

Social Media and Conflict Dynamics on Northern Ireland's Peace Lines | Toda Peace Institute

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At interfaces between the Republican and Nationalist Catholic neighbourhoods and predominantly Loyalist and Unionist Protestant neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland, the violence during the 'Troubles' (1969-1999) was particularly raw and volatile. As the peace process took hold, enormous effort by community leaders, paramilitaries and other agencies has helped to gradually reduce street conflict to low levels. However, the rise of social media in the last 5-10 years has added a new dimension, both good and bad. Particularly concerning are arranged fights, often sectarian, involving the use of weapons. How does social media impact conflict dynamics in a post-conflict region like Northern Ireland? This policy brief explores the nature of the problem and how those at the frontline such as youth workers, residents and the police use social media to counter it, and offers recommendations for the future.

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