



# Global Nonviolent Action Database

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## Scots campaign for independence 2012-2014

*Time period notes: May 25, 2012 - September 18, 2014*

25-MAY

2012

to: 18-SEP

2014

**Country:** Scotland

**Location City/State/Province:** *Whole country*

**Location Description:** *Whole country*

**Goals:**

Independence from UK

### Methods

#### Methods in 1st segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 038. Marches
- Other... › Social Media Campaign

#### Methods in 2nd segment:

- 006. Group or mass petitions
- Other... › Social Media Campaign

#### Methods in 3rd segment:

- 006. Group or mass petitions
- Other... › Social Media Campaign

#### Methods in 4th segment:

- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- Other... › Social Media Campaign

#### Methods in 5th segment:

- 006. Group or mass petitions
- Other... › Social Media Campaign

## Methods in 6th segment:

- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 036. Performances of plays and music
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- Other... › Social Media Campaign

## Classifications

### Classification:

Change

### Cluster:

National/Ethnic Identity

### Group characterization:

- Scottish nationalists

## Leaders, partners, allies, elites

### Leaders:

Blair Jenkins, chief executive of Yes Scotland; Dennis Canavan, chair of advisory board. Stephen Noon was a strategist.

### Partners:

Scottish National Party, the Scottish Green Party, and the Scottish Socialist Party

### External allies:

Women for Independence, Business for Scotland, Farming for Yes, Crofters for Yes

### Involvement of social elites:

Some famous Scottish actors endorsed independence: Sean Connery, Alan Cumming, Brian Cox; Poet Liz Lohead; musician Pat Kane; tennis player Andy Murray

## Joining/exiting order of social groups

### Groups in 1st Segment:

- Actors: Sean Connery
- Alan Cumming
- Brian Cox
- musician Pat Kane;
- poet Liz Lohead

### Groups in 2nd Segment:

- Actress Elaine C Smith

### Groups in 3rd Segment:

### Groups in 4th Segment:

**Groups in 5th Segment:**

**Groups in 6th Segment:**

- Andy Murray

**Segment Length:** 20 weeks

## Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

### **Opponents:**

"Better Together" was the opposition campaign.

### **Nonviolent responses of opponent:**

Rallies, petitions, social media and internet videos, debates.

### **Campaigner violence:**

While not physical violence, there was a problem with written attacks on people who satirized the independence debate. The campaign rejected the behavior. They have condemned 'any and all forms of intimidation'.

## Success Outcome

### **Success in achieving specific demands/goals:**

1 point out of 6 points

### **Survival:**

1 point out of 1 points

### **Growth:**

3 points out of 3 points

### **Notes on outcomes:**

Large growth of support for goal over the campaign. 45% favored independence in vote.

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In 2012, the United Kingdom included Scotland along with England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Scotland had been an independent country from 1320 until 1707 when it joined with England to create the Kingdom of Great Britain. In 1999, the UK Parliament created the Scottish Parliament to provide limited self-rule. The Scottish National Party, which advocated Scottish independence, won control of the Scottish government in 2007. They began a "National Conversation" about possible paths to full independence or increased powers within the United Kingdom. In 2011, the Scottish National Party won a majority in the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish government made an agreement with the United Kingdom government called the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013 and set a date of 18 September 2014 for a referendum on independence for Scotland.

The Scottish National Party, the Scottish Green Party, and the Scottish Socialist Party created an organization called "Yes Scotland" to lead an effort to win a vote for independence in the Scottish independence referendum, in 2014. The goal was re-establishment of Scotland as an

independent state. The opposition to independence formed an organization in favor of preserving the union with the United Kingdom called “Better Together”. The UK government opposed independence for Scotland. The campaign for independence launched 25 May 2012 creating Yes Scotland and hired Blair Jenkins as its chief executive and Dennis Canavan, as chair of its advisory board. The goal was to win the referendum and then implement independence for Scotland.

Yes Scotland decided to use a petition campaign as an organizing tool for building support for the yes vote and independence. They set a goal of 1 million signatures on their petition in favor of independence. There were 4.4 million eligible voters by 2014 so that goal represented about 25% of the electorate.

The contest over the political status of the region took place between two competing nonviolent campaigns, one for independence and one for preserving the union, using similar methods. They both used rallies and marches as well as social media and internet videos, fundraising events, debates, and even petitions etc.

The Yes Scotland campaign used community meetings and talking to people door-to-door to contact voters and solicit signatures on the petition, as well as distribute information and conduct debates. On 24 June 2012, they held forty-five such events around the country. The signature effort relied on face-to-face conversations.

Yes Scotland held their first major rally on 22 September 2012 in Edinburgh, the capital and second largest city, with participation by an estimated five thousand supporters. Organizers decentralized most of the campaign work into local activity with small public meetings to explain the independence campaign and argue for a “yes” vote, and to collect signatures on the petition resulting from the growth in support. As of 1 January 2013, Yes Scotland had set up more than one hundred grassroots groups to recruit support for independence and to solicit for signatures on the petition.

The opposition, Better Together, also worked to recruit organizers to convince friends and family to vote for union. Yes Scotland launched the Glasgow part of the campaign on 16 January 2013 and estimated nearly seven hundred attendees from various groups, which they said was their largest event to date.

In response to falling polling numbers in January 2013, Yes Scotland used its more than one hundred thirty local groups to distribute half a million leaflets around the country in one weekend.

The campaign held another large march and rally in Edinburgh on 21 September 2013 with estimates as high as thirty thousand participants with speakers from the various parties involved in the coalition. In the week before the vote, 18 September 2014, both sides held rallies and

marches to motivate their supporters to actually vote.

Both campaigns used social media to promote local events around the country and provide information as well as links to off-site resources for their supporters. Yes Scotland made videos of supporters talking about why people should vote their way and uploaded them to an internet web site, youtube.com, that hosted videos for streaming for free. Sometimes those videos included celebrity supporters. By 22 August 2014, Yes Scotland had collected their goal of 1 million signatures on their petition.

Scots voted on 18 September 2014 on the question of independence and chose against independence by 55% vs 45% with 85% of registered voters participating, a very high turnout. The effort failed to achieve their goal of independence. The campaign did, however, result in promises from the UK Parliament to extend new powers to the Scottish Parliament. The exact nature of the new powers was not specified by the time of the vote. The campaign also strengthened the pro-independence political parties, as their memberships grew after the campaign.

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