

PRHSMUN VI



**Troubles on the Emerald Isle
Northern Ireland
Background Guide**

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Letters from the Chairs

Hello delegates!

I am David Ghobrial, a Senior at Pearl River High School, and will be your chair for this year's 6th annual PRHSMUN! Since my freshman year, I've been passionate about Model UN, attending Yale's Model UN conference three times and actively participating in conferences around Rockland County. I am incredibly thrilled to be your chair for this committee!

Beyond Model UN, I'm the President of my Senior Class of 2025, a Board of Education Member, and a proud member of the PRHSMUN conference since 9th grade. When I am not immersed in diplomatic discussions, you can find me on the tennis courts or the soccer field. Interesting Fact: I can speak 3 languages. These facts aside, Model UN has always been an activity I held deep to my heart, and so I can't wait to see you all make some lasting memories. If you have any questions regarding the committee topics, feel free to ask me by sending an email to davidghobrial07@gmail.com. I am looking forward to hearing from every single one of you!

Hello everyone, my name is Caitlin Leahy, and I am one of this year's JCC Crisis Co-Chairs! I am very excited to be co-chairing this committee as I love working in a crisis committee. I have worked the PRHSMUN Crisis Room, and I have attended conferences such as Yale MUN and BOSMUN. I am a sophomore at Pearl River, and I have been a part of Model UN since I was in 8th grade. I am a cross country/track runner, softball player, avid surfer, and a baker. I am looking forward to a great conference, and I am excited to see you all at PRHSMUN.

And remember that in this committee, every delegate, no matter how small their role might seem, has the power to shape the course of the discussion. If you have any questions please contact us at ModelUN@pearlriver.org.

See you all soon!

David Ghobrial

Chair, Troubles on the Emerald Isle

Caitlin Leahy

Co-Chair, Troubles on the Emerald Isle



Committee Background:

The United Nations (U.N.) is made up of 5 major active bodies. These bodies are the General Assembly (GA), the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the U.S. Secretariat. The United Nations Security Council is one of the five main bodies of the United Nations, tasked with maintaining international peace and security. The United Nations Security Council has the authority to take actions to address threats to peace, ranging from sanctions to military intervention. In this crisis session, **The United Nations Security Council** will focus on **The Northern Ireland Crisis**, a conflict that has roots in the historical divide between Catholic Nationalists, who seek unification of the Republic of Ireland, and Protestant Unionists, who wish to remain part of the United Kingdom. Despite the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, recent developments, such as Brexit, have exacerbated tensions, leading to a renewed risk of violence and instability. The Security Council will discuss how to mediate this tension and ensure peace in Northern Ireland.

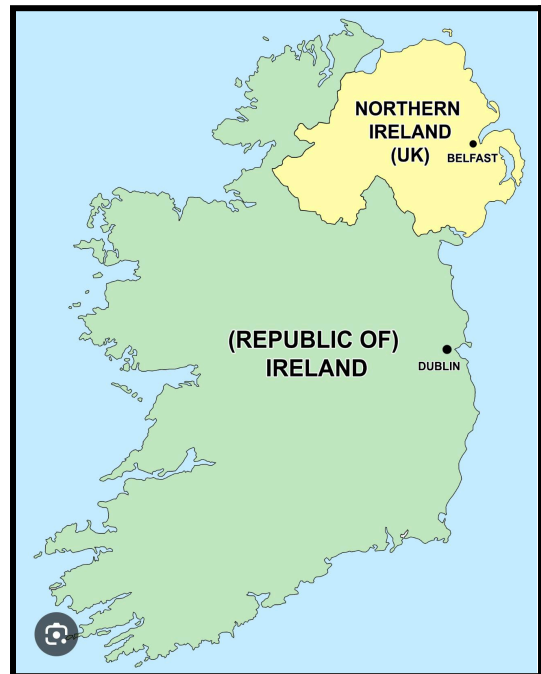
Introduction:

Northern Ireland has faced deep divisions for centuries, mainly between Catholics wanting to reunite with Ireland and Protestants wanting to remain part of the UK. This conflict, known as “The Troubles,” led to years of violence. The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 brought peace, but recent issues like Brexit have revived tensions. In this session, the UN Security Council will discuss how to help resolve the crisis in Northern Ireland. They get to explore solutions to peace and address the challenges faced by both communities, aiming to ensure a stable and peaceful future for the region.



Background & History:

The root of this crisis' conflict can be linked back to the Protestant Reformation. Before the reformation, Ireland was going through a golden age of culture and literature, protecting and preserving education regarding much of the Latin scripture and literature that is known today. The island was made up of several separate kingdoms who were all at peace with one another and shared similar cultural and religious values. However, the lack of a unified government made Ireland an easy target for the kingdom on their neighboring island, England. By the 16th century, most of Ireland had been conquered by England. To make matters for Ireland worse, Henry VIII, the king of England, had recently begun what would eventually become known as the English Reformation, converting England from Catholics to Protestants as a byproduct of the Protestant Reformation. Initially, the reformation had little effect on Ireland as the island remained Catholic but this changed in 1609 when the British government encouraged English and Scottish Protestant settlers to start plantations in the Northern Irish Kingdom of Ulster. Although these Protestants were initially a minority in Ireland, they eventually gained economic dominance. Continued oppression continued through the reign under the Stuart Dynasty and under Oliver Cromwell military oppression of the Irish, commandeering fertile land and forced conscription and labour of the Irish in the Caribbean.



Over the next three centuries Ireland would face immense oppression from the island's British overlords. Irish Catholics were not given equal rights and Ireland had nearly no political freedoms whatsoever. One event in particular, the Irish Potato



Famine, wiped out nearly one in seven Irish people and caused one in four Irish people to immigrate. The British government provided little to no aid to the starving Irish and was complacent as around one million Irish starved to death. In fact, much of the dairy products and wheat products produced by the Irish during this famine were immediately exported from the island at the time, pushing food away from the starving.

By the start of the twentieth century, the fire of Irish Independence sentiment began to kindle. Multiple centuries of oppression under British rule caused a high amount of animosity towards the British amongst Irish Catholics. Several key Irish politicians, such as Daniel O'Connell, pushed for an Irish Home Rule Bill in the British parliament. However, a new paramilitary group of predominantly protestant Northern-Irish unionists formed, known as the Ulster Volunteers. The Ulster Volunteers formed with the singular mission of ensuring an Irish Home Rule Bill would not be passed. In response to the formation of the Ulster Volunteers, a group of Irish nationalists formed the Irish Volunteers.

Although an Irish Home Rule Bill did technically pass in 1914, it excluded six of the northern counties of Ulster and was suspended before it could go into effect due to the outbreak of the First World War. This prompted the Irish Volunteers to split into two separate groups, the National Volunteers who supported the British war effort, and the Irish Volunteers who did not support the British war effort. In 1916, the Irish Volunteers, along with another paramilitary group, the Irish Citizen Army, launched an armed insurrection against British rule which is known today as the Easter Rising. British forces were able to quickly put down the insurrection. Although initially the insurrection did not have much public support in Ireland, the Irish public began to sympathize with the rebels after British officials sloppily executed fifteen rebel leaders and imprisoned more than a thousand suspected rebels without trial.

In 1919, after winning several key elections, a pro-independence Republican Irish party, known as Sinn Féin, declared the creation of an Irish Republic with its own parliament. The Irish Volunteers, who became known as the Irish Republican Army (or IRA for short,) would solidify Ireland's independence by waging a guerilla



war against the British that ended in 1921. However, during peace talks, Northern Ireland opted to remain a part of the United Kingdom. The newly independent Republic of Ireland would enter a period of peace and steady economic growth.

While Catholics under the Republic of Ireland were finally able to find freedom from persecution, Catholics still living in Northern Ireland continued to face discrimination. During the 1960s, thousands of Northern Irish Catholics, inspired by civil rights movements in the United States, engaged in peaceful protests with the aim of ending religious discrimination in Ireland. However, these protesters were often met with counter-protesters which often resulted in violence commencing between the two groups. Due to increasing intercommunal violence in Northern Ireland, British troops were deployed in Ireland with the goal of stabilizing the region. However, these troops only raised further discontent as they unfairly targeted Catholics. Due to disagreements within the Irish Republican Army (IRA) over the organization's role as either a political or military force, a group called the Provisional IRA broke away from the IRA and began its own military campaign in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, the paramilitary group of the Ulster Volunteer Force was once again created with the goal of preventing Irish reunification, along with several other loyalist groups such as the Red Hand Commando and the Ulster Defense Association.

This period of violence in Northern Ireland is known as “the Troubles.” This period would last for three decades where due to violent attacks from all parties, 3,600 deaths would occur. In 1998, after a ceasefire was agreed upon by the Provisional IRA, talks between the Irish and British governments began and the Good Friday Agreement was signed. The agreement did not reunify Ireland but it allowed for Northern Ireland to unify with Ireland if a significant shift in public opinion were to occur and a national referendum was held. The agreement reinforced Northern Ireland's consensual union within the United Kingdom.



Current Situation:

The situation in Northern Ireland is rooted in a complex history of religious and political conflict between the Protestant Unionists and the Catholic Nationalists. These tensions, initially arising from the Protestant Reformation, intensified with British colonization of Ireland, particularly in the 17th century, when Protestant settlers were brought into Northern Ireland. For centuries, Catholic Irish faced political oppression and economic marginalization. The Irish Potato Famine, which killed over 1 million people and forced another million to emigrate, exacerbated these tensions.

In the 20th century, Irish nationalist sentiment grew, leading to the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, leaving Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. However, Catholics in Northern Ireland continued to face discrimination in areas like voting, housing, and employment. The 1960s saw the rise of the civil rights movement among Northern Irish Catholics, inspired by the United States' own struggle for civil rights. Peaceful protests were often met with violent opposition, leading to what became known as "The Troubles," a violent conflict lasting from the late 1960s to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. This conflict saw paramilitary groups, including the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and loyalist militias, fighting for control and influence.



"The Troubles," highlighting the conflict between paramilitary groups and the British military.





The Good Friday Agreement

Today, Northern Ireland remains part of the United Kingdom, but tensions between nationalists (primarily Catholic) and unionists (primarily Protestant) still exist. The legacy of The Troubles, economic disparity, and competing political ideologies continue to shape the region. The 2016 Brexit referendum, which saw Northern Ireland's Catholic-majority population voting to remain in the European Union, further strained relations as the question of the Irish border resurfaced, potentially threatening the fragile peace established by the Good Friday Agreement.



Protesters voicing concerns about Brexit's impact on the Irish border and Northern Ireland's future



Focus Questions:

- What were the root causes of the conflict in Northern Ireland, and how did religion, politics, and colonialism intersect to shape this crisis?
- How did the Good Friday Agreement impact the conflict, and to what extent has it succeeded in achieving peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland?
- How did Brexit impact Northern Ireland, particularly in terms of the Irish border and the region's relationship with both the UK and the Republic of Ireland?
- What role do paramilitary groups, such as the IRA and loyalist groups, still play in Northern Ireland today, and how can their influence be reduced?
- How can international parties (Ex: European Union, the United Nations, the United States,...) support the peace process in Northern Ireland?

Consider these questions when creating your paper -

- What is your country's position on the topic?
- Who are your allies? Enemies?
- What could our country stand to gain from this conflict?

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