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**Monthly Threat Update January 2023**

# News Roundup

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## UK: UK to consider proscribing Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation

Reporting has suggested that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) will be officially proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK in the coming weeks.[1] The IRGC is a branch of the Iranian armed forces intended to protect the political system of Iran's Islamic Republic and is known to control Iran's most destructive military capabilities; including alleged access to CBRN material and a sophisticated cyber capability. It is almost certain that the IRGC extends its influence and potential threat to the UK through a highly capable and extensive network of covert assets and proxy groups that seek to subvert and influence the stability and prosperity of the UK.

Proscribing the group would make it a criminal offence to be associated in any way with the IRGC. It is almost certain that the proscription of the IRGC would further damage UK-Iranian relations. The group



Iranian elite revolutionary guards march during an annual military parade. Photo ATTA KENARE/AFP via Getty Images.

were designated as a terrorist organisation by the United States in 2019, prompting severe diplomatic backlash and a breakdown in US-Iranian relations.

It is highly likely that the Iranian threat to the UK will increase if the IRGC is proscribed. The Iranian State is known to retaliate against those who oppose or denigrate their regime.[2] It is unlikely that any retaliatory actions related to the IRGC in the UK would pose a significant physical threat to property. Instead, it would likely target individuals. In October 2022, Director General of MI5 Ken McCallum indicated there had been 10 Iranian plots to kidnap or kill Iranian citizens in the UK in the past 12 months.[3] As of 16 January, reporting suggests that the UK Labour Party have made further demands for the group to be proscribed after the execution of British-Iranian national, Alireza Akbari, who had been accused of spying for MI6.[4]

If the UK government moves to proscribe the IRGC, there is a realistic possibility that UK-based organisations and individuals with ties to the Iranian regime could respond negatively to the proscription of the IRGC. This could increase the vulnerability of organisations across the UK to Iranian backed insider threat and acts of retaliation.

While a decision on the proscription of the IRGC is expected in the coming weeks, the move by a UK government to proscribe a state-backed group would be unprecedented.

1   UK set to brand Iran's revolutionary guards as terrorists after Akbari execution | Foreign policy | The Guardian

2   Ibid.

3   Iran tried to assassinate British residents 10 times this year, MI5 chief reveals (telegraph.co.uk)

4   Declare IRGC a terror group after Alireza Akbari killing, Labour urges | The Independent

# News Roundup (continued)

## UK: Man arrested following uranium found at Heathrow Airport

On 14 January, a British citizen was arrested on suspicion of terror offences after traces of uranium were detected in a shipment of scrap metal at Heathrow Airport in December 2022.[5] The offence relates to the production or possession of radioactive material. Reports suggest a "very small" amount of uranium was detected at Heathrow Airport on a flight from Oman. The flight had allegedly originated in Pakistan.[6] Certain uranium isotopes can be harmful to humans, and the metal itself is toxic if ingested or inhaled. However, Commander Richard Smith, head of the Metropolitan Police's counter-terrorism command, stated that the incident did not appear to be linked to any direct threat to the public.[7] The investigation is ongoing.

The discovery of uranium at Heathrow Airport illustrates the security service's ability to detect Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials that could pose a threat to the

UK. While it is highly likely that terrorist actors would have the intent to conduct an attack using CBRN materials in the UK, it is highly unlikely that most UK terrorist actors would have the capability to conduct such an attack. As such, it is likely that state-sponsored actors would remain as the predominant CBRN threat to the UK.

5   Man in his 60s arrested over uranium found at Heathrow Airport: UK News - Sky News
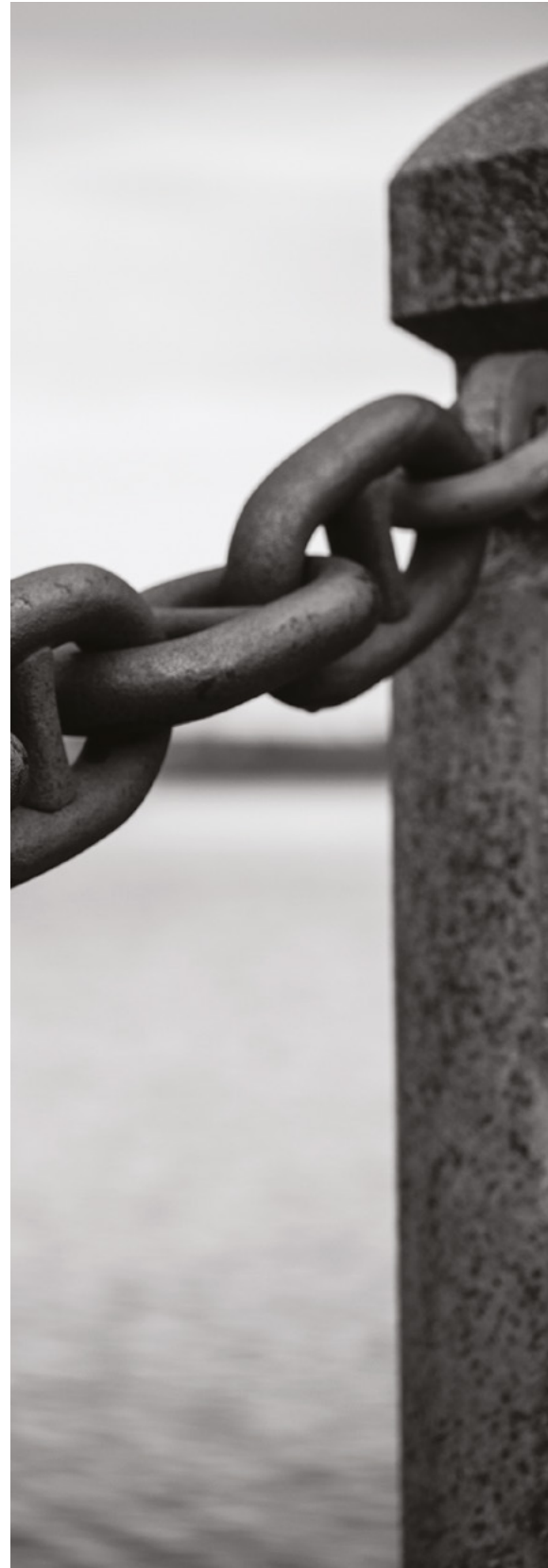
6   Ibid.

7   Ibid.

# POOL Re SOLUTIONS

**Risk Awareness**  **Risk Modelling**  **Risk Management**

## Understanding risk, enabling resilience

Whilst the human cost of terrorism is devasting, 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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CSSC Cross-sector Safety and Security Communications

SECURITY SERVICE MI5

COUNTER TERRORISM POLICING UK Protect

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RUN HIDE TELL

National Cyber Security Centre a part of GCHQ