



Key findings of the Manchester Arena Inquiry released

Bladed weapons attack in Wurzburg

Vehicle-as-weapon attack in London, Ontario

Ex-soldier found guilty of neo-Nazi terror offences

Home Secretary warns of post-lockdown terror plots

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Monthly *Threat* Update

June 2021

Threat Overview

There were no significant attacks or disrupted terrorist plots in the United Kingdom in June 2021. However, a bladed weapons attack against shoppers in Wurzburg by a suspected Islamist extremist killed three and injured eight. In Ontario, a vehicle-as-a-weapon attack by a suspected right-wing extremist killed four members of a Canadian-Pakistani family.

On 17 June, the first report related to the Manchester Arena Inquiry was released. The report highlighted serious shortcomings by multiple parties with responsibility for securing the Arena prior to the 2017 attack. The inquiry made several recommendations, including endorsing the proposed 'Protect Duty', which is currently under public consultation. The report underscores the importance of businesses taking responsibility to protect the public and to take proactive and appropriate steps to reduce or mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.

In the UK, a former serviceman was convicted of terror and explosive offences after police discovered chemical stockpiles and right-wing extremist propaganda at his home in 2020. Finally, the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, warned that Britain faces a potential wave of terrorist attacks as pandemic-related restrictions are eased, citing the impact of mental health problems as a result of the pandemic as a key driver of further attacks.



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Key findings of the Manchester Arena Inquiry released

On 17 June 2021, the first of three reports by the Manchester Arena Inquiry, chaired by the Hon Sir John Saunders, was published. The Manchester Arena Inquiry was established by the Home Secretary in 2019 to investigate the 22 May 2017 Manchester Arena attack which killed 22 people and injured hundreds more. The attack was the deadliest in the UK in more than a decade. The report found “serious shortcomings” by multiple parties charged with securing the venue.

[See the full report here.](#)

By investigating security arrangements at the venue and identifying missed opportunities for detecting and stopping the attack, the inquiry sought to reduce the risk of similar attacks occurring, and



Sir John Saunders, chairman of the Manchester Arena Inquiry, and Sophie Cartwright QC, arriving at Manchester Magistrates Court, ahead of the publication. Photo: PA Images / Alamy Stock Photo

to identify methods to mitigate the impact of future attacks. The report criticises Arena operators SMG, its contracted security providers, Showsec and the British Transport Police (BTP). The report also highlights failures by individuals in the lead up to and on the day of the attack.

Key findings from the report highlight several issues which contributed to these missed opportunities, including inadequate training for security personnel and a lack of input by appropriately qualified counter-terrorism experts; the placement of the security perimeter; deficient venue risk assessments; and general complacency over the risk of terrorism and the issue of responsibility for “grey area” protection.

The report also includes several recommendations, including endorsing the introduction of “Protect Duty” legislation, which, if passed into law, would require venues and businesses that allow public access and local authorities to take proactive and appropriate steps to reduce or mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack. Had the necessary precautions and processes been undertaken, the report maintains that the Manchester Arena attacker may have been identified as a threat and stopped on or before 22 May 2017. Saunders stated in the report, that whilst it was likely the attacker would still have detonated his device if confronted earlier, “the loss of life and injury is highly likely to have been less”.

The Protect Duty is anticipated to become law in early-mid 2022. The report provides significant detail on what issues the Duty should attempt to address, and the potential burden on businesses. Pool Re SOLUTIONS will continue to work with the government to ensure insurance partners’ interests are best represented in the consultation process and have already outlined several issues of concern to the Home Office which may arise from the proposed legislation.

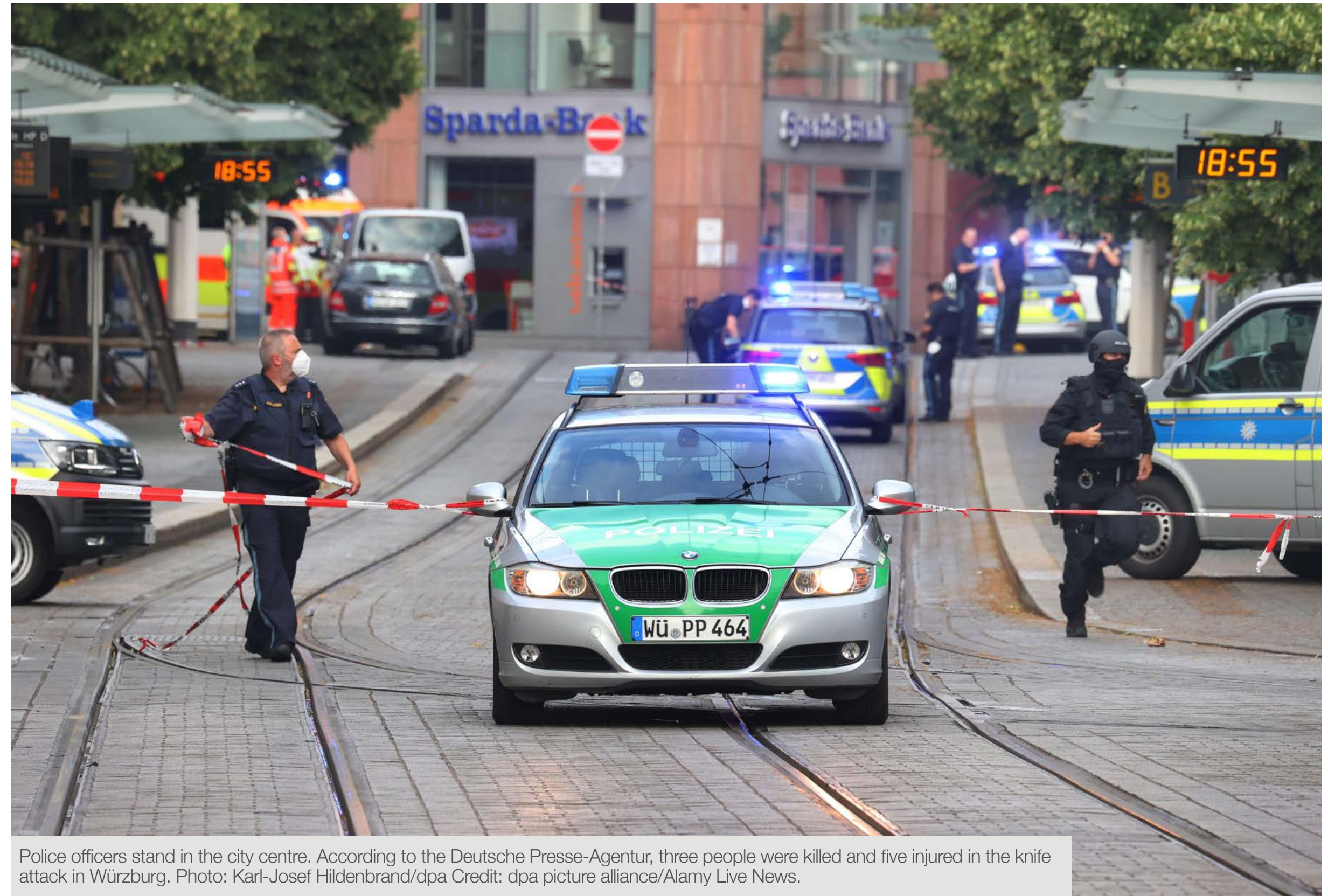
Bladed weapons attack in Würzburg

In the afternoon of 25 June, a homeless Somali refugee stole a knife from a Woolworths in central Würzburg, Germany and proceeded to use it to attack shop staff and members of the public until responding officers shot, injured, and detained him. Three people were killed, and a further seven injured. The attacker reportedly acted alone. He had a criminal record and a history of mental health problems. While police discovered no connections to overseas terrorist groups, they believe he was motivated by Islamist extremism.

The attacker's profile was typical of those responsible for opportunistic, low-complexity attacks in Europe in recent years. It is unclear how he was radicalised,

however, in such lone actor attacks, the assailant's engagement with extremist ideas is often only one of several driving factors.

The incident underscores the considerable difficulty of preventing these kind of attacks—it is unlikely there was any firm evidence of intent prior to the attack, and stringent restrictions on the sale of kitchen knives are impractical. Consequently, the methodology will continue to appeal to unsophisticated terrorist actors.

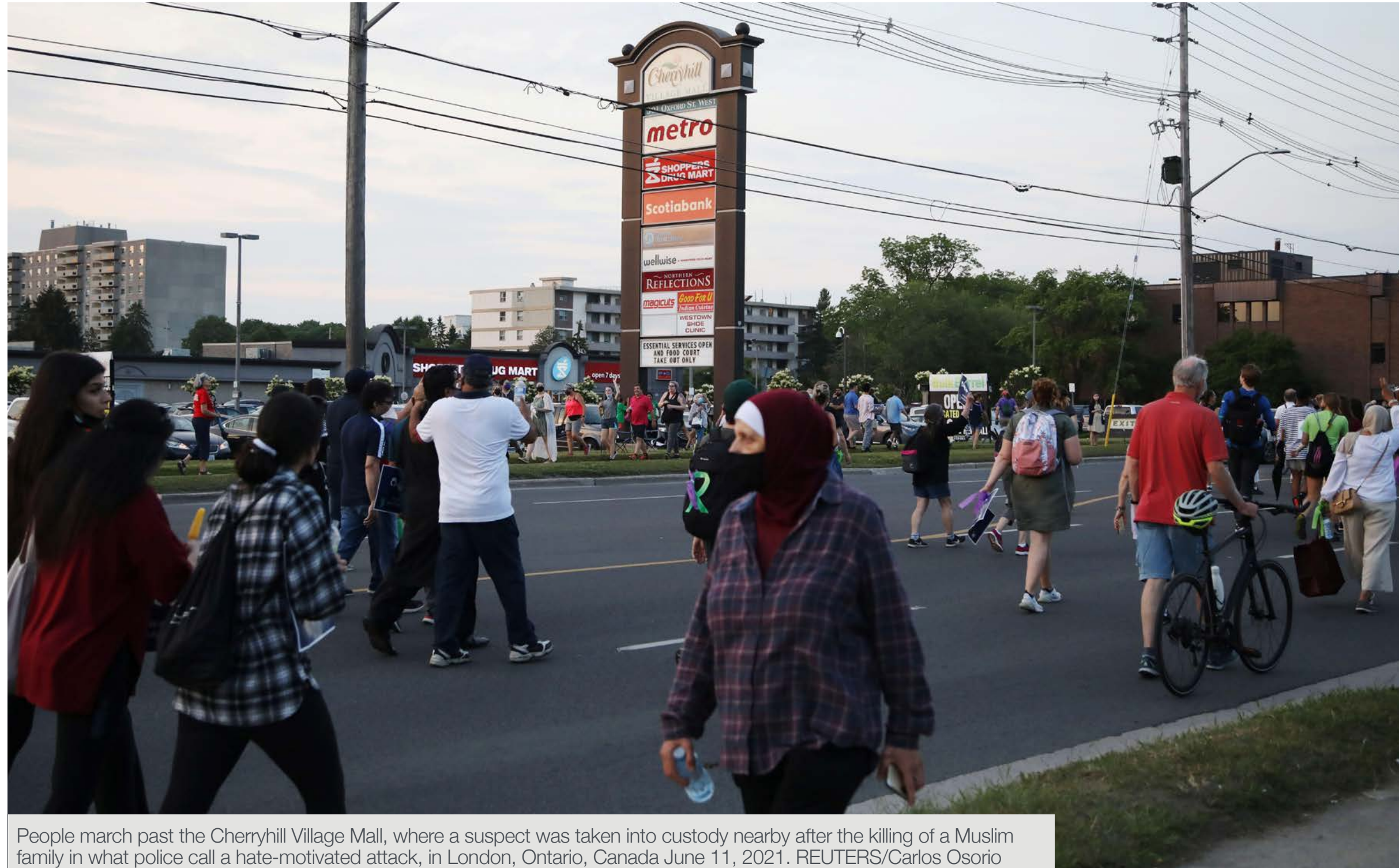


Police officers stand in the city centre. According to the Deutsche Presse-Agentur, three people were killed and five injured in the knife attack in Würzburg. Photo: Karl-Josef Hildenbrand/dpa Credit: dpa picture alliance/Alamy Live News.

Vehicle-as-weapon attack in London, Ontario

On the evening of 6 June, a man drove a truck into a Pakistani-Canadian family at a junction in London, Ontario, Canada, before leaving the scene. Four people were killed, and another was wounded. Shortly after, the attacker confessed to the crime and was arrested. He reportedly wore tactical clothing adorned with far-right imagery. The Canadian Prime Minister later called the incident a terrorist attack in a media statement.

The attack was the first by a right-wing terrorist since a marauding firearms attack against a mosque in Quebec in 2017. While self-proclaimed 'incel' Alex Minassian used a van to conduct a vehicle-as-a-weapon (VaW) attack in April 2017, that was not treated as terrorism.



People march past the Cherryhill Village Mall, where a suspect was taken into custody nearby after the killing of a Muslim family in what police call a hate-motivated attack, in London, Ontario, Canada June 11, 2021. REUTERS/Carlos Osorio

In response to a significant increase in VaW attacks in recent years, hostile vehicle mitigation measures (HVM) have become commonplace in city centres in Europe. However, in low-density cities with extensive road networks, securing pavements and other pedestrian zones can be challenging. It does not appear that HVM were present at the junction where the attack occurred.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many local authorities and businesses have sought to make use of roadside areas to accommodate social distancing and outside dining. They should be cognizant of the vulnerability of such spaces to VaW attacks and take appropriate steps to mitigate the risk.

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Ex-soldier found guilty of neo-Nazi terror offences

On 15 June, Dean Morrice, a former British serviceman, was given an 18-year sentence following his conviction of terrorism and explosives charges. Morris was in possession of right-wing extremist propaganda and expressed support for the 2019 Christchurch mosque attacks in New Zealand.

Police found stockpiled chemicals, including gunpowder and large quantities of incendiary materials when they raided his home in August 2020. Police also found ball bearings, pipes, instructions

for manufacturing IEDs, and 3D-printed guns, and a handbook on how to encrypt data stored on a mobile phone. According to police sources, he had not yet planned to launch an attack.

The conviction underscores the potential threat posed by former and serving military and security personnel holding extremist views. Such individuals often have specialised training and knowledge, and in some cases, access to military-grade weaponry, which makes the danger they pose particularly acute.



Ender, 3D printing machine recovered at the scene. Above: Dean Maurice.



Guitar adorned with stickers

Home Secretary warns of post-lockdown terror plots

On 29 June, the Home Secretary Priti Patel warned that Britain faces a potential wave of terrorist attacks as pandemic-related restrictions are eased. Patel cited the impact of mental health issues related to the pandemic, and the greater amount of time people have been spending online as factors driving radicalisation. Recently released Home Office statistics indicate that young people may be particularly vulnerable to radicalisation. The data showed that one in eight terrorist detainees is now a minor, with the average age of those charged with terror offences declining.

The end of 'lockdown' measures is likely to lead to an increase in terrorist

activity, as attack planning, postponed due to the pandemic, is resumed, and terrorists seek to take advantage of the return of crowds to undertake mass casualty attacks. However, the pandemic may also have a longer-term impact on the future frequency of terrorist attacks, with lockdown measures creating greater susceptibility to extremist ideas among the public, especially on the part of those spending excessive time alone or online. Whether this contributes to a sustained rise in counterterrorism casework in the medium-term remains to be seen.



Home Secretary Priti Patel. Photo REUTERS / Alamy Stock Photo.

Interesting reads:

The Insider Threat: Far-Right Extremism in the German Military and Police, CTC Sentinel
<https://ctc.usma.edu/the-insider-threat-far-right-extremism-in-the-german-military-and-police/>

The Threat Is the Network: The Multi-Node Structure of Neo-Fascist Accelerationism, CTC Sentinel
<https://ctc.usma.edu/the-threat-is-the-network-the-multi-node-structure-of-neo-fascist-accelerationism/>

After the Attack: Lessons for Governments and Journalists in Reporting Terrorist Incidents, ICCT
<https://icct.nl/publication/lessons-for-governments-journalists-in-reporting-terrorist-incidents/>

Abubakar Shekau: Nigeria's Boko Haram leader is dead, say rival militants, BBC
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-57378493>

European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2021 (TESAT), Europol
<https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2021-tesat>

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Understanding risk, enabling resilience

Whilst the human cost of terrorism is devastating, the financial impact an incident can have on communities, businesses and economies is generally greater than most realise.

At Pool Re we understand that terrorism is a significant multi-faceted peril that can expose businesses in a complex way. Like many other catastrophic perils, terrorism is a challenge which requires a collaborative approach.

We have been the UK's leading terrorism reinsurer for over a quarter of a

century. During this time our SOLUTIONS division have developed a specialist team of experts who can work with you to help you and your Policyholders understand and manage the terrorism threat.

We believe all organisations and businesses can benefit from a better understanding of the terrorism risk solutions available.

To find out more about Pool Re SOLUTIONS and how your organisation can take advantage of this service please contact us at: **solutions@poolre.co.uk**

Threat level

	Critical: an attack is highly likely in the near future	Severe: an attack is highly likely	Substantial: an attack is likely	Moderate: an attack is possible but not likely	Low: an attack is highly unlikely
Threat from terrorism to the UK:	○	○	●	○	○
Threat from Northern Ireland related terrorism to Northern Ireland:	○	●	○	○	○

Government advice

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