

# JOINT CRISIS COMMITTEE: THE TROUBLES



DECEMBER 3, 2022

## LETTER FROM THE CRISIS DIRECTOR

Hello, delegates. My name is Jonas Pfefferman, and I will be your crisis director. I'm currently a junior at The Bishop's School. I've been involved in Model United Nations since seventh grade and have attended Triton MUN, Clark MUN, KnightsMUN (for those of you who came last year, I was Vice Chair for UNEP in the lobster costume), and JMUN conferences. Crisis is always a great way to explore alternate histories (and assassinate a couple people) to move toward a given goal, whether it be shared or individual. I'm super excited to be your Crisis Director, as this topic involves a lot of strong opinions and is still not fully resolved.

The Troubles is a fascinating time in history. As someone who watched (at least most of) *The Crown*, I was surprised at how little screen time this decades-long conflict was given, especially with it turning personal for the royal family in its later half. While a joint crisis is oftentimes two equal sides of a war, the Troubles presents an interesting crisis opportunity due to the nature of the conflict. We'll have to wait and see if deals are struck or the extremes take center stage in order to find resolutions. I can't wait to see you all, and good luck.

If you have any questions about the committee or research, don't hesitate to email me at [jonas.pfefferman.24@bishops.com](mailto:jonas.pfefferman.24@bishops.com).

# I. CRISIS GUIDE

Welcome to the Historical Joint Crisis Committee: The Troubles. Compared to the formality of the General Assembly, these committees are faster-paced, and the sense of urgency that usually accompanies an unmoderated caucus will pervade the atmosphere throughout the day. Similarly to a General Assembly, most of the conference will be spent in moderated or unmoderated caucus following short introductory speeches. Crisis is quick, free-flowing, and dynamic, reflecting the diverse group of large personalities that will be in the room. Each committee will receive a crisis update approximately every twenty minutes, but the frequency will vary depending on the flow of the committee.

There will be two main forms of action that can be taken in committee: committee directives and crisis notes. Committee directives force the entire committee to take unified action, and they require a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority to pass as they are the most powerful form of action. Crisis notes can be used to ask the crisis staff for information, arrange private meetings with other delegates, or take unilateral action. Requests will only be fulfilled in accordance with the given delegate's portfolio powers (e.g. a general may take individual action regarding the units under their control) and will be sent to crisis staff without committee debate. You should specify in a crisis note whether the action is public or private. Public actions may be read aloud in crisis updates, whereas private actions will not unless uncovered in some way. If a group of individuals would like to take joint action without committee approval, they may submit a single note with the signatures of all participants.

To communicate with others, delegates have two main options: communiques and notes. Communiques can be issued by an individual or group of delegates and will be read aloud during

crisis updates in both committees. For private communications, like in General Assembly Committees, if you want to send a note, simply write your name and the name of your recipient, and the dais will ensure that the note reaches its destination. Your tools may vary from small amounts of resources to large numbers of troops, but it's all about finding the right way to use them!

## I. TOPIC BACKGROUND

The Troubles is a long conflict whose underlying causes, ramifications, and general politics still affect the region of Northern Ireland to this day. As a whole, it spanned from 1968 to 1998 and mainly involved two factions: the republicans/nationalists (made up mostly by the Provisional Irish Republican Army, or IRA) and the loyalists/unionists.<sup>1</sup> The conflict's roots can be traced all the way back to when the British invaded the island to prevent a possible Norman invasion in the late twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> Later, during the Protestant reformation, English and Scottish Protestants were encouraged to move to the predominately-Catholic Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Following



the First World War, the Irish Republican Army sought an independent Irish Republic through violence, thus starting the Anglo-Irish War.<sup>4</sup> During the war, The Government of Ireland Act (1920)

Boland, Sean Kay and John O'Beirne Ranelagh,

"Ireland," *Encyclopedia Britannica*

<sup>3</sup> "Feature History - The Troubles (1/2)," *Youtube*

<sup>4</sup> Fanning, "Ireland," *Encyclopedia Britannica*

split Ireland into Ireland and Northern Ireland, each with home-rule governments; the war ended with the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 that established Ireland as a dominion while keeping Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom itself.<sup>5</sup> The Irish Civil War that followed changed little, but saw a divide in the politics of nationalists.<sup>6</sup> The Republic of Ireland Act (1949) saw a fully independent Irish Republic<sup>7</sup> while Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom unless a majority of its citizens agreed to a break.<sup>8</sup>

In 1969, in order to resist the oppression of Catholics in Northern Ireland by the Protestant majority, the Provisional Army Council became the Provisional IRA (later known as the IRA).<sup>9</sup> That same year, British troops would be called in as a “neutral” force between republican protestors and local police/unionist groups.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the Troubles, back-and-forth



violence was exchanged between the IRA and paramilitary unionist groups. Much of the violence was sparked by “Bloody Sunday,” in which an peaceful yet illegal anti-internment march—a protest against laws that allowed the British government to imprison IRA

members without trial—was fired upon by British soldiers in response to some protestors throwing rocks at the despised paratrooper unit present.<sup>11</sup> The IRA would use guerrilla tactics,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Michael E Donoghue, "Irish Civil War," *World Book Advanced*

<sup>7</sup> Fanning, "Ireland," *Encyclopedia Britannica*

<sup>8</sup> Evan Brown, "Northern Ireland History," *World History: The Modern Era*

<sup>9</sup> History.com Editors, "Irish Republican Army: Timeline," *History.com*

<sup>10</sup> "Feature History - The Troubles (1/2)," *Youtube*

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

including the use of bombs (specifically car bombs) on civilian targets. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (elected 1979) took a firm stance against the violence in Northern Ireland and would later reinforce this position by saying her government would not concede and demanded that IRA members be treated as criminals rather than prisoners of war.<sup>12</sup> See below for individual positions on reasons to continue or end the conflict and the goals each side hopes to achieve.

## II. POSITION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

In following the rhetoric and attitude laid out by recently-elected Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, it is your belief that this violence must be stopped at all costs. Troops are in the area, but police and the army maintain little to no control over areas aside from IRA “no-go” areas set up by unionist militias.<sup>13</sup> At home,



grumbles continue over whether or not it is worth the time of the United Kingdom to be involved in a “war” while it has other

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<sup>12</sup> "Feature History - The Troubles (2/2)," *Youtube*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*

United Kingdom nor the commonwealth.<sup>14</sup> To add insult to injury, the republican terrorists just murdered Lord Mountbatten. Will you secure Northern Ireland and put down the terrorists?

### III. POSITION OF THE IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY

Despite not having any support from the Republic of Ireland itself, the Irish Republican Army remains both an impressive guerilla military force as well as a thorn in the side of the



Northern Irish parliament with practically all members of Sinn Féin (Northern Ireland's main nationalist party) belonging to the organization.

It is your goal to see a united Irish Republic completely separate from British-protestant control. You have just claimed responsibility for your

highest-profile attack, the "execution" of British Lord Mountbatten, and Britain is in shock. The British continue to make arrests and quell riots, but more recruits are joining by the day. The question remains: how far are you willing to go to unite your island?

### IV. THE CRISIS

It is August 28, 1979. Margaret Thatcher entered office in May, and she has made her position of no concessions to the IRA abundantly clear. As British troops make more arrests, the

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<sup>14</sup> "Feature History - The Troubles (1/2)," *Youtube*

IRA continues to make more attacks as they wage war on the British presence. Just days ago, in one of the most daring (and symbolic) attacks, the IRA detonated a bomb on the boat of Lord Loius Mountbatten, a relative of the Queen, killing him and six others on the boat.<sup>15</sup> The attack is not only deeply personal, as Lord Mountbatten was both a relative to the Crown and mentor to Prince Charles, but also symbolic because a British war hero was assassinated just outside of his castle in Ireland. The Irish Republican Army proudly claims responsibility as the British isles are left reeling, and this conflict takes a



more central position for both the public and politics. With a personal insult thrown at the United Kingdom's head of state and its Prime Minister's stance

only hardening, neither side is looking to back down now...

**Good Luck delegates, the Fate of Northern Ireland lies with you.**

## V. POSITION PAPER REQUIREMENTS

The position papers for this crisis committee will differ slightly from a traditional Model UN position paper. Only three sections are required: **history of the conflict, delegate position, and delegate solutions.**

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<sup>15</sup> Lesley Kennedy, "The IRA Assassination of Lord Mountbatten: Facts and Fallout," *History.com*

In the history of the conflict section, provide a brief background summary of the conflict. Try to relate it back to your country and your delegate. This section should only be a five-to-six sentence paragraph.

In the delegate position section, give a short background of your character's role in their country. Furthermore, define your spheres of power. For example, are you a military general with troops, an economist, a diplomat with close relations to foreign powers, or a different type of appointee? This should only be a short paragraph.

The solution section will embody the rest of your paper. Focus only on what has happened up to the present time (until August 28, 1979) as this is when the committee will begin. You should not allow your decision-making to be clouded by the events of the future. During the conference, it is likely that history will unfold in a very different way than it actually did. Remember to be creative while still accurately personifying your designated official. Overall, formulate a comprehensive strategy to benefit yourself, your country, and your side of the conflict. Don't be afraid to think outside the box!

Please refer to the "format" section on this link to our website for details on how to title your paper: <http://www.knightsmun.com/position-papers.html>.

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