TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

21 May 1966 - The UVF declares war on the IRA - IRA not engaged in armed action yet

May-Jun 1966 - UVF carry out three attacks on Catholics in Belfast - 3 dead and 2 wounded - one of the dead Protestant

5 Oct 1968 - NICRA march defied ban - attacked by RUC - over 100 injured - two days of rioting followed

Mar-Apr 1969 - loyalists intended to bring down UUP PM O’Neill - six bombings on local infrastructure blamed on IRA

28 Apr 1969 - O’Neill resigned as PM
  • Called surprise general election in Feb because of the turmoil inside the UUP - about 10-12 dissident MPs opposed his leadership - Brian Faulkner resigned from Government
  • From his point of view election results inconclusive - humiliated by near defeat in his seat by Ian Paisley
  • Resigned after the bombing campaign from UVF brought his personal political crisis to a head

5 Aug 1969 - UVF plant first bomb in Republic of Ireland

12-14 Aug 1969 - Battle of the Bogside (Derry) - two days of nationalist rioting against the RUC supported by loyalists
  • Violence began because a Apprentice Boys march passed very close to the Catholic area of Bogside - violence between loyalists and nationalists - loyalists encouraged by police
  • PIRA and OIRA soon realised importance and began pouring troops and resources in
  • Police ill-equipped to deal with rioting - shields too small and uniform not flame proof - not permitted to use armoured cars and guns
  • Led to request from Chichester-Clark (NI PM) for British troops

14-17 Aug 1969 - serious rioting across NI in response to Bogside - 6 Catholics and 2 Protestants shot dead - at least 133 treated for gunshot wounds - first deployment of British Army - beginning of Op BANNER

Dec 1969 - IRA splits into Official and Provisional
  • Veteran republicans became frustrated with the IRA’s refusal to get involved with violence - separated themselves from the Dublin leadership

3 Apr 1970 - warning from British commander that anyone throwing petrol bombers would be shot dead if they did not heed warnings from soldiers