

# Arenas



## Terrorism threat to Arenas

- It is almost certain that terrorist actors would have the intent to conduct attacks against arenas across the UK due to the high-profile nature of arena sites in the UK and the gathering of large crowds at their sites.<sup>1</sup>
- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted against an arena in the UK would be conducted by an individual or small cell using a low sophistication methodology. E.g., Bladed or Blunt Force Weapons, Vehicle as a Weapon, or Fire as a Weapon.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could have the capability to conduct a high-sophistication attack at arenas in the UK. E.g., Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), Person Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (PBIED), or Firearms attack. The complex nature of plotting a high-sophistication terrorist attack makes it highly likely that there will be greater opportunity for UK police and security services to disrupt potential attacks.
- The large crowds that gather at arenas almost certainly provide an attractive target for indiscriminate terrorist attacks. As such, it is likely that any terrorist attack against an arena would be conducted by an Islamist-inspired individual due to the ideologically driven intent to conduct indiscriminate attacks against members of the public in the UK.
- The assessments in this report were made using the PHIA Probability Yardstick, for further information please see the Assessment Methodology [section below](#).

### Location based threats to arenas in the UK

- It is highly likely that there would be a heightened terrorist threat to arenas in major cities and those in proximity to iconic sites and/or major transport hubs. There is a realistic possibility that arenas located in proximity to iconic sites and/or busy public spaces could be impacted by a Marauding Terrorist Attack in proximity to their site.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors could seek to target individual facilities at arena sites in the UK. This could include specific shops, restaurants and bars, cinemas, hotels, arcades, etc. that are frequently found at large arena complexes. It is recommended that readers of this report familiarise themselves with any of the specific sector threat assessments for facilities that are present at specific arena sites.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could seek to conduct an attack against smaller arenas that are located in smaller towns and cities in the UK due to the lack of other suitable targets in the nearby area compared to more urban environments.

### Previous terrorist incidents related to arenas in the UK and overseas

- Terrorist actors have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks against arenas in the UK, including:
  - 2017 Manchester;** An Islamist terrorist conducted a Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED) attack in the external foyer outside the AO arena in Manchester following a performance by music artist, Ariana Grande. There were 22 fatalities and hundreds more were injured.

### Other potential threats to arenas in the UK

- There is a realistic possibility that the threat posed to arenas could be dynamic and dependent on the nature of the acts performed or events held at any given site.
  - E.g., There is a realistic possibility that an arena could face a heightened threat from extreme right-wing and Islamist terrorist actors during an event featuring a high-profile LGBTQIA+ artist and associated crowd.
- Due to the busy and crowded nature of arena sites during events, it is almost certain that potential terrorist actors would be able to conduct hostile reconnaissance without detection. For potential terrorist actors conducting hostile reconnaissance, the formulaic and regular delivery of arena events could allow for the development of understanding about the security mitigations, best access points, and most suitable areas to target.
- Due to the sophisticated search and screening procedures at arenas in the UK, there is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors could prioritise attacks against an arena's external spaces, proximal locations, or at points of security challenge. E.g., Approaches to the arena, external concourses, transport hubs, security checkpoints, etc.
- There is a realistic possibility that there could be a heightened threat to arenas in the UK hosting high-profile individuals. E.g., Celebrities, politicians, influencers, etc.

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- There is a realistic possibility that staff employed at arenas could pose an insider threat in several ways, including:
  - Temporary staff, in-house staff, and/or third party providers could enable terrorist actors in the UK to access the site with malicious items by allowing such individuals to bypass security mitigations and vetting procedures in place.
  - Stagehands or security staff could grant terrorist actors access to high-profile guests or performers in the back-stage areas of an arena.
  - Third party vendors or service providers could exploit vehicular access to an arena site in order to smuggle attack devices or other malicious items.
- It is highly likely that the terrorism threat to arenas would be driven by the profile and attendance at any given site. E.g., it is highly likely that terrorist actors in the UK would prioritise attacks against major arenas (AO Arena Manchester, O2 Arena London, etc.) rather than smaller regional arenas, due to the greater media coverage, high attendance, and high-profile acts likely to attend such sites.

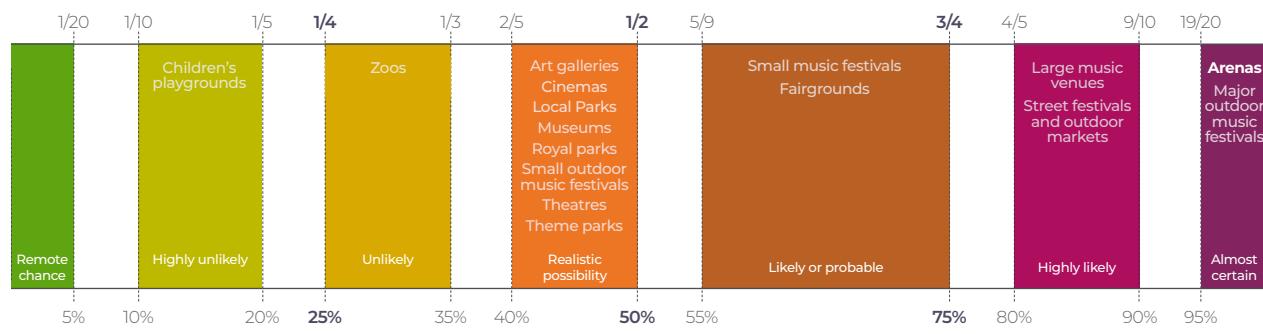
## Threat visualisation

The diagram below outlines the intent of terrorist actors in the UK to conduct attacks against arenas within the arts, culture and entertainment sector.

Terrorist intent can be defined as the desire and/or determination of an individual to conduct an attack against any given site.

The intent of terrorist actors to conduct an attack against the arts, culture and entertainment sector in the UK is subject to change based on the assessments outlined in this report.

**Note:** The terrorism threat to any given site is not based solely on intent, but also the capability of terrorist actors in the UK as outlined in this report. Terrorism threat is also mitigated by the UK's countrywide terrorism risk mitigation infrastructure including both public and private security and safety capabilities.



## Assessment Methodology

The assessments made in this report have been made using the Professional Head of Intelligence's "Probability Yardstick" (above). The Probability Yardstick is a standardised instrument used to provide a professional standard for intelligence assessment.

- Almost certain:** An event has a greater than 90% chance of occurring.
- Highly likely:** An event has a 76% to 90% chance of occurring.
- Likely:** An event has a 55% to 75% chance of occurring.
- Realistic possibility:** An event has a 40% to 54% chance of occurring.
- Unlikely:** An event has a 25% to 39% chance of occurring.
- Highly unlikely:** An event has an 10% to 24% chance of occurring.
- Remote chance:** An event has a less than 10% chance of occurring.

## Time spans

- Short Term:** 0–6 Months.
- In the next 12 months.**
- Medium Term:** 12 months–5 Years.
- Long Term:** 5+ Years.

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**Intelligence cut-off date: 06 February 2024**

For more information please contact [solutions@poolre.co.uk](mailto:solutions@poolre.co.uk)

## Bibliography

1. Arena is defined in this report as an enclosed venue with a roof and walls. Compared to stadia, arenas are relatively smaller and more intimate, and can accommodate both indoor sports and other events. Examples could include; the O2 Arena London, the OVO Arena Wembley London, Manchester Arena, etc.

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