The government in London did not transfer power to the democratic institutions of Northern Ireland before December 1999. It suspended self-government in Northern Ireland from 12 February 2000 to 30 May 2000, for two days in 2001, and from 14 October 2002 to 8 May 2007.¹⁵ The British government along with Unionist and Loyalist groups felt more comfortable with such direct rule than the Nationalists and Republicans did [**GOVERN 1995-1999= -1, GOVERN 2000-2002=0, GOVERN 2003-2006= -1, GOVERN 2007-2012=0**].

The Belfast Agreement (1998: Strand One.5) established “arrangements to ensure key decisions are taken on a cross-community basis”, the first of these was “parallel consent”, the second was “a weighted majority (60%) of members present and voting, including at least 40% of each of the nationalist and unionist designations present and voting”. These veto mechanisms were not in force during the suspension of self-government, which was to the disadvantage of the Nationalists and Republicans in Northern Ireland [**VETO 1995-1999= -1, VETO 2000-2002=0, VETO 2003-2006= -1 VETO 2007-2012=0**].

As there were more Protestants than Catholics, they felt less comfortable with the veto-mechanisms that limited the power of the majority (Irwin 2003; Valandro 2004: 45). This, however, is only relevant for the periods when the regional self-government, along with its

14 The Agreement 1998: Strand One.5 and 14-16.

15 See the chronology at <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/northireland1.html> (8 Oct 2014) or Archick 2014: 6-7.

veto-mechanisms, was in place [**VETOSAT 1995-1999=n.r., VETOSAT 2000-2002=1, VETOSAT 2003-2006=n.r., VETOSAT 2007-2012=1**].

The election of the Northern Ireland Assembly in 1982 was the last one prior to the war's termination. In May 1996, voters elected delegates to the ongoing peace talks and to the Northern Ireland Forum. In June 1998, November 2003, March 2007 and May 2011 citizens elected the Northern Ireland Assembly. Moreover, they took part in several elections for the Westminster Parliament. Unionist, Loyalist, Nationalist and Republican parties were allowed to participate in all the elections. All polls were free and fair [**ELECT 1995= -1, ELECT 1996-2012=0**].¹⁶

The maximum demand by the Nationalist and Republican factions was that Northern Ireland secedes from the United Kingdom and unify with the Republic of Ireland. The Unionist and Loyalist factions insisted that Northern Ireland remain in the United Kingdom. The Belfast Agreement states that the British and Irish governments will “recognise the legitimacy of whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland with regard to its status, whether they prefer to continue to support the Union with Great Britain or a sovereign united Ireland”. Until such a referendum takes place, Northern Ireland will remain in the United Kingdom (Agreement 1998: Annex A.1.1). Looking at the demographic structure with a (shrinking) Unionist majority, this arrangement meant that Northern Ireland would likely remain in the United Kingdom for at least the first years. A census in 2011 revealed that the Unionist plurality included only some 10,000 people (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2012: 9). Until the end of 2012, no referendum on the status took place [**EXBORDER 1995-2012= -1; INBORDER 1995-2012=n.r.**].

The Nationalists and Republicans got more than the prospect of a referendum. As described, democratic institutions of self-governance were to be established in Northern Ireland. The power-sharing arrangements for these institutions provided the Nationalists and Republicans with more political influence than they had enjoyed before. We perceive this arrangement as an important concession to the Nationalist and Republican cause; however, Sinn Féin, the major Republican political party, rejected regional self-government even in 1997, as it favored unification with the Republic of Ireland (Kandel 2005: 374). This concession, however, was not implemented during the period of direct rule by London [**COMPETEN 1995-1999= -1, COMPETEN 2000-2002= 1, COMPETEN 2003-2006= -1, COMPETEN 2007-2012=1**].

¹⁶ On all elections, see <http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/> (8 Oct 2014).

As another concession, the Belfast Agreement established three institutions that provided representatives of the Republic of Ireland with a role in matters related to Northern Ireland. The North/South Ministerial Council – comprised of representatives from Northern Ireland and the Irish Government – and was to consult and co-operate “on matters of mutual interest” (The Agreement 1998: Strand Two: 1). The British-Irish Council was mandated “to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples” of the Irish and British islands (The Agreement 1998: Strand Three: British-Irish Council: 1). Finally, the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference recognized the Irish Government’s special interest in Northern Ireland and established meetings on matters that were not under the purview of the regional self-government of Northern Ireland but “on which the Irish Government may put forward views and proposals” (The Agreement 1998: Strand Three: British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference: 5). The two British-Irish institutions replaced the arrangements that had been established by the Anglo-Irish Agreement (Agreement 1985), signed in November 1985. This Agreement had provoked fierce reactions from Unionists and Loyalists (Kandel 2005: 275-278).

The IRA and the party perceived as its political wing, Sinn Féin, declared to fight for a Socialist, unified Irish island (Kandel 2005: 225, 329). The economic system is not, however, commonly considered an important issue of the conflict [**ECONOMY 1995-2012=n.r.**]. A relevant issue was the discrimination of Catholics in the political and economic sphere. Grievances with respect to the election process, housing, and employment were being addressed in the 1970s (MacGinty/Darby 2002: 18). The Belfast Agreement requested equal rights, equal treatment, and freedom from discrimination for all citizens (The Agreement 1998: Constitutional Issues 1i and 1v). For that purpose, it established a new Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission that would review laws and practices and make recommendations to the government. Moreover, the Agreement called for an Equality Commission with a mandate to advise and monitor (The Agreement 1998: Rights, Safeguards, and Equality of Opportunity: para. 5, 6). Until 2012, the Roman Catholic share of the workforce increased to 46.6% (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 2013: 2). The gap between the unemployment rates of Protestants and Catholics drastically narrowed between 1992 and 2011. In 2012, a report by the Northern Ireland Assembly concluded that discrimination ceased to be a significant factor in employment practice¹⁷ [**SPECPRO 1995-2012=1**].

Parades as a means of commemorating historical events have taken place since the 18th century. In the mid-1990s, conflicts over the enactment and the routes of these marches led to

17 For all cited data, see Nolan 2013: 96, 110-111.

outbursts of violence, particularly in Belfast, Derry and Portadown and strained the peace process. While the organizers of the parades (most times Unionists and Loyalists) insisted on their right to assembly and expressing their identity, their opponents (most times Nationalists and Republicans) felt provoked and even menaced by the marches (Review of Parades and Marches in Northern Ireland 1997: Para. 11-14, 19-20). As decisions by local authorities and the police were not consistent, the British Parliament adopted the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act in February 1998 and established the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland that was to facilitate conflict mediation over parades. If mediation failed, the Commission could impose conditions on the marches. The Secretary of State (for Northern Ireland) could even prohibit holding of processions (Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998: Para. 2, 8, 11). The Parades Commission adopted procedural rules and guidelines¹⁸ for holding parades that can be perceived as a procedural compromise [**ISSUE 1995-2012=0; ISSUE2 1995-2012=n.r.**]. For 2011-2012, the Parades Commission counted more than 200 contentious parades and placed restrictions on 73% of them (Parades Commission 2014: 10-11).

Nationalists and Republicans had demanded the dissolution of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (MacGinty/Darby 2002: 50). This did not happen. Instead comprehensive police reform took place. The police was demilitarized, renamed the 'Police Service of Northern Ireland' and obtained a badge showing symbols that all communities could identify with. Additionally, the police was placed under the political supervision of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (Moltmann 2013: 18-19). As described above, Catholic representation in the police improved. To avoid weighing the police reform twice, we will not assign it to a compromise item.

The sequencing of the peace process was another object of conflict. Until June 1996, the British Government demanded that the paramilitary organizations disarm before the political parties affiliated with them be included into peace talks. The paramilitary organizations, by contrast, insisted that substantial negotiations should precede disarmament (MacGinty/Darby 2002: 31-32, 37). As described, the Belfast Agreement was signed prior to the process of decommissioning. Anyhow, conflicts over the peace process itself are not coded in our project [**NEWCON 1995-2012=n.r.; NEWCON2 1995-2012=n.r.; BENEFIT 1995-2012=n.r.; BENEFIT2 1995-2012=n.r.**].

The scale of compromise varied in the post-conflict period according to whether the regional self-governance institutions suspended. During periods of direct rule, the situation was more

18 <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/parade/rules.htm> and <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/parade/guide.htm> (5 Nov 2014).

to the benefit of the government along with the Unionists and Loyalists. In times of self-government, however, the Nationalists and Republicans had a slight advantage [**COMPROM 1995= -0.57, COMPROM 1996-1999=-0.43, COMPROM 2000-2002=0.25, COMPROM 2003-2006= -0.43, COMPROM 2007-2012=0.25**].

Stability of peace

The war terminated in 1994 and did not recur [**SAMEWAR 1995-2012=0; DATESAME=n.r.; PEACMON1=216**]. No other conflict escalated into a war [**ANYWAR 1995-2012=0; DATEANY=n.r.; PEACMON2=216**].

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