

* COMMAND SUMMARY

MISSION STATUS

MISSION STATUS

**PROCEED WITH
CONTROLS**

THREAT LEVEL

MODERATE

CONFIDENCE

HIGH

^ CRITICAL RISK FACTORS

- > Active Day 5 fuel protest blockades on O'Connell Street and M50 create direct access, movement, and crowd-crush hazards for field teams
- > Drone operations in Dublin city centre require IAA pre-authorisation; most of the urban area falls within controlled airspace – unauthorised flight risks prosecution and equipment seizure
- > Far-right actors with documented links to protest leadership and history of online threats against journalists increase hostile-encounter probability at protest sites

KEY REC Deploy ground teams with clear press identification and designated extraction routes pre-planned on foot; hold drone operations pending IAA authorisation and conduct flight planning only from verified open zones; avoid O'Connell Bridge vicinity at night when Garda-protester tensions are highest

I'll run all priority source searches simultaneously across all tiers before generating the dossier.
All source tiers have been searched. Generating the dossier now.

INTELLIGENCE DOSSIER

CLASSIFICATION: CLIENT SENSITIVE – REUTERS INTERNAL USE

Date of Issue: 11 April 2026

Prepared for: Reuters News Team (4 personnel)

Mission: Newsgathering – 2026 Irish Fuel Protests, Dublin, Republic of Ireland (ROI)

1. MISSION OVERVIEW

A four-person Reuters team is deploying to Dublin, ROI, to cover the 2026 Irish Fuel Protests — an ongoing, rapidly escalating series of nationwide demonstrations that began 7 April 2026.

The protests are an ongoing series of nationwide demonstrations that began on 7 April 2026, primarily led by farmers, hauliers, and transport-dependent workers, causing widespread disruption to transport networks, fuel supply chains, and economic activity across the country.

The protests emerged amid a sharp increase in global energy prices linked to the 2026 Iran war, most notably the closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran, which significantly raised the prices of petrol and diesel in Ireland.

The team will conduct interviews, ground-level camera work, and drone operations. As of the date of this briefing (Day 5), the situation has escalated to Defence Forces deployment, Garda-declared exceptional event status, and a national fuel supply emergency. The mission is viable but requires strict operational controls.

2. AREA THREAT ASSESSMENT

-

Protests are now in their fifth day; truck and tractor drivers are staging blockades at Ireland's sole fuel refinery and several depots, with the main highway around Dublin closed alongside six other major roadways.

-

Fears that around a third of Ireland's 1,500 filling stations could run dry; approximately 600 have already done so as of the date of this briefing.

-

The Irish Defence Forces have deployed four heavy-lift recovery trucks to physically tow large HGVs and tractors obstructing critical infrastructure.

-

Firefighters faced significant delays responding to emergencies due to disruption caused by the protest in Dublin city centre; Dublin Fire Brigade has appealed to protesters to allow emergency vehicles free passage.

- Patients and staff have been delayed getting to health appointments; Children's Health Ireland reported impacts at Crumlin, Connolly, Tallaght, and Temple Street hospitals.
- Far-right figures attended protest leadership meetings; a Leitrim councillor who advocated an anti-war message was shouted down, and online threats against him — including that his head "should have been cracked off the wall" — subsequently appeared.
- Ireland's Minister for Justice stated that fuel protesters are being "manipulated" by "outside actors," specifically naming British far-right activist Tommy Robinson as seeking to exploit the protests for political purposes.
- The US State Department advisory specifically warns that large-scale political demonstrations may occur with little notice and could disrupt a visitor's trip.
- Ireland's broader security environment remains stable with no active terrorism threats targeting tourists.
- Gardaí not wearing identification badges and lacking awareness of human rights standards have been flagged as emerging issues in the policing of Irish protests.
- In Dublin, while the majority of protests have been facilitated without significant intervention, legal observers documented a higher tendency for Gardaí to intervene and to use force.
- Dublin Airport is advising passengers travelling to and from the airport to allow extra time due to delays and disruption caused by the protests.
- Fire brigades are restricting responses to non-life-threatening call-outs, and the National Ambulance Service is curtailing transfers as one-third of the country's petrol stations run dry.

3. KINETIC THREAT LEVELS

THREAT CATEGORY	LIKELIHOOD	SEVERITY	RATING
Crowd crush / vehicle strike at protest blockades	High	Moderate	HIGH
Hostile engagement with far-right elements at protest perimeter	Moderate	Moderate	MODERATE
Garda use of force (pepper spray, baton) at flashpoints	Moderate	Moderate	MODERATE
Equipment theft / snatch in crowded protest zones	Moderate	Low	MODERATE
Emergency services access failure during medical incident	High	High	HIGH
Drone seizure / prosecution for unlicensed flight	High	Moderate	HIGH
Civil disorder escalation (overnight, alcohol-linked)	Low	Moderate	LOW
Road traffic accident during mission movement	Moderate	Moderate	MODERATE

4. LEGAL & REGULATORY CONTEXT

Press Freedom Status

Journalists in Ireland are largely free to work without significant cultural constraints, and the overall climate for press freedom is positive, with journalists able to work freely and without interference.

Ireland is ranked 15th globally in the RSF World Press Freedom Index.

Ireland's 2026 Defamation Act reforms, enacted in February, introduced enhanced protection for public interest journalism and anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) provisions, improving the legal environment for investigative reporters.

The Irish Defamation Bill introduces groundbreaking procedural safeguards to address the risk of weaponising defamation laws, including an anti-SLAPP defence and the ability to apply for early dismissal.

Journalist / Operative Legal Rights

Journalism is not licensed in Ireland. No accreditation is required to report in public spaces. However, interviewing police sources has been virtually impossible since the Garda Síochána Act of 2005, which prohibits law enforcement from speaking to journalists without prior authorisation, under penalty of dismissal, a fine, or up to seven years in prison.

Teams should expect no on-the-record comment from individual Gardaí.

Equipment Restrictions – Drones

Dublin has significant airspace restrictions due to Dublin Airport, Casement Aerodrome (Baldonnel), and several restricted zones over the city centre; most of Dublin's urban area falls within controlled airspace.

Dublin Airport's 5 km no-fly radius covers a large area of the city. Hospital helipads at Beaumont, the Mater, and St. James's create additional restricted zones. Phoenix Park is an absolute prohibited zone. Military facilities and regular Garda Air Support Unit operations add temporary restrictions.

Flying a drone in a red zone without authorisation is illegal and can result in prosecution. To operate commercially in a red zone, you need a UAS Flight Authorisation from the IAA (Irish Aviation Authority), ATC (Air Traffic Control) coordination, and a compliant risk assessment.

Fixed-charge fines from €500 apply from August 2025.

Maximum prosecution fine on indictment: €500,000 or imprisonment.

The Irish Aviation Authority or the Gardaí can take away a drone if they believe it is likely to be used in breach of regulations.

Camera Restrictions

No restriction on cameras in public places.

If operating a drone with a camera capable of recording identifiable persons, the operator is a data controller under GDPR. Any processing of personal data must be done in compliance with data protection law, and a legal basis must be established.

Detention Risk

Low for credentialed journalists operating within press law. Risk elevates near critical infrastructure (fuel depots, Dublin Port) where legal observers have documented Gardaí giving Section 8 Public Order Act directions and then quickly escalating, using physical force or issuing arrests within seconds.

5. HOSTILE ACTOR PROFILES

Decentralised Protest Leadership (Grassroots) — Type: Civil / Activist

> **Motivation:**

Rising fuel costs are making it increasingly difficult to sustain businesses, particularly in sectors heavily dependent on diesel.

> **Targeting behaviour:** Non-specific; media generally tolerated but confrontational elements have been noted.

Gardaí are probing threats against journalists covering protests.

> **Known TTPs:**

Slow-moving convoys on motorways such as the M1 and M50, and blocking of main roads in Dublin, using large trucks and tractors to disrupt traffic.

Social media (WhatsApp, Telegram) coordination.

Far-Right Elements — Type: Other (Domestic Extremist)

> **Motivation:**

Outside actors, including British far-right actors, are seeking to manipulate the fuel protesters for their own political purposes.

> **Targeting behaviour:**

Far-right figures were present at protest leadership meetings; online threats have followed those perceived as critical or "against" the movement.

History of targeting journalists online and in person.

Previous anti-immigration demonstrations turned violent, with protesters throwing fireworks, flares, rocks, and bottles at Gardaí and a Garda vehicle being set on fire.

> **Known TTPs:** Online harassment of reporters, doxxing, physical intimidation near protest peripheries, late-night escalation.

An Garda Síochána (Riot/Public Order Units) — Type: State

> **Motivation:** Maintain order; Garda has declared an "exceptional event" status.

> **Targeting behaviour:** Primarily focused on protesters; journalists caught in crowd-control actions at flashpoints face collateral risk.

> **Known TTPs:**

Issues observed include excessive use of force, misuse of Section 8 of the Public Order Act, and Gardaí not wearing badge numbers when policing protests.

Pepper spray and batons deployed at previous flashpoints (Dublin Port, October 2025).

6. DIGITAL SECURITY

- > **Devices:** All team devices should be encrypted. Use full-disk encryption and strong passphrases. Enable remote wipe. Do not use personal social media on work devices.
 - > **Communications:** Use end-to-end encrypted messaging (Signal preferred) for all team communications. Avoid SMS/plain calls for operationally sensitive coordination.
 - > **Network Risks:** Irish broadband and mobile networks (Vodafone, Eir, Three) are standard EU-regulation compliant. No known state interception risk in ROI. Public Wi-Fi at protest sites should be avoided entirely; use mobile data or a hardware VPN.
 - > **Social Media / Digital Footprint:**
Grassroots organisations coordinated convoys and demonstrations through social media platforms. Monitor protest WhatsApp/Telegram channels for real-time movement intelligence. Do not publish location data or team movements in real time. Be aware that far-right actors actively monitor media coverage of these protests for targets.
 - > **Recommended Tools:** Signal (comms), ProtonVPN or Mullvad (network), Wire (backup comms), Google Maps offline (for navigation in blocked zones), TII Traffic (traffic.tii.ie) for live road closure monitoring.
 - > **Drone Digital Protocols:** All drone flights must be pre-planned using the IAA UAS Geographical Zone Map. File NOTAM notifications and obtain IAA Flight Authorisation before any flight in Dublin urban areas. Contact IAA at fod@iaa.ie / +353 1 671 8655 before deployment.
-

7. MEDICAL & CASEVAC

Local Medical Infrastructure Quality

Modern medical facilities and highly skilled medical practitioners are available in Ireland.

However, the fuel protests are actively degrading emergency response capacity.

Fire brigades are restricting responses to non-life-threatening call-outs, and the National Ambulance Service is curtailing transfers as one-third of the country's petrol stations run dry.

Nearest Trauma Facility (from O'Connell Street / protest zone)

- > **St. James's Hospital** — James's Street, Dublin 8 (Primary Major Trauma Centre). Approximately 3 km south-west of O'Connell Street — however, road access is severely disrupted. Verify routes before

movement.

-
- > **Mater Misericordiae University Hospital** — Eccles Street, Dublin 7. Approximately 1 km north-west of O'Connell Street. Nearest facility but has a helipad restriction zone above it — do not fly drones in vicinity.
-
- > **Beaumont Hospital** — Beaumont Road, Dublin 9. Regional trauma centre, north Dublin.
-

Recommended Vaccinations / Prophylactics

Travellers should be up to date with routine vaccination courses and boosters as recommended in their home country, including measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and diphtheria-tetanus-polio vaccine. Standard EU travel health precautions apply. No malaria, yellow fever, or tropical disease risk. Carry a standard trauma first-aid kit given degraded ambulance response times.

Emergency Extraction Routes and Contacts

-
- > Primary: Dublin Airport via M1 (monitor for blockades via TII Traffic app in real time). Alternate airport access via R132 (Swords Road) if M1 is blocked.
-
- > Secondary extraction: Dublin Port → Holyhead by ferry (Irish Ferries / Stena Line) if airside access is compromised.
-
- > Dublin Airport is advising passengers to allow extra time due to protest disruption on approach roads. Plan minimum 3 hours additional transit time.
-
- > Medical evacuation provider: International SOS (ISOS) — +353 1 241 4400 (Dublin). Europ Assistance also active in ROI.
-
-

8. GO / NO-GO TRIGGERS

GO conditions:

-
- > Ground team can reach O'Connell Street area via foot or bicycle from pre-agreed secure accommodation south of the Liffey
-
- > Garda press liaison contact established in advance of deployment to protest sites
-
- > Drone IAA authorisation confirmed in writing before kit is transported to the field
-
- > Communications check (Signal) confirmed across all 4 team members
-

- > Vehicle fuel confirmed full before each sortie (fuel shortage is acute; do not rely on enroute refuelling)
-
- > Team safety briefing completed, including designated extraction rally point
-

ABORT triggers:

- > Defence Forces actively clearing O'Connell Street or O'Connell Bridge via force (vehicle removal operation underway)
-
- > Far-right elements confirmed present and mobilising around press or camera positions
-
- > Garda Section 8 direction issued to team or bystanders immediately adjacent — comply immediately and withdraw
-
- > Team member sustains injury and ambulance response is not confirmed within 15 minutes — activate own CASEVAC (Casualty Evacuation) to nearest hospital by foot/taxi
-
- > Dublin Port blockaded (escalation indicator: fuel supply crisis enters critical phase, potential for rapid disorder spike)
-
- > Any team member receives online threats linked to their visible news-gathering activity at the protests
-

8B. AIRSPACE & BORDER STATUS

ROUTE / BORDER	STATUS	LAST VERIFIED	NOTES
EIDW / Dublin Airport	OPEN — OPERATIONAL	11 Apr 2026	
Active NOTAM: mobile cranes operating in the vicinity of the airport (AIRAC AIP Supplement Nr 002, effective 19 Feb 2026), causing increased approach minima on RWY 16, 28L, 28R, and 34.			
Road access delayed by protests on M1/M50 — allow 3+ hrs			
Dublin Airspace (UAS / Drone)	RESTRICTED	Mar 2026 (IAA data)	

ROUTE / BORDER	STATUS	LAST VERIFIED	NOTES
Most of Dublin's urban area falls within controlled airspace due to Dublin Airport, Casement Aerodrome, and city centre restricted zones.			
IAA authorisation required before any commercial drone flight			
EISN FIR (Irish FIR)	OPEN — NO CONFLICT RISK	11 Apr 2026	
EASA CZIB 2026-03-R5 advises operators to avoid airspace of Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, UAE, Oman, and Saudi Arabia			
— Irish FIR is not listed; no conflict zone risk			
Ireland–UK Land Border (Northern Ireland)	OPEN	11 Apr 2026	No passport control. Monitor: AI-generated protest posters have appeared advertising fuel protests in Northern Ireland — minor disruption risk if protests spread
Dublin Port (Sea)	OPEN — MONITOR	11 Apr 2026	
No reported issues at Dublin port in terms of supply leaving, but around half of Ireland's petrol and diesel enters through Dublin port — if that flow is disrupted, shortages would worsen rapidly nationwide.			
Concern noted that protesters may target port			
Shannon Airport (SNN / EINN)	OPEN — MONITOR	11 Apr 2026	
Regular demonstrations at Shannon Airport over US military aircraft use.			
Not primary mission location but relevant if extraction routing is required			

9. EMERGENCY CONTACTS

SERVICE	NUMBER	NOTES
Police / Emergency (Garda)	999 or 112	
Dial 112 or 999 for emergency police support in Ireland.		
Response times degraded in city centre due to protest blockades		
Ambulance	999 or 112	
Ambulance services are widely available; dial 999 or 112 for emergency medical services.		
Note: NAS curtailing transfers due to fuel crisis – self-CASEVAC to nearest hospital may be required		
Fire	999 or 112	Dublin Fire Brigade Townsend Street HQ affected by blockades; alternative mobilisation routes in use
British Embassy Dublin	+353 1 205 3700	29 Merrion Road, Dublin 4. 24-hr emergency line for British nationals
US Embassy Dublin	+353 1 668 8777	
Report crimes to local police by dialling 999 or 112 and contact the US Embassy at +353-1-668-8777.		
42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4		
Mater Misericordiae University Hospital	+353 1 803 2000	Eccles Street, Dublin 7. Nearest to O'Connell Street protest zone (~1 km). Emergency dept.
St. James's Hospital (Major Trauma)	+353 1 410 3000	James's Street, Dublin 8. Primary major trauma centre. Access via south quays or Luas Red Line (currently operating)
Medical Evacuation – ISOS	+353 1 241 4400	International SOS Dublin. 24-hr medevac, repatriation, medical advice
Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) – Drone Ops	+353 1 671 8655 / fod@iaa.ie	Contact for drone UAS Flight Authorisation and pre-flight clearance

SERVICE	NUMBER	NOTES
TII Traffic Live Road Updates	traffic.tii.ie	Real-time road closure map for national network — critical for mission movement planning

10. DOS AND DON'TS

DO:

#	ACTION	REASON
1	Carry clearly visible press credentials (vest, lanyard, and laminated Reuters ID) at all times in the field	Distinguishes team from protest participants and reduces risk of Garda Section 8 direction or hostile engagement
2	Secure IAA UAS Flight Authorisation in writing before deploying drones anywhere in the Dublin urban area	Most of Dublin falls within controlled or restricted airspace; unauthorised flight risks drone seizure, €500+ on-the-spot fines, and criminal prosecution
3	Pre-plan all ground movements on foot using alternate routes that bypass O'Connell Bridge and the north quays	These remain the primary blockade zones; vehicle and pedestrian access is unpredictable and can close without warning
4	Brief the full team on a single designated emergency rally point south of the Liffey (e.g., Trinity College front gates) in case of team separation	City centre road closures and communication outages could isolate team members during a rapid Garda or military clearance operation
5	Fill all team vehicles to maximum fuel capacity before each operational sortie	Approximately 600 filling stations have run dry nationally; do not assume fuel availability enroute
6	Monitor TII Traffic (traffic.tii.ie) and the Garda Traffic X account in real time throughout operations	Protest convoy routes and road closures are changing by the hour; advance intelligence prevents team becoming trapped in blocked zones
7	Establish pre-mission contact with Garda Press Office and obtain a liaison number before entering protest areas	Garda have declared an "exceptional event"; having a direct press contact reduces risk of equipment seizure and speeds resolution of any detainment incident

DON'T:

#	ACTION	REASON
1	Don't attempt drone flights over O'Connell Street, O'Connell Bridge, or any active protest blockade without explicit IAA authorisation and a filed NOTAM	These areas are within Dublin's controlled airspace; Garda Air Support Unit operations and heavy vehicle activity create collision and seizure risk
2	Don't approach or film individuals identified as far-right protest figures (Duffy, McConnell) without a second team member present and a clear exit route available	These individuals have a documented history of threatening behaviour toward perceived critics and media
3	Don't rely on Luas Green Line or Dublin Bus as operational transport during mission	Luas Green Line between St. Stephen's Green and Dominick Street remains suspended; Dublin Bus has cancelled over 16 routes — use Luas Red Line or cycling only

// END OF REPORT

Prepared by RiskBrief Intelligence Engine