

New Irish Republican Army (New IRA)

Formerly Real IRA

OVERVIEW

AS OF JULY 2026

The New Irish Republican Army (New IRA) is the largest dissident republican group in Northern Ireland. The group advocates for the removal of British forces, the unification of Ireland through armed struggle, and violence against the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The New IRA was formed in 1997 as the Real IRA, a successor to a prior, defunct dissident group. In 2012, the group merged with a Londonderry-based vigilante group and rebranded as the New IRA, incorporating the combined weapons, tactical, and ideological expertise of its predecessor groups.

Operating Area

The UK and Republic of Ireland, with a stronghold in Londonderry, Northern Ireland

Members

Approximately 100 to 250 across Northern Ireland

Tactics And Targets

The New IRA primarily targets PSNI officers, police stations, and symbols of British authority, as well as other dissident groups, mostly in Northern Ireland. The New IRA sometimes works with gangs in joint operations. The group uses improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and shootings in its attacks, and its bomb tactics usually involve hiding rudimentary pipe, package, or car bombs before an attack, using proxies to deliver them, or using fake messaging to lure law enforcement closer to the attack site to maximize casualties. The New IRA generates revenue through money laundering, smuggling, and theft from charities. The group has also tried to procure weapons from gun dealers in the United States and the Balkans.

Terrorist Group Designation

In June 2023, the US State Department designated the New IRA as a foreign terrorist organization, updating the May 2001 designation of the Real IRA to reflect the group's rebranding



New Irish Republican Army (New IRA) *(continued)*

KEY LEADERS



Fergal Melaugh

Leader



Thomas Ashe Mellon

Former leader; resigned from the group in early 2025 but still holds significant influence over New IRA members



Kieran 'Douse' Gallagher

Second-in-command; financier



David 'Davy' Jordan

Chair of the New IRA's army council; former chairperson of Saoradh, the political party associated with the New IRA; has advocated for bombing campaigns and cyber attacks in the UK

NOTABLE ATTACKS

26 April 2026

Belfast, Northern Ireland

The New IRA claims responsibility for hijacking a car after forcing a delivery driver to transport an IED to a police station. The device detonates but causes no damage or casualties.

22 February 2023

Omagh, Northern Ireland

The New IRA claims responsibility for shooting and injuring an off-duty senior PSNI officer.

17 November 2022

Strabane, Northern Ireland

The New IRA claims responsibility for trying to kill a PSNI officer by striking a patrol car with an explosive device.



New Irish Republican Army (New IRA) *(continued)*

NOTABLE ATTACKS *(continued)*

18 April 2019

Londonderry, Northern Ireland

The New IRA claims responsibility for shooting and killing an author and journalist who was observing a riot held by dissidents.

5-22 March 2019

London, UK; Glasgow, UK; Limerick, Ireland

The New IRA mails incendiary letter bombs that are found at the London Waterloo train station, Heathrow and London City airports, the University of Glasgow, and an Irish post office. The package at Heathrow partially detonates but causes no casualties.

