

Fairgrounds

Terrorism threat to fairgrounds

- It is likely that terrorist actors in the UK would have the intent to conduct attacks against fairgrounds in the UK due to their publicly accessible nature and the routine gathering of large crowds of children and young adults at such sites.
- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted against a fairground would be conducted by an individual or a small cell using a low sophistication attack methodology. E.g., Bladed or Blunt Force Weapons, Vehicle as a Weapon, Fire as a Weapon, Fake Suicide Vest etc.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could prioritise the use of a Vehicle as a Weapon to conduct an attack against fairgrounds in the UK where there is vehicular access to the pedestrian areas of such sites.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could have the capability to conduct a high-sophistication attack at a fairground in the UK. E.g., Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), Person Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (PBIED), or Firearms attack. The complicated 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 fairgrounds almost certainly provide an attractive target for indiscriminate terrorist attacks. As such, it is highly likely that any terrorist attack against a fairground in the UK 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 fairgrounds in the UK

- It is likely that there is a heightened terrorist threat to fairgrounds in major cities and those in proximity to iconic sites and/or major transport hubs. There is a realistic possibility that fairgrounds 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 in the UK could seek to conduct an attack against fairgrounds 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 fairgrounds in the UK and overseas

- At this time, there have been no previous terrorist attacks against fairgrounds in the UK.
- Terrorist actors have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks against fairgrounds globally, including:
 - 2023 Belgium:** An individual was arrested for “attempted terrorist murder” after he allegedly plotted to conduct an attack during the Miss Belgium pageant at a fairground park in Plosaland. When arrested, the individual was reportedly in possession of two firearms and a bulletproof vest.¹
 - 2022 USA:** Media reporting suggests that a teenager was arrested after allegedly posting a threat to the Texas Fort Bend County fair on social media. The individual later admitted to making the threat and was charged with “Terrorist Threat”.²
 - 2016 Pakistan:** A faction of the Pakistan Taliban, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, claimed responsibility for a Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED) attack against a community of Christians celebrating Easter at an amusement park. Media reporting suggests there were more than 70 fatalities and over 300 people were injured.³
 - 2015 Syria:** Media reporting suggests that three civilians were wounded by rocket shells fired against the old Damascus International Fairground.⁴

Other potential threats to fairgrounds in the UK

- It is likely that there would be a heightened threat to fairgrounds during festive periods and holidays. E.g., It is almost certain that fairgrounds would have a higher footfall during the Christmas period or during summer and spring bank holidays. It is almost certain that large crowds that gather during busy periods would be an attractive target for terrorist attacks.
- It is highly likely that the terrorism threat to fairgrounds would be driven by the profile and attendance of each site. E.g., It is highly likely that terrorist actors in the UK would prioritise attacks against major fairgrounds with high-profile reputations and mass attendance. E.g., Winter Wonderland in London.

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- It is almost certain that any terrorist actor with the intent to conduct an attack against a fairground would have open access to the site and the capability to conduct uninterrupted hostile reconnaissance due to the relaxed security posture and publicly accessible nature of most fairgrounds in the UK.
- There is a realistic possibility that staff and vendors at fairgrounds could pose an Insider Threat in several ways, including:
 - Third party security staff and/or in-house staff could enable terrorist actors in the UK to access the site with malicious items by allowing such individuals to bypass any security mitigations and vetting procedures in place.
 - Third party vendors and/or in-house staff could exploit vehicular access to the site available to suppliers to bring in high-sophistication attack methodologies or to advance low-sophistication attack capabilities.
- There is a realistic possibility that there could be a heightened threat to any fairground with a pronounced link to a minority culture or community.

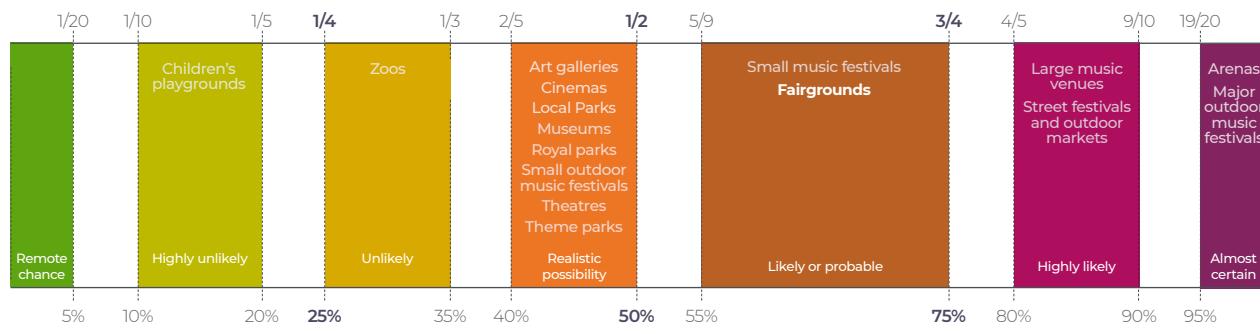
Threat visualisation

The diagram below outlines the intent of terrorist actors in the UK to conduct attacks against fairgrounds 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: 13 February 2024

For more information please contact solutions@poolre.co.uk

Bibliography

1. Miss Belgium attack: Suspect arrested for attempted terrorism - (brusselstimes.com)
2. 18-year-old arrested for alleged terrorist threat on Fort Bend County fair, deputies say - (click2houston.com)
3. Pakistan Taliban faction claims park attack on Lahore Christians - BBC News
4. Terrorists' shells hit church, mosque and Damascus Fairground, 5 civilians wounded – Syrian Arab News Agency (sana.sy)

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