



Document #2101655

USDOS – US Department of State (Author)

Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - Real IRA (RIRA)

Aka RIRA; Real Irish Republican Army; 32 County Sovereignty Committee; 32 County Sovereignty Movement; Irish Republican Prisoners Welfare Association; Real Oglagh na hEireann.

Description: **Description:** The Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA) was designated as an FTO on May 16, 2001. The group was formed in 1997 as the clandestine armed wing of the 32 County Sovereignty Movement, a “political pressure group” dedicated to removing British forces from Northern Ireland and unifying Ireland. The RIRA has historically sought to disrupt the Northern Ireland peace process and did not participate in the 2005 weapons decommissioning. Despite internal rifts and calls by some jailed members (including the group’s founder Michael “Mickey” McKevitt) for a cease-fire and disbandment, the RIRA has pledged additional violence and continued to conduct attacks. Many RIRA members are former Provisional Irish Republican Army members who left the organization after the group renewed its cease-fire in 1997. These members brought extensive experience in terrorist tactics and bomb making to the group. In June 2023, the Department of State amended its FTO designations of RIRA to reflect additional aliases including New IRA as its primary name. Although this amendment occurred outside of the reporting period for this report, it is included to highlight claimed activity under its new primary name through 2022.

Activities: Targets have included civilians (the most notorious example is the Omagh bombing in 1998), British security forces, and police officers in Northern Ireland. The Independent Monitoring Commission, which oversees the peace process, assessed that RIRA likely was responsible for most of the attacks that occurred after the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was decommissioned in Northern Ireland. In 2012, RIRA rebranded itself

as the New Irish Republican Army (New IRA) when members of RIRA, Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD), and several independent republicans came together. In 2016, the New IRA bombed the van of an Irish prison officer in east Belfast; the officer died from complications following the attack. Dublin police also linked the New IRA to a cache of explosives found in Dublin in 2016. In 2017, the New IRA claimed responsibility for a gun attack on police in north Belfast that injured an on-duty officer. In 2019, the New IRA claimed responsibility for four parcel bombs mailed to London and Glasgow and an attempt to murder a police officer in Northern Ireland using a car bomb. Also in 2019, the New IRA admitted responsibility and offered apologies for the shooting and killing of Lyra McKee, a journalist in Northern Ireland. In 2021, the New IRA claimed responsibility for an attempted bomb attack on a police officer in Northern Ireland. In November 2022, the New IRA claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on a police vehicle in Northern Ireland.

Strength: The Irish government reports that RIRA has roughly 100 active members. The organization may receive limited support from IRA hardliners and sympathizers who are dissatisfied with the IRA's cease-fire and with Sinn Féin's involvement in the peace process.

Location/Area of Operation: United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.

Funding and External Aid: RIRA receives funds from money laundering, smuggling, and other criminal activities, is suspected of receiving funds from sympathizers in the United States, and has attempted to buy weapons from gun dealers in the United States and the Balkans.

Associated documents

Document ID 2101655 Chapter

30 November 2023 | [USDOS – US Department of State](#) (Author)

United Kingdom

Northern Ireland: Annual report on terrorism (covering 2022)

[Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 1 - United Kingdom \(Northern Ireland\)](#) (Periodical Report, English)

en

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15 June 2023 | [USDOS – US Department of State](#) (Author)

Ireland

Annual report on trafficking in persons (covering April 2022 to March 2023)

[2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Ireland](#) (Periodical Report, English)

en

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ecoi.net description:

Brief description of the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA) (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2022)

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