

Cricket grounds



Terrorism threat to cricket grounds

- It is likely that terrorist actors in the UK would have the intent to conduct attacks against cricket grounds due to the routine gathering of large crowds and mass media coverage of events held at such sites.
- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted against a cricket ground 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 a cricket ground 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.
- It is highly likely that the threat posed to any cricket ground in the UK would be dynamic and dependent on the profile and attendance of the ground. E.g., It is almost certain that terrorist actors would prioritise attacks against matches hosted at major grounds such as The Oval, Lord's Cricket Ground, etc., compared to smaller, lesser-known grounds.
- 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 cricket grounds in the UK

- It is highly likely that there is an increased terrorism threat to cricket grounds in major cities and those in proximity to iconic sites and/or major transport hubs. There is a realistic possibility that cricket grounds 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 cricket grounds 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 cricket grounds in the UK and overseas

- At this time, there have been no previous attacks against cricket grounds in the UK.
- Terrorist actors have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks against, and in proximity to, cricket grounds globally, including:
 - **2023 Pakistan**; A terrorist attack in proximity to the Quetta stadium in Pakistan halted a Pakistan Super League exhibition cricket match between the Quetta Gladiators and the Peshawar Zalmi.¹
 - **2022 Pakistan**; Reporting suggests that an individual was arrested for threatening to conduct a terrorist attack against the Australian cricket team during its Lahore tour in Pakistan.²
 - **2010 India**; An Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack was conducted prior to an Indian Premier League cricket match between the Royal Challengers Bangalore and Mumbai Indians at the Bangalore stadium. Two of the devices were detonated, injuring 15. One further bomb was defused and two others were found in later searches of the stadium.³
 - **2009 Pakistan**; Six Sri Lankan cricketers were injured following a Firearms attack conducted against the country's team bus. This was the first time a cricket team had been directly targeted by terrorist actors.⁴

Other potential threats to cricket grounds in the UK

- Due to the crowded nature of cricket grounds during major events, it is almost certain that potential terrorist actors would be able to conduct hostile reconnaissance without detection. The formulaic and regular delivery of cricket matches could allow for the development of understanding about the security mitigations, best access points, and most suitable areas to target at any given site.
- Due to the sophisticated search and screening procedures at large/high-profile cricket grounds in the UK, there is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors could prioritise attacks against a ground's external spaces, proximal locations, or at points of security challenge. E.g., Approaches to the ground, external concourses, transport hubs, security checkpoints, etc.
- There is a realistic possibility that there could be a heightened threat to cricket grounds in the UK hosting high-profile individuals. E.g. Celebrities, politicians, influencers, etc.

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- There is a realistic possibility that the threat posed to cricket grounds would be dynamic and dependent on the nature of the event hosted at the site. It is almost certain that terrorist actors would have the intent to conduct attacks against events with major TV coverage and high-profile attendees. For example, it is almost certain that high-profile musical performances held at large cricket grounds (E.g., Harry Styles performing at Old Trafford) would attract the attention of terrorist actors in the UK.
- There is a realistic possibility that staff employed at cricket grounds could pose an insider threat in several ways, including:
 - Temporary event 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.
 - Temporary event staff, in-house staff, and/or third party providers could grant terrorist actors access to high-profile players, guests, or performers in the back-stage areas of a cricket ground.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors could exploit the popular trend of wearing fancy dress to cricket matches in the UK in order to covertly traffic the items required to conduct a low-sophistication terrorist attack into the site. E.g., Bladed and Blunt Force Weapons and/or Fire as a Weapon.
- There is a realistic possibility that the presence of costumes deemed offensive or controversial could alter the intent of terrorist actors to target individuals attending cricket grounds in the UK. E.g., The widespread wear of crusader replica costumes by England cricket fans has previously caused controversy and offence globally.⁵
- Although it is unlikely that any such event would be designated as terrorism, it is highly likely that Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) Protest groups would have the intent to stage protests at cricket grounds in the UK. NVDA Protest groups have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to target cricket grounds in the UK, including:
 - **2023 London;** An Ashes Test at Lord's Cricket Ground between England and Australia was disrupted by two Just Stop Oil activists. Two individuals ran on the pitch and threw orange powder. Two men and a woman were arrested on suspicion of aggravated trespass and public nuisance.⁶
 - **2022 London;** Environmental activists from Extinction Rebellion were ejected from Lord's Cricket Ground after unfurling a banner protesting the ground's ties to J.P. Morgan.⁷
- There is a realistic possibility that the nature of the cricket team playing at any given site could increase the threat to crickets grounds in the UK. For example, in 2022, community tensions following a cricket match between India and Pakistan led to incidents of vandalism, assaults, and attacks on places of worship in Leicester. Media reporting suggests approximately 25 police officers were injured.⁸
- There is a realistic possibility that drones could pose an emerging threat to cricket grounds in the long term. Although it is currently unclear if terrorist actors in the UK would have the intent or capability to conduct a drone attack against a cricket ground, experts have previously warned that large-scale events are vulnerable to drone attacks.⁹

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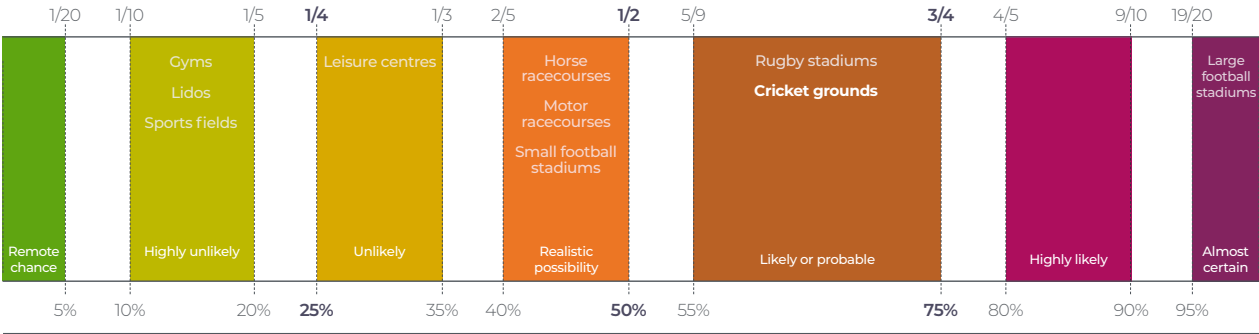
Threat visualisation

The diagram below outlines the intent of terrorist actors in the UK to conduct attacks against cricket grounds 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: 20 February 2024

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

Bibliography

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4. [Sri Lankan cricketers injured as gunmen attack team bus in Lahore; Sri Lanka cricket team attack - The Guardian](#)
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6. [Ashes Test match between England and Australia disrupted by Just Stop Oil protest; UK News - Sky News](#)
7. [Extinction Rebellion activists ejected from Lord's Cricket Ground after J.P. Morgan protest - CityAM](#)
8. [Leicester riots: City at sudden crossroads after violence ends 50 years of harmony - The Independent](#)
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