

The Northern Ireland 'troubles': some chronologies

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1. Date list

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- 1603 The defeat of an Irish revolt opens the way for Protestant settlement in Ulster.
- 1 July 1691 Protestant William 111 defeats Catholic James H at the Battle of the Boyne.
- 1801 The Act of Union creates the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
- 1845-50 Over a million Irish people die in the Great Famine.
- 24-29 April 1916 British army crushes Easter 1916 Uprising in Dublin, intended to create an Irish republic.
- 1919 Sinn Fein MPs form an Irish parliament, the Dail Eireann; the IRA begins a military campaign to end British rule.
- December 1920 Britain passes Government of Ireland Act to set up a parliament in Belfast to run the six counties.
- December 1921 The Anglo-Irish Treaty creates an Irish Free State controlling all of Ireland except the six counties.
- 1949 Ireland is declared a Republic and leaves the British Commonwealth.
- 1956 The IRA launches a 'border campaign' against British and Protestant rule in Northern Ireland; it ends in failure in 1962.
- 5 October 1968 Police clash with civil rights marchers in Londonderry.
- 4 January 1969 A People's Democracy march is attacked by Protestants at Burntollet Bridge, outside Derry.
- 12-15 Aug. 1969 After violent clashes spread from Derry to Belfast, the British army is sent in to restore order.
- 6 February 1971 For the first time a British soldier is killed by the Provisional IRA.
- 9 August 1971 Internment is introduced in Northern Ireland
- 30 January 1972 'Bloody Sunday' 14 people killed as British soldiers open fire after a demonstration in Londonderry.
- 24 March 1972 Britain imposes 'direct rule' on Northern Ireland, suspending the parliament at Stormont.
- 21 July 1972 On 'Bloody Friday' in Belfast, 9 people are killed and 130 injured by Provisional IRA bombs.
- May 1974 A strike by Protestant workers forces the British government to abandon plans for a power sharing executive in Northern Ireland; Protestant bombings kill 33 people in southern Ireland.
- 24 Nov. 1974 IRA bombings of two pubs in Birmingham kill 19 people.
- Feb.-Nov. 1975-6 The IRA maintains a ceasefire; internment ends.
- 1976 Peace campaigners Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
- 27 August 1979 In two separate attacks, the IRA murder Earl Mountbatten and 3 other people in Sligo, and kill 19 British soldiers at Warrenpoint.
- 5 May 1981 IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands dies in the Maze prison.
- 1983 Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams is elected MP for West Belfast.

- 12 October 1984 The IRA bombs the Grand Hotel, Brighton, during the Conservative Party conference, narrowly failing to kill Prime Minister Thatcher.
- November 1985 In the Anglo-Irish agreement, Britain recognizes that Dublin government has legitimate interest in the affairs of Northern Ireland.
- 31 August 1994 IRA declares a ceasefire. It ends with bombing of Canary Wharf, London, on 9 February 1996.
- May 1996 An all-party forum is elected to negotiate a Northern Ireland settlement.
- July 1997 The IRA announces new ceasefire.
- 10 April 1988 A peace agreement provides for a power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland which will include Sinn Fein.
- 15 August 1998 A 'Real IRA' car bomb kills 29 people in Omagh.
- December 1998 SDLP leader John Hume and Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble are jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
- 2 December 1999 A power-sharing executive and assembly are finally set up in Northern Ireland.
- 2002 Power-sharing executive and assembly suspended.
- 8 May 2007 Power-sharing restored with Ian Paisley (Democratic Unionist Party) and first minister and Martin McGuinness as his deputy.

2. Chronology of events

The Troubles in Northern Ireland by Ivan Minnis, Heineman, 0-43111-868-X, pp 60-1

- 1967 Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) set up
- 1968 Civil Rights campaign intensifies, leading Prime Minister Terrence O'Neill to propose reforms
- 1969 *February* O'Neill suffers heavy losses in general election, but presses on with his plans.
August serious rioting breaks out in Londonderry, with police beginning to lose control of situation. British army sent in to restore order.
- 1970 SDLP formed.
- 1971 First British soldier killed by IRA.
UDA formed.
DUP set up by Ian Paisley.
- 1972 Bloody Sunday: British army kill 13 Civil Rights marchers in Derry. Direct Rule from London introduced.
Bloody Friday, IRA bombs kill 9 in Belfast city centre.
- 1973 Sunningdale Agreement sets up Power-sharing Executive
- 1974 Ulster Workers' Strike brings about collapse of Executive.
IRA bombing campaign in England intensifies.
- 1975 INLA set up.
- 1976 Blanket protest by IRA prisoners begins
- 1979 IRA assassinate Queen's cousin, Lord Mountbatten, also killing 19 soldiers on same day in separate explosion.
- 1981 Hunger strikes begin, eventually leading to deaths of 10 Republican prisoners.
- 1983 New Ireland Forum set up in Dublin to discuss possible solutions to 'troubles'.
- 1984 IRA bomb explodes at Conservative Party Conference in Brighton, killing 5.
- 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement signed giving Irish Republic some say in government of Northern Ireland.
- 1986 Unionist protests against Anglo-Irish Agreement reach their height, with many Loyalist attacks on members of RUC.
- 1987 IRA bomb kills 11 Protestant civilians attending Remembrance Day ceremony in Enniskillen.
'Talks about talks' begin.
- 1991 Inter-party talks finally get under way, but meet with no success.
- 1992 Contact between the British government and Sinn Fein begins.
UDA banned as Loyalist violence by its offshoot, the UFF, increases.
- 1993 SDLP leader, John Hume, and Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein increase contacts, leading to Hume-Adams document.
IRA kills 10 Protestants in fish shop on Shankill Road in Belfast; wave of Loyalist violence follows, including gun attack in Greysteel, Co. Londonderry in which 8 die.

- 1994 *August* IRA ceasefire announced.
September Loyalists follow a month later.
Sinn Fein and British Government hold first official meetings.
- 1995 Framework Document produced by British and Irish governments, revealing plans for future arrangements in Northern Ireland.
July first of annual confrontations between Orange Marchers, police and Nationalist residents' groups at Drumcree near Portadown.
President Bill Clinton visits Northern Ireland in attempt to boost peace process.
- 1996 IRA ceasefire ends with bomb at Canary Wharf in London as talks break down.
- 1997 Despite rising tension IRA announces second ceasefire.
David Trimble leads his party into direct negotiations with Sinn Fein and Tony Blair becomes first Prime Minister to meet with a Sinn Fein leader since the 1920s.
- 1998 Good Friday Agreement concluded.
Referendum shows clear majority in favour.
Elections held to the new assembly.
August Dissident Republicans opposed to agreement kill 29 people in bomb explosion in Omagh, Co. Tyrone.
John Hume and David Trimble awarded Nobel Peace Prize.
- 1999 Unionists withdraw from Assembly as IRA decommissioning has not begun.
Trimble able to persuade party to return later in year.
- 2000 Lack of movement on decommissioning forces British government to suspend Assembly before second Unionist withdrawal.
IRA announces it will put its arms 'beyond use'.
Trimble again persuades Unionists to return to Assembly and Executive is restored.
- 2002 Power-sharing executive and assembly suspended.
- 2007 *May* Power-sharing restored with Ian Paisley (Democratic Unionist Party) and first minister and Martin McGuinness as his deputy.

3. 20th century chronology of Ireland

with emphasis on Northern Ireland

Blackpool Pilot Scheme

1900: The island of Ireland had been part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland since 1801 when it had lost its own parliament.

1907-10:

- Irish Republican Brotherhood, IRB, a group of **nationalists** in existence from 19th Century, began to change in nature and organisation, and by 1913 became armed and trained in military drill to fight for Irish home rule.

1913:

- The Ulster Volunteer Force, UVF, formed by Edward Carson, as a militant group of **unionists** to oppose Irish home rule.
- The Irish Volunteers formed to 'safeguard the rights of the Irish people' and so fight for Irish home rule.

1914:

- First World War began
- The Irish Volunteers split into 2 groups: the National Volunteers (about 160,000) supported the British war effort; and the 'Irish Volunteers' (about 2-3,000) who refused to join the British Army, but defend Ireland with its own military organisation.
- The Irish Citizen Army emerged as a small but disciplined army to fight for Irish home rule, workers' rights, and resist splitting the country. Its HQ banner read 'We serve neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland'.

1916:

- The Easter Rising - an anti-British rebellion in Dublin led by a small group of Irish Volunteers, ICA and the Military Council of the IRB. The National Volunteers took no part. The rebellion was put down by the British Army, but set off a chain of events which changed the course of Irish history.

1918:

- UK general election – Sinn Fein won 73 seats – refused to attend British Parliament – formed their own Parliament, called Dáil Éireann.

1919:

- Dáil Éireann declared Ireland an Independent Republic – the British government refused to accept it.
- The Irish Republican Army, IRA, was formed from militant members of Irish Volunteers. It stayed independent of Dáil Éireann. Michael Collins led them in attacks on the police.
- Start of the War of Independence – until 1921.

1920:

- Group of British ex-soldiers formed 'Black and Tans' to help police fight Republicans, soon joined by 'Auxiliaries' – burned down centre of Cork in revenge for IRA killings.
- Government of Ireland Act – split, or partitioned Ireland into two parts:
 - Northern Ireland (6 counties: Antrim; Armagh; Down; Fermanagh; Londonderry; Tyrone; as well as the boroughs of Belfast and Londonderry). Some 66 per cent Protestant. All agreed to accept home rule within the UK.
 - Southern Ireland (the remaining counties and boroughs). Some 90 per cent Catholic. They refused to accept anything short of independence.

1921:

- The Anglo-Irish Treaty ended the War of Independence but began a period of civil war.
- Northern Ireland to be governed by the Ulster Unionist Party government, based at Stormont in East Belfast.

1922:

- Southern Ireland became the Irish Free State, and remained part of the British Commonwealth.
- IRA began a militant campaign against government of Irish Free State for agreeing to partition. The civil war ended in 1923.
- Michael Collins murdered.

1932:

- Eamon DeValera, leader of Fianna Fáil party, previously leader of Sinn Féin, became Prime Minister, or Taoiseach, of Irish Free State.

1937:

- Irish Free State renamed Éire in a new constitution.

1939:

- Éire declared 'neutrality' in Second World War.

1949:

- Éire became a republic.
- Britain stated that Northern Ireland was to remain with the UK for as long as its people wished to do so.

1956:

- IRA revived the demand for 're-unification', and began a campaign of violence in Northern Ireland. Ended in 1962.
- The Ulster Volunteer Force re-formed, dating back originally to 1912, and stated its aim to kill IRA members.

1967:

- With Catholics in Northern Ireland complaining of injustices, inequality in the voting process, and unfairness in allocation of jobs and houses, the Civil Rights Association was formed to campaign for 'one man, one vote'.

1968:

- A civil rights march in Derry ended in violence and was filmed by live TV cameras. This point is seen as being the start of 'The Troubles'.

1969:

- Severe rioting took place between Catholics and Protestants in Ulster.
- British troops were sent in to keep the peace.
- IRA split into two: 'Official IRA' – moved away from violent methods; and 'Provisional IRA' – aimed to force the British out of Ulster by armed struggle. This organisation was seen as illegal in both the UK and Republic of Ireland.

1970:

- Alliance Party formed with members from both sides.
- Social Democratic & Labour Party formed – mainly Catholic, committed to a united Ireland by peaceful means, and fiercely opposed to IRA violence.
- Ulster Defence Regiment set up to support RUC and British Army but not allowed to work in trouble spots unless commanded by army officers.

1971:

- Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) formed and led by Ian Paisley.
- The Ulster Defence Association (UDA) formed as an umbrella organisation for loyalist groups, including the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), and eventually became illegal as a terrorist group.

1972:

- 'Bloody Sunday' – 14 unarmed men and boys shot dead and 13 wounded by British paratroopers at a Civil Rights Association march.
- Northern Ireland was taken under 'direct rule' by the British Government, with a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in the Cabinet.

1973:

- By the end of the year, nearly 700 civilians and 200 British soldiers had been killed in Ulster.
- Sunningdale Agreement. Power sharing Assembly established.

1974:

- Ulster Workers' Strike brings down Faulkner and Assembly. Direct rule re-imposed.

1980:

- Republican Hunger Strikes in Long Kesh Prison. Ten hunger strikers die by 1981.

1985:

- Anglo-Irish Agreement signed.

1994:

- Peace Declaration.
- IRA ceasefire August 31.
- Ulster paramilitaries declare ceasefire October.

1996:

- IRA ceasefire rescinded.

1997:

- IRA declares ceasefire on July 21.

- 1998:
- Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement signed on April 10.
 - Amendments to Articles 2, 3 and 29 of the Irish Constitution passed by Referendum.
- 1999/2000:
- Legislative Assembly and Power-sharing Executive formed at Stormont to govern Northern Ireland with all-party support.
- 2002:
- Assembly suspended.
- 2007
- Assembly and Executive restored, with Ian Paisley as First Minister and Martin McGuinness his deputy.

4. Chronology of the Peace Process

'Stop-Go Democracy: The Peace Process in Northern Ireland Revisited' by Feargal Cochrane, pp 91-2
http://www.idea.int/publications/dchs/upload/dchs_vol2_sec3_2.pdf

- 10 Apr. 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA) is concluded and published.
- 10 May 1998 At a special conference in Dublin, Sinn Fein votes to change its constitution, ending its abstention policy and allowing its candidates to take seats in a new Northern Ireland Assembly,
- 22 May 1998 Referendums on the Agreement in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In this first all-Ireland poll since 1918, 71% of people vote for the GFA in Northern Ireland with 28% voting against it. The turnout is 81%. In the Irish Republic, 94% vote in favour with only 5% voting against it and a turnout of 56% of the electorate.
- 25 June 1998 Northern Ireland Assembly elections are held, to a new 108-member Assembly.
- 1 July 1998 First meeting of the 'Shadow' Assembly and election of David Trimble as first minister-designate and Seamus Mallon as deputy first minister-designate. This is referred to as the shadow assembly as powers have not yet been devolved to it from Westminster.
- 15 Aug. 1998 29 people are killed following a bomb explosion in Omagh. The bomb was planted by the Real IRA and was the single worst incident in 30 years of conflict in Northern Ireland.
- 29 Nov. 1999 The Northern Ireland Assembly meets, triggering the d'Hondt mechanism and the nomination of 10 ministers to the Northern Ireland Executive.
- 2 Dec. 1999 Devolved powers formally pass from Westminster to Belfast and the new Executive meets for the first time.
- 11 Feb. 2000 After 72 days, the Assembly and Executive are suspended by British Secretary of State Peter Mandelson due to lack of detailed timetable from the IRA on weapons decommissioning.
- 6 May 2000 The IRA releases a statement saying that it is willing to begin a process that would 'completely and verifiably' put its weapons beyond use.
- 27 May 2000 UUP leader and First Minister David Trimble secures his party's support to re-enter power-sharing Assembly and Executive with Sinn Fein, despite the absence of IRA weapons decommissioning.
- 30 May 2000 The devolved powers suspended in February are restored to Northern Ireland.
- 23 Oct. 2001 The IRA begins weapons decommissioning, in its own words, 'in order to save the peace process', in an act verified by the Independent Commission on Decommissioning as 'significant'.
- 4 Nov. 2001 New Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) formally comes into being, replacing the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).
- 4 Oct. 2002 Sinn Fein offices at Stormont are raided by the PSNI as part of alleged investigation into an IRA intelligence-gathering operation. The UUP subsequently threatens to walk away from the Assembly unless action is taken by the British Government.

- 14 Oct. 2002 British Secretary of State John Reid announces the suspension of devolved government and the return of direct rule.
- 1 May 2003 British Prime Minister Tony Blair announces the postponement of new elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly because of a lack of clarity over the IRA position on decommissioning.
- 26 Nov. 2003 The delayed Assembly election finally takes place.
The DUP and Sinn Fein emerge as the largest parties within unionism and nationalism.
- 3 Feb. 2004 Review of the working of the Good Friday Agreement begins at Stormont, involving all the major political parties.
- 18 Sep. 2004 Three days of intensive negotiations at Leeds Castle end with the parties failing to secure an agreement over the restoration of devolved government.
- 4 Oct. 2004 DUP leader Ian Paisley has a landmark meeting in Dublin with the Irish Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern.
This is the first time the DUP has officially met an Irish prime minister in Dublin
- 29 Nov. 2004 Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams holds first-ever meeting with Chief Constable of the PSNI Hugh Orde.
- 20 Dec. 2004 The largest bank raid in UK history takes place at the Northern Bank in Belfast where over 26 million GBP is stolen.
The PSNI, as well as senior members of the Irish Government, place responsibility for the robbery on the IRA, although the IRA denies any involvement.
Despite such allegations, no charges have get been brought against any members of the IRA in relation to the robbery.
- 30 Jan. 2005 Robert McCartney, a Catholic from the Short Strand area of Belfast, is murdered in a bar, allegedly by members of the IRA.
This murder and its alleged cover-up by republican sympathizers cause huge embarrassment for Sinn Fein.
- 17 Mar. 2005 Senator Edward Kennedy and President George Bush meet Robert McCartney's sisters in Washington and refuse to meet Gerry Adams, who is also in Washington as part of the St Patrick's Day celebrations.
- 5 May 2005 The date set for the Westminster general election.

5. Chronology of the Peace Process

<http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/home/index.aspx?id=346>

- Nov. 1985 The Irish and British Governments signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement .
The Agreement enabled the Irish Government to put forward views and proposals on many aspects of Northern Ireland affairs, and through its structures the two Governments intensified their work to find a solution to the Northern Ireland problem.
- 1991/92 The two Governments convened round-table talks involving the main constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland (the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI)).
While some common ground was identified, overall agreement could not be reached.
- 15 Dec. 1993 The then Taoiseach, Mr Albert Reynolds TD, and the British Prime Minister, Mr John Major, issued a Joint Declaration which set out a charter for peace and reconciliation in Ireland.
It set out the basic principles necessary to underpin the political process and established the principles of self-determination and consent in relation to the Constitutional status of Northern Ireland.
- 31 Aug. 1994 The IRA announced a ‘complete cessation of military operations’.
- 13 Oct. 1994 This announcement was followed on by a similar statement from the Combined Loyalist Military Command.
Following the cease-fires the two Governments engaged in direct political dialogue with Sinn Fein and the two loyalist parties, the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) and the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP).
- 22 Feb. 1995 The then Taoiseach, Mr John Bruton TD, and the then British Prime Minister, Mr John Major, published A New Framework for Agreement (known as the Framework Document), setting out the shared understanding between the two Governments of their best estimate of how an honourable accommodation might be envisaged across all the relationships, without compromising the long-term aspirations or interests of either tradition or of either community in Northern Ireland.
The Governments also committed themselves to comprehensive negotiations involving the Northern Ireland parties, the outcome of which would be submitted for democratic ratification through referendums North and South.
- Dec. 1995 The two Governments established an International Body under the chairmanship of US Senator George Mitchell to provide an independent assessment of the decommissioning issue.
- January 1996 In its report of January 1996 the International Body recommended that all parties participating in negotiations should commit themselves to six principles of democracy and non-violence, including the total and verifiable decommissioning of all paramilitary weapons.
It proposed that the parties consider a proposal whereby decommissioning might occur during negotiations.
- 9 Feb. 1996 The IRA announced an end to its cease-fire and resumed violence.
Both Governments vowed to continue the search for political agreement and expressed the hope that a restoration of the cease-fire would allow for the resumption of political dialogue with Sinn Fein.
- May 1996 General election in Northern Ireland.
- 10 June 1996 Multi-party talks began involving the two Governments and Northern Ireland political parties

which had been successful in the election (UUP, DUP, SDLP, APNI, PUP, UDP, United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP), Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) and Labour, but excluding Sinn Fein, in the absence of a complete and unequivocal IRA cease-fire). The talks were chaired by Senator Mitchell, assisted by former Finnish Prime Minister Mr Harri Holkeri and retired Canadian General John de Chastelain. For the first year, after the adoption of rules of procedure in July 1996, they made little progress, as the decommissioning issue continued to dominate.

- 20 July 1997 The IRA announced a resumption of its cease-fire.
- 9 Sept 1997 Sinn Fein enter the talks on 9 September.
Two of the unionist parties, the DUP and the UKUP, then left the talks.
However, the largest unionist party, the UUP, continued to participate.
- 26 Aug. 1997 An Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) was established by the two Governments on to report on progress on the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons.
- 24 Sept 1997 Substantive negotiations eventually began on, following agreement on a comprehensive three-stranded agenda.
They continued until April 1998. Each participant presented its views and proposals on aspects of the agenda.
As the talks progressed the independent chairmen worked with the two Governments and the parties to identify areas of broad agreement and isolate areas of remaining difficulty.
Eventually, the independent chairmen set a deadline of 9 April 1998. In the final and intensive negotiations the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern TD, and the British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair led their Governments' delegations.
- 10 April 1998 A comprehensive political agreement - known as the Good Friday (or Belfast) Agreement was approved at a plenary session of the talks.
The two Governments signed immediately thereafter a new British-Irish Agreement committing them to give effect to the provisions of this multi-party agreement, in particular those relating to constitutional change and the creation of new institutions.
- 22 May 1998 In referendums, the people of Ireland, both North and South, overwhelmingly endorsed the Good Friday Agreement.
In Northern Ireland, 71.1 per cent of the people voted to approve the Agreement.
In the South, 94.4 per cent of the people voted to allow the Government become party to the Agreement.
The combined Yes vote in both parts of Ireland was 85 per cent.
This was the first occasion since 1918 on which all the people in Ireland had voted together to decide their political future.
The electorate in the South approved amendments to the Irish Constitution which formed part of the Agreement.
- 25 June 1998 Elections took place to the new Northern Ireland Assembly .
Pro-Agreement parties held most of the seats,.
- 1 July 1998 First meeting of the new Assembly.
Mr David Trimble of the UUP was elected as First Minister and Mr Seamus Mallon of the SDLP as Deputy First Minister.
Disagreements between the parties, principally over the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons, led to the operation of the Assembly being interrupted by a series of suspensions over the next two years
- Sept. 1999 Report of the Northern Ireland Police Commission (under the chairmanship of Chris Patten).

- Nov. 2001 Creation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), replacing the Royal Ulster Constabulary.
- 14 Oct. 2002, The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Dr John Reid, made an order suspending the Executive and Assembly following allegations of Republican intelligence gathering in Stormont.
- 1 May 2003 British and Irish governments issue a Joint Declaration.
It which outlined the work that they had been engaged in since the suspension of the Executive and the Assembly in 2002 and identified areas where progress could be made in the ongoing implementation.
A period of intensive negotiations between the parties and the two Governments failed to resolve all outstanding difficulties.
- Nov. 2003 Assembly elections, held in November 2003, resulted in the DUP and Sinn Féin becoming the largest parties on the unionist and nationalist side respectively.
- 7 Jan. 2004, The two Governments established an Independent Monitoring Commission to produce regular reports on the issues of paramilitary and criminal activity and on security normalisation.
- 8 Dec. 2004 Both governments announced that, while almost all outstanding issues had been agreed with the parties, differences over the process to be used to verify the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons remained unresolved.
- 7 Jan. 2005 The PSNI Chief Constable, Mr. Hugh Orde, made public his assessment that the IRA were responsible for a substantial raid on the Northern Bank head office in Belfast in December 2004. The Government subsequently delivered a clear message to the Sinn Féin leadership that unless IRA paramilitarism and criminality was brought to a definitive closure, there was no prospect of restoring inclusive devolved institutions in Northern Ireland.
- 6 April 2005 The Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams made a statement directed at the IRA in which he asserted that there was now a political alternative to ‘armed struggle’
He appealed to the IRA to consider ‘initiatives which will achieve your aims by purely political and democratic activity’.
- 28 July 2005 The IRA issued a statement indicating that an end to its armed campaign had been ordered by the leadership.
The statement confirmed that the IRA leadership had authorised their representative to engage with the IICD to complete the process to verifiably put its arms beyond use.
- 26 Sept. 2005 The IICD submitted a report to the two Governments confirming that IRA decommissioning had been completed.
- 14-24 Nov. 2005 A series of ‘stocktaking’ meetings with the parties took place at Hillsborough jointly chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Hain.
- 26 Jan. 2006 The Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern and Prime Minister Blair issued a joint statement in which they stated that 2006 would be a decisive year for the process and called on all the parties to take the necessary steps to allow trust and confidence to be built.
- 6 Feb. 2006 Talks with the parties began with the aim of setting out the arrangements and timetable for the restoration of the institutions.
- 6 April 2006 The Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair set out the Governments’ joint strategy for the recall of the Assembly on 15 May 2006, with a view to restoring the power-sharing institutions. A

- 15 May 2006 All 108 MLAs took their seats at the Assembly's first meeting - the first time they had met in that format in over three and a half years.
- 29 June 2006 The Taoiseach and Prime Minister Blair met the parties at Stormont to take stock of developments since the recall of the Assembly.
On the same day they published a work-plan and a timetable setting out the steps to restoration to assist the parties with their preparations for government.
Over subsequent months, the parties met within the framework of the Assembly's Preparation for Government Committee, which was established to scope the work needed to be done in preparation for government. Membership of the Committee comprised three members each from the DUP, Sinn Féin, UUP and SDLP, and two from the Alliance party. The Committee submitted reports to the Governments on the following issues: (i) the economy, (ii) law and order issues (iii) institutional issues and (iv) rights, safeguards, equality and victims' issues.
- 11-13 Oct. 2006 The Taoiseach and PM Blair hosted intensive talks with the political parties at St Andrews in Scotland with the aim of reaching agreement on all outstanding issues.
- 13 Oc. 2006 The two Governments published the St. Andrews Agreement.
Underpinning the Good Friday Agreement, the St. Andrews Agreement set out a clear way forward for all parties to commit to the full operation of stable power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and to full support for policing and the criminal justice institutions, including the Policing Board. Major progress in that regard was made in the early months of 2007.
- 28 Jan. 2007 The Sinn Féin Ard Fheis overwhelmingly endorsed a motion supporting policing and the criminal justice system in accordance with the St Andrews Agreement.
- 7 Mar. 2007 Elections were held to the Northern Ireland Assembly which delivered a strong mandate for power-sharing.
They returned the DUP with 36 seats, Sinn Féin with 28 seats, UUP with 18, SDLP 16, Alliance 7, PUP 1, Greens 1 and Independents 1.
- 26 Mar. 2007 In an unprecedented meeting held in Stormont Sinn Féin and the DUP agree to share power on 8 May.
- 8 May 2007 Restoration of devolved institutions in Northern Ireland.
- 4 April 2007 Successful meeting between the Taoiseach, Mr. Bertie Ahern and the DUP leader Dr. Ian Paisley on 4 April at Farmleigh.
- 11 May 2007 The Taoiseach welcomed Dr. Ian Paisley as Northern Ireland's First Minister to the site of the Battle of the Boyne.
- 15 May 2007 On, in the first ever such speech by a Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern was welcomed in Westminster to address the Joint Houses of Parliament.