



# CONFLICT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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## The Peace Process

**WHO SHOULD BE BLAMED FOR THE SLOW PROGRESS OF THE  
PEACE PROCESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND?**

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# Loyalist paramilitaries are still active

**Source 1:** Extract from a UK government report on paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland, October 2015

All the main paramilitary groups operating during the period of the Troubles remain in existence: this includes the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), Red Hand Commando (RHC), Ulster Defence Association (UDA), Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA). Seventeen years after the 1998 Belfast Agreement, paramilitary groups remain a feature of life in NI; the UDA, UVF and INLA have continued to recruit and all of the paramilitary groups maintain a relatively public profile in spite of being illegal organisations.



# Loyalist paramilitaries are still active

**Source 2:** Members of Loyalist paramilitary group UDA/UFF West Belfast Brigade, 'A' Company, 2002





# Nationalist terrorism is still a threat

**Source 3:** Extract from a UK government report on paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland, October 2015

However, the most serious current terrorist threat in NI is not posed by these groups but by dissident republicans (DRs) – paramilitary groups not on ceasefire and who reject the 1998 Belfast Agreement (the so-called ‘new’ IRA, Óglaigh na hÉireann and the Continuity IRA). In addition to numerous paramilitary-style assaults, DRs have mounted between 15 and 40 terrorist attacks each year since 2000, which are primarily directed against PSNI officers. Their activities pose a severe threat to NI’s security and stability and, at any given time, a terrorist attack is highly likely. There is also a smaller threat posed by dissident loyalist paramilitary groups.



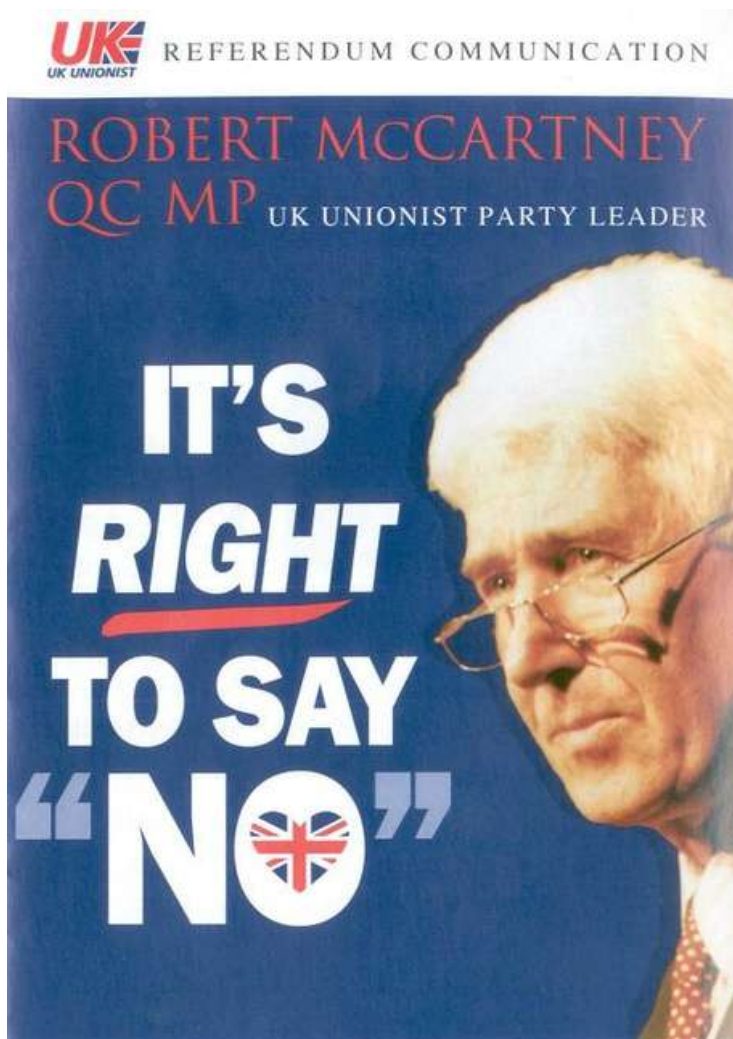
# Nationalist terrorism is still a threat

Source 4: Graffiti in West Belfast about the Continuity IRA





# Unionists refuse to accept equal rights for Nationalists



**Source 5:** DUP campaign pamphlet against the Good Friday Agreement, 1998

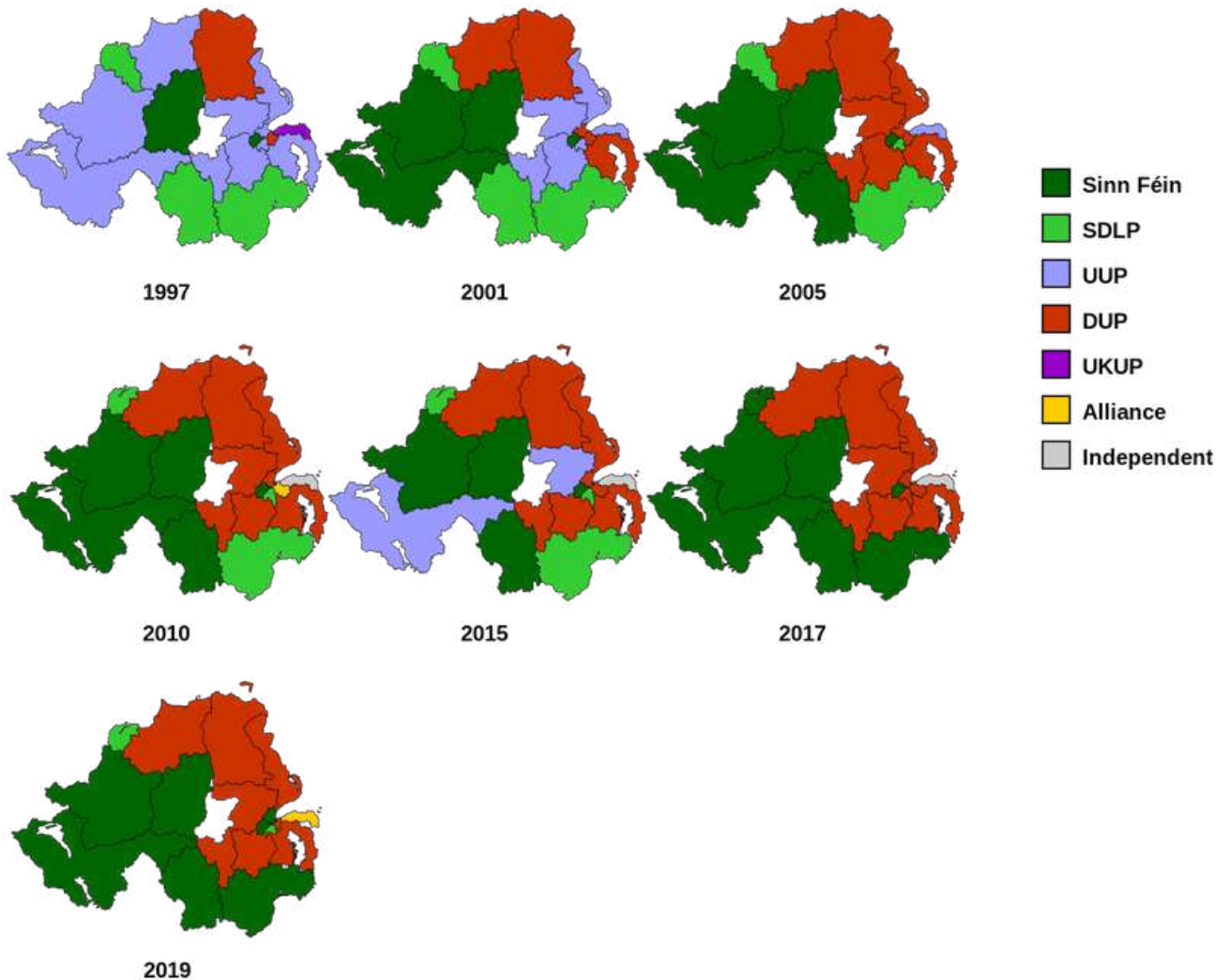
The Agreement is a surrender to terrorist violence. Those who have survived bomb and bullet must not yield to bribery and brainwashing. Is a peace dependent on the whim of fully armed terrorists the Peace you Desire? **The answer to that question can only be NO.**

Vote **NO** on 22nd May



# Unionists refuse to accept equal rights for Nationalists

Source 6: Results of Northern Ireland elections from 1997 to 2019





# Nationalists still distrust official institutions

**Source 7:** Poster put up by Nationalists that compares the post-Agreement Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to the previous police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the photograph was taken in 2018







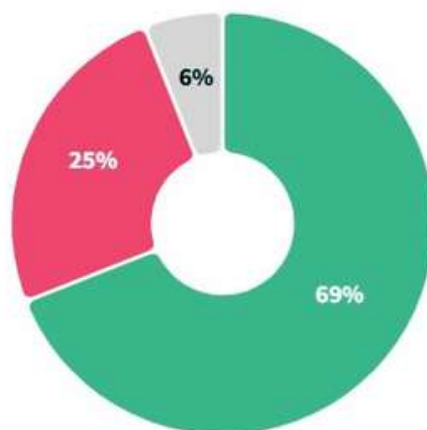
# Nationalists still distrust official institutions

**Source 8:** An opinion poll of Republicans about their attitude towards the use of violence during the Troubles

**Michelle O'Neill (Sinn Féin - and NI First Minister designate) recently said "I think at the time (of the troubles) there was no alternative (to 'violent resistance to British rule'), but now, thankfully, we have an alternative to conflict".**

Some are taking this as a justification of republican (i.e. IRA) violence and terrorism during the 'Troubles'.

NATS/REPUBS ONLY    
  SINN FEIN VOTERS ONLY    
  SDLP/Aontu/PBP ONLY    
  18 to 44 years age-group  
 45+ years age-group



- There was NO ALTERNATIVE to 'violent resistance to British rule', during the Troubles, as Michelle O'Neill has said
- There was ALWAYS AN ALTERNATIVE to 'violent resistance to British rule', during the Troubles, e.g. peaceful resistance and protest, within the law
- Don't know/Not sure/No opinion

Source: LucidTalk opinion poll August 2022



# Unionists used Brexit to try to reinstate the border

Source 9: Anti-Protocol billboard in Larne, 6 March 2021





# Callous disregard for Irish lives permeated British policy

**Source 10:** Comments on the DUP by Steve Aiken, an Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, 2019

The contentious backstop solution to avoid a hard Irish border after Brexit is pushing Northern Ireland towards "extreme unionism", an Ulster Unionist politician has warned.

Steve Aiken, a UUP MLA for South Antrim, told a conference on Brexit in Galway that he believed many members the rival Democratic Unionist Party were not actually unionists but "Ulster nationalists" or "ultras" who want a hard border after Brexit to cement divisions in Ireland. He claimed there was a "massive sort of schism" within the DUP based around ideology.

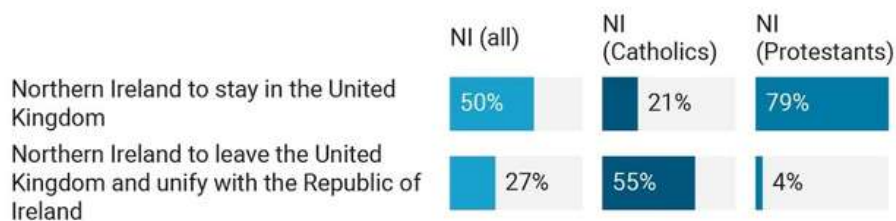
"There are people within the DUP who seriously believe a hard Brexit is what they want because that would be able to deliver them a hard border, and if it was a hard border, it would reinforce the divisions in Ireland, and for them, that would be electorally successful going into the future," he said.



# Nationalist politicians have used Brexit to promote Irish reunification

**Source 11:** Results of a 2022 opinion poll on Northern Irish people’s views on a United Ireland. Note that the 2022 census put Catholics at 45.7% of the Northern Irish population and Protestants at 43.5%

If there was a referendum asking people whether they want Northern Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom or to unify with the Republic of Ireland, how would you vote in that referendum?





# Nationalist politicians have used Brexit to promote Irish reunification

**Source 12:** Extract from 'Brexit, the Belfast Agreement and Northern Ireland: Imperilling a Fragile Political Bargain', by P. Teague, 2019

Calls by Sinn Fein and other nationalist politicians for N. Ireland to be conferred some form of special status as a counter to Brexit was considered by the DUP and others as little more than a ruse to create a transmission mechanism to convey N. Ireland into a united Ireland.



# Unionists use tradition to provoke Nationalists

**Source 13:** The route for a 5 July Orange Parade in Portadown in 1990s. The yellow line is the route, the green areas are predominantly Catholic areas





# Unionists use tradition to provoke Nationalists

Source 14: A Loyalist March in Belfast, 26 August 2023





# Nationalist politicians stoke division

**Source 15:** Comments by Michelle O'Neill, leader of Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland after the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act passed in December 2022

## Historic day as legislation passes to give official recognition to the Irish language – O'Neill

Michelle O'Neill said:

"Today marks a defining moment as legislation passes to give historic official recognition of the Irish language in this State.

"After many years of campaigning to guarantee Irish language rights and protections in law, today belongs to the grassroots activists who have delivered Acht Gaeilge.

"Resistance to equality and rights has failed. Those Irish speakers who have been discriminated against, excluded and ignored in the past by the State have now secured the promise of the Good Friday Agreement for today's generation of gaelgeoirí.

"Irish speakers at last will be able to access public services and use Irish in the courts as archaic laws banning its use have been repealed and consigned to history.

"An Irish language commissioner will be appointed with statutory powers to ensure compliance with new public service standards.

"The official recognition of Irish in this State represents meaningful parity of esteem for the nationalist community who want to build a society grounded in fairness, inclusion and respect with those who are British and those of an Ulster-Scots cultural tradition.

"The legislation facilitates both identities and cultures and is welcome.

"I hope that we can open a new chapter that allows us all to celebrate and express our equally legitimate cultures, and recognise our differences as something to be valued, not diminished."





# Nationalist politicians stoke division

**Source 16:** Extract from the Main statistics for Northern Ireland on language, based on the 2021 census

In 2021 the most prevalent main languages other than English were Polish (20,100 people), Lithuanian (9,000), Irish (6,000), Romanian (5,600) and Portuguese (5,000).