

Case Study: Northern Ireland

Instructions: Read your assigned case study with your group and answer the questions that follow. When you finish, look back over the definition of terrorism you wrote. Do you think this definition is still accurate? Make any changes you think are necessary.

Northern Ireland has been the scene of political violence for many years. Today, the region is a province of the United Kingdom, while the rest of the island of Ireland is a republic that gained its independence from Britain in 1921.

Several unofficial military organizations, including the Irish Republican Army (IRA), have fought for British withdrawal from Northern Ireland, often using violence. These groups believe that the island should be united as one country and view Britain as a colonial presence. British security forces and Irish Loyalist “paramilitaries” intent on remaining under British rule have fought back. Between 1969 and 2002, 3,341 people were killed and more than 47,000 injured. Many of the victims were innocent civilians. In January 1972, in an incident known as Bloody Sunday, British paratroopers fired on unarmed protesters, killing fourteen and injuring thirteen. This event only managed to intensify the struggle.

But, in April 1998, a peace accord known as the Good Friday Agreement led many to hope for a peaceful resolution of the political differences. Despite this settlement, violence continued to plague the region. In August 1998, an IRA splinter group bombed a shopping center in the town of Omagh, killing twenty-nine and wounding hundreds. In 2006, an independent government commission announced that the IRA had committed itself to following a political path and had instructed its members not to use force.

1. Are the members of the IRA described above terrorists or revolutionaries? Why?
2. Was the way that force was used acceptable? Why or why not?
3. What is your view of the response of the state to the IRA’s use of force?

Case Study: The Earth Liberation Front

Instructions: Read your assigned case study with your group and answer the questions that follow. When you finish, look back over the definition of terrorism you wrote. Do you think this definition is still accurate? Make any changes you think are necessary.

In the early 1990s, a group of radical environmentalists in England formed the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) to combat environmental destruction. Now active in North America as well, the loosely connected group seeks to protect habitats for endangered animals, eliminate animal testing for the medical and beauty industry, and reduce oil dependency.

Like mainstream environmental organizations, the ELF works to end the exploitation of the natural environment and halt construction of new housing developments. Feeling that other environmental groups have had little effect, the ELF uses militant tactics to communicate its message. In August 2003, the group claimed responsibility for setting fire to twenty Hummer SUVs at a California dealership. The group has also claimed responsibility for releasing hundreds of animals from captivity, burning down resort buildings and ski lifts in Vail, Colorado, and sabotaging a genetic engineering lab at the University of Minnesota. Although the group has been careful never to harm humans in its attacks, it has caused more than \$200 million in damage since 1997. The FBI continues to investigate the incidents.

1. Are the members of the ELF described above terrorists or revolutionaries? Why?

2. Was the way that force was used acceptable? Why or why not?

3. What is your view of the response of the state to the ELF's use of force?

Case Study: South Africa

Instructions: Read your assigned case study with your group and answer the questions that follow. When you finish, look back over the definition of terrorism you wrote. Do you think this definition is still accurate? Make any changes you think are necessary.

In 1948, the South African government codified into law its system of racial segregation known as apartheid. The African National Congress (ANC), a political movement started in the early twentieth century, launched a national campaign of nonviolent resistance against apartheid. But, after years of political struggle, the ANC had made little progress against the increasingly oppressive apartheid regime.

In the early 1960s, the ANC decided to use violence to fight the white government, which denied black South Africans their most basic human rights, including access to education, the right to vote, and the right to live and travel where they wanted. Following the 1960 massacre of sixty-nine black Africans by South African forces at a peaceful demonstration in the township of Sharpeville, the ANC embarked on a campaign of sabotage against the country's infrastructure and armed resistance against the South African government. Racially motivated violence plagued the country as the South African government cracked down on black South Africans. In 1976, government forces killed more than six hundred people in an uprising at the Soweto township. While the ANC mainly targeted political, economic, and military targets, the group also harmed civilians. For example, a car bomb detonated by the ANC in 1983 killed nineteen and wounded more than two hundred, many of them civilians.

1. Are members of the ANC described above terrorists or revolutionaries? Why?

2. Was the way that force was used acceptable? Why or why not?

3. What is your view of the response of the state to the ANC's use of force?