

## UN RCE Salisbury - 18 July 2023

### UN SDG 16 Project Final Report - Assisting Victims of Violent Extremism in the UK & Ireland with Peter Kelly

Violent extremism or terrorism rears its ugly head in all forms, shapes, and sizes. Whether it's in the form of far-right extremism, far-left extremism, radical Christian extremism, radical Jewish extremism, radical Islamic extremism, or many more ideological motives behind extremists or terrorist groups, no matter the reasons, the fallout from extremist attacks can be very deadly. It can cause significant damage to the infrastructure and the culture of a particular region or community. In the context of The Troubles in Northern Ireland, both Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries, aligned with Protestants and Catholics, respectively, were responsible for numerous attacks that caused countless deaths amongst innocent civilians. These attacks occurred throughout Northern Ireland from the 1960s to the 1990s, with occasional spillovers in England and the Republic of Ireland.

For this project, our team worked with the leaders of eight different victim groups and individual representatives of victims of the conflict through a middleman named Peter Kelly. Our team comprised professors, students, and alums of Salisbury University on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Considering our team was primarily made up of Americans and one other scholar from New Zealand, Peter Kelly was the primary contact for getting in touch with the leaders of the groups of victims and the individual representatives of the victims in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Peter Kelly also served as the lead advocate and voice of the victims to the UK Parliament and the Irish Oireachtas. While here on the American side, we served as the voices of the victims to the White House, the US Congress, and the UN headquarters.

As the project progressed, we advocated for the victims and their families. We made a concerted effort to ensure that the Northern Ireland Troubles Amnesty Bill was

not passed through the British Parliament. The reasoning is mainly that this bill would allow for the perpetrators of the attacks and police officers who were complicit in some of the attacks to evade justice. As a result, this bill was problematic on multiple levels, and we tried to assist the victims in their continual fight for Justice. The victims felt wronged by both the governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland since many felt the ombudsman reports and other strides toward justice weren't enough.

In addition to these efforts, we partnered with Sari Singer, who is the Founder and Director of Strength to Strength, a nonprofit organization that focuses on bringing together victims of terrorism from around the world and assisting them with long-term psychological care. Our team helped Sari develop a historical database of terrorist attacks and website design. Sari's organization impressively helps address psychological needs through peer-to-peer support, regular meetings, provision of information and advice, and raising awareness of the unmet needs of victims and their families. Strength to Strength enables victims of terrorism to share experiences and empowers them to live life to their best potential. They remain committed to each victim through their global network and connections with RCE Salisbury.