

Zoos



Terrorism threat to zoos

- It is unlikely that terrorist actors would have the intent to conduct attacks at zoos in the UK. However, it is almost certain that there would be a heightened threat to high-profile zoos with high footfall both within and in proximity to their site. E.g., London Zoo, Chester Zoo, Edinburgh Zoo, etc.
- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted against a zoo 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 could have the capability to conduct a high-sophistication attack at a zoo in the UK. E.g., Improvised Explosive Device (IED), Person Borne Improvised Explosive Device (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 almost certain that the terrorism threat to zoos would be driven by the profile and attendance at each site. E.g., It is highly likely that terrorist actors in the UK would prioritise attacks against major zoos in the UK with higher attendance and greater media focus. E.g., London Zoo, Chester Zoo, Edinburgh Zoo, rather than smaller, regional zoos.
- 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 zoos in the UK

- It is likely that there is a heightened terrorist threat to zoos in major cities and those in proximity to iconic sites and/or major transport hubs. There is a realistic possibility that zoos located in proximity to iconic sites and busy public spaces could be impacted by a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) in proximity to their site.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could seek to conduct an attack against zoos that are located in smaller towns and cities in the UK due to the lack of other suitable targets in the nearby area.

Previous terrorist incidents related to zoos in the UK and overseas

- At this time, there have been no previous attacks against zoos in the UK.
- Terrorist actors have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks in proximity to zoos globally, including:
 - 2019 Sri Lanka;** Three churches and three luxury hotels were targeted as part of a coordinated range of Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED) attacks. The attacks were later claimed by Islamic State.¹ A hotel adjacent to the Dehiwala Zoo was targeted during the attack.²

Other potential threats to zoos in the UK

- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could seek to target groups of people in proximity to zoos using a Vehicle as a Weapon. Major UK zoos have a high attendance and subsequently multiple queuing and parking areas at which people congregate. The threat posed by Vehicle as a Weapon attacks would be dependent on road-access to the site at each specific zoo.
- Although it is unlikely that any such event would be designated as terrorism, there is a realistic possibility that Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) Protest groups could have the intent to stage protests at zoos in the UK. NVDA Protest groups have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to target zoos in the UK, including:
 - 2022 Leicester;** Activists from “Leicester Animal Rights” staged a protest outside Twycross Zoo. Media reporting suggests that the protesters protested during one of the busiest days of the year for Twycross Zoo.³
 - 2022 Cheshire;** A group of animal rights campaigners from “Against the Cull” and “Merseyside Animal Rights” staged a protest against the proposal to develop a zoo at Bidlea Dairy in Cheshire, UK.⁴
- There is a realistic possibility that staff at zoos could pose an Insider Threat in several ways, including:
 - Security staff could enable terrorist actors in the UK to access the site with malicious items by bypassing security mitigations and vetting procedures in place at that site.
 - There is a realistic possibility that third party vendors or service providers could exploit vehicular access to a zoo site in order to smuggle attack devices or items.
- There is a realistic possibility that the presence of high-profile politicians, contentious media figures, and/or major celebrities could lead to an increased threat to zoos from individuals with terrorist intent. It is almost certain that terrorist actors in the UK would have the intent to conduct an attack against high-profile individuals.

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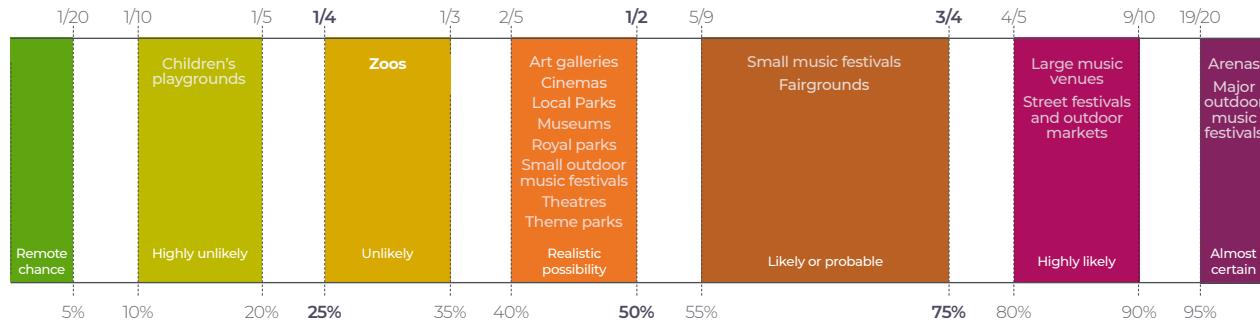
Threat visualisation

The diagram below outlines the intent of terrorist actors in the UK to conduct attacks against zoos 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: 19 February 2024

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

Bibliography

1. Sri Lanka attacks: Easter Sunday bombings marked one year on - BBC News;
2. Terror in Sri Lanka - (cnn.com)
3. Protesters outside Twycross Zoo call on public to boycott 'animal prisons' - Leicestershire Live (leicestermercury.co.uk)
4. Protest Over Plans to Expand Zoo at a Farm in Cheshire, UK - Vegan FTA

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