# Northern Ireland ’74 game sparks debate over portrayal of Troubles



A newly released video game titled Northern Ireland ’74 has sparked discussion as it places players in the role of the British security forces during the period known as the Troubles. The strategy game, available on PC in early-access, aims to provide an authentic representation of the Northern Ireland conflict in 1974, according to its creator.

Northern Ireland ’74 is developed by Johan Nagel, a retired banking executive and former infantry platoon commander in the South African army. Operating under the brand Every Single Soldier, Nagel has previously created military strategy games based on real historical conflicts, including the South African Border War, the Vietnam War, and the war in Afghanistan. His latest title attempts to capture the complexity of the Northern Ireland Troubles, a conflict marked by violence between republican and loyalist paramilitaries as well as British forces.

In Northern Ireland ’74, players take on the role of British security, deploying troops, recruiting informers, conducting special forces operations, and working to prevent rioting. Beyond military actions, the game also tasks players with managing politics to achieve what it describes as a “just and fair peace.” A promotional video for the game encourages support for the Royal Ulster Constabulary, maintaining British authority in the region, containing the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and targeting its leadership.

Speaking to The Irish News from Thailand, Nagel explained that the game is a turn-based strategy simulator rather than an action or “shoot-em-up” title. He emphasised his aim of making the game authentic, borne out of research and consultation with military contacts. “I was drawn to making a game based on the Northern Ireland Troubles due to the complexity of the conflict,” he said. Nagel also acknowledged that while the game is intended as a history lesson with strategic depth, it remains a “sandbox” rather than a fully accurate simulation, with some feedback so far relating mainly to geographical inaccuracies and insignia detail.

Nagel anticipates some opposition to the game due to the sensitivity of the topic, remarking, “Games haven’t really been made about the Troubles as it’s too politically sensitive. I’ve created this more for military enthusiasts.” He reflected on his past experiences with other wartime games facing criticism, predicting “some kick-back” for Northern Ireland ’74 as well.

In response to the game’s release, Mark Thompson of victims’ group Relatives for Justice commented to The Irish News that the game appeared to lack authenticity, particularly in how it portrayed the role of British forces. He said, “The game doesn’t appear to show that the majority of those killed by British forces were unarmed Catholic civilians, including scores of children.” Thompson expressed concern that the game’s framing could sanitise the British army’s role in Northern Ireland, potentially trivialising the experiences and suffering of victims.

Northern Ireland ’74 thus enters a complex historical and political landscape, aiming to combine military strategy gaming with representation of a contentious and painful period in Northern Ireland's history. The game is currently accessible to PC players in an early-access format as its developer continues to refine its content and authenticity.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://store.steampowered.com/app/3204920/Northern_Ireland_74/> - The Steam page confirms the game's early-access release on PC, its strategy genre, and the developer Every Single Soldier.
* <https://steamcommunity.com/app/3204920> - The Steam Community page corroborates the game's focus on simulating the Northern Ireland Conflict (1966–1998), including British security forces' role.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMbPAK64-1c> - The trailer highlights the game's emphasis on British authority, RUC support, and IRA containment, aligning with promotional content described in the article.
* <https://www.kinguin.net/category/313890/northern-ireland-74-pc-steam-cd-key> - The Kinguin listing verifies the game's availability on PC and its status as a commercial product.
* <https://steamdb.info/app/3204920/patchnotes/> - SteamDB details ongoing development efforts and updates, reflecting the early-access status and commitment to refining authenticity mentioned by Nagel.
* <https://store.steampowered.com/app/3204920/Northern_Ireland_74/> - Reiterates the developer (Every Single Soldier) and genre specifics, supporting the article's claim about Nagel's studio and the game's strategic focus.
* <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/troubles-video-game-creator-aims-for-authenticity-in-simulator-that-pits-players-against-the-ira-OE4KTIZ6N5FYNILTMA6TEMJRI4/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data