

THE IRISH TROUBLES

IN 5 KEY DATES

The Troubles was a guerrilla/nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland during the late 20th century. It is also known as the **Northern Ireland conflict**, it is sometimes described as an "irregular war" or "low-level war". The conflict began in the late 1960s and many said it ended with the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

A key issue was **the state of Northern Ireland**. Unionists/loyalists (most of whom were Protestants) wanted Northern Ireland to remain within the United Kingdom. Irish nationalists/republicans (most of whom were Catholics) wanted Northern Ireland to leave the United Kingdom and join a United Ireland.

More than 3,500 people were killed in the conflict. Of those: 52% were civilians, 32% were members of the British security forces, and 16% were members of paramilitary groups.



1968 : DERRY CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH

The 5th of October 1968 a march for civil rights was organised by local activists, with the support of the **Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association** (NICRA). NICRA had formed in 1967, and drew inspiration from the campaign for equal rights in the US. They demanded an end to **gerrymandering** and **discrimination** and called for "one man, one vote". Their first march in August 1968 sparked after one case, in particular, when a single Protestant woman was allocated a house ahead of Catholic families. In October 1968, their attention turned to the unionist-controlled Londonderry Corporation, and its housing policy. The previous day, **the march was banned** by the Northern Ireland government. It **went ahead, in defiance**.

Officers from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) drew batons and beat marchers. They then used water cannon to disperse the crowd.



1972 : BLOODY SUNDAY

Bloody Sunday—happened on 30 January 1972, in the Bogside area of Derry, Northern Ireland. During this **civil rights protest** against internment, 26 unarmed civil rights protesters and spectators were shot by British soldiers. Thirteen men, most of whom were in their teens and twenties, were killed. Investigations have been held by the British government, and said that the soldiers and British authorities were almost reckless. Critics said **the report made it seem like the British did nothing wrong**. The Saville report (started in 1998, published in 2010) found that all of the people shot were unarmed, and that the killings were "unjustified". The Irish Republican Army's (IRA) war against the partition of Ireland had begun in the two years before the incident, and it helped them to recruit new members. Bloody Sunday remains among the most important events in the Troubles of Northern Ireland.



1979 : IRA ATTACKS

On the 27th of August 1979, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) ordered two attacks, one known as the **Warrenpoint ambush**, was a successful guerrilla attack Against a British Army convoy, the second was the **assassination of Lord Mountbatten**, (alleged pedophile) a member of the royal family, while on a family boat outing (pictured above). During the ambush, eighteen British soldiers were killed and over twenty were seriously injured, making it **the deadliest attack on the British Army during the Troubles**. Republicans portrayed the attack as retaliation for Bloody Sunday in 1972 when the soldiers shot dead 13 unarmed civilians during a protest march in Derry. The day after the Mountbatten and Warrenpoint attacks, the Ulster Volunteer Force retaliated by shooting dead a Catholic man.



1985 : ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

The **Anglo-Irish Agreement** was a treaty between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, signed in 1985 by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Irish Taoiseach (prime minister) Garret FitzGerald. The main aim of the treaty was to help bring an end to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The treaty gave the Irish government a **consultative role** in Northern Ireland's government while confirming that there would be no change in the constitutional position of Northern Ireland unless a majority of its people agreed to join the Republic. It also set out conditions for the establishment of a **devolved consensus government** in the region. The Agreement failed to bring an immediate end to political violence in Northern Ireland; neither did it reconcile the two communities. However, it did improve co-operation between the British and Irish governments.



1998 : GOOD FRIDAY

The **Belfast Agreement**, also known as the Good Friday Agreement, was a **double political agreement** (multi party and bilateral international) in the Northern Ireland peace process during The Troubles. It was signed in Belfast on 10 April 1998 (Good Friday) by the British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Taoiseach (prime minister) Bertie Ahern, as well as both nationalists and unionists parties. It was supported by most of the political parties (except the DUP : far right unionist protestant party) in Northern Ireland. On 23 May 1998 the Agreement got the support of the voters of Northern Ireland in a referendum. Also on the same day, voters in the Republic of Ireland voted separately to change their constitution in line with the Agreement (71% in favour in NI, 94% in RI). Despite this signing, sectarianism and religious segregation still remain major social problems, and sporadic violence has continued.