

Bus and coach stations



Terrorism threat to bus and coach stations

- It is likely that terrorist actors would have the intent to conduct attacks against bus and coach stations in the UK due to their publicly accessible nature, the crowds of people that gather at any given site, and the limited security and screening processes present at any given coach and/or bus station in the UK.
- It is highly likely any attack conducted against a bus or coach station in the UK would be conducted by a lone individual or small cell using a low sophistication methodology. E.g., Bladed or Blunt Force Weapons, Vehicle as a Weapon, Fire as a Weapon etc.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors could have the capability to conduct a high sophistication attack against a bus or coach station in the UK. E.g., Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) 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 likely that any terrorist attack against a bus or coach station 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 bus and coach stations in the UK

- It is highly likely that there would be a heightened terrorist threat to bus and coach stations located in major cities and those in proximity to iconic sites and/or other major transport hubs. There is a realistic possibility that bus and coach stations located in proximity to iconic sites and busy public spaces could be impacted by a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) in proximity to their site.
- It is likely that there would be a heightened threat to bus or coach stations situated within or adjoined to other transport hubs (airports/train stations) or large venues. For example, in 2017, an Islamist terrorist conducted a Person Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED) attack at Manchester Arena. Prior to detonating the device, the perpetrator had arrived at Manchester Victoria tram stop and used the station concourse lift to reach the City Room, where he later conducted his attack.¹
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could seek to conduct an attack against bus or coach stations that are located in smaller towns and rural areas in the UK due to the high footfall they attract and the lack of other suitable targets in the nearby area.

Previous UK and global terrorist attacks against bus and coach stations

- Terrorist actors have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks against, or in proximity to, bus and coach stations or systems, in the UK, including:
 - **2005 London;** Three Islamist terrorists conducted three individual attacks on Tube trains that had departed from King's Cross using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Another device was detonated on a London Bus in Tavistock Square. There were 52 fatalities, and 770 were injured.²
- Terrorist actors have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks against bus and coach systems globally, including:
 - **2023 Canada;** An Islamist terrorist committed a Bladed Weapons attack on a transit bus in Surry, British Columbia. The accused had allegedly threatened an individual at a different bus station prior to the primary attack. One individual was injured.³
 - **2022 Syria;** Islamic State claimed responsibility for an ambush attack against a bus in northern Syria. There were 13 fatalities, and three others were wounded.⁴
 - **2022 Israel;** Reporting suggests that the Palestinian militant groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, both praised the perpetrators of two Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks at bus stops in Jerusalem. There was one fatality, and 14 others were injured.⁵
 - **2020 Bulgaria;** Two individuals were sentenced to life in prison for their involvement in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack against a tourist bus at Jerusalem's Burgas Airport in 2012. The attack was allegedly linked to the Lebanese Shiite movement, Hezbollah. There were five fatalities, and more than 35 others were injured.⁶
 - **2019 Egypt;** Reporting suggests that terrorist actors from the Hasm group conducted an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack against a tourist bus in Egypt. 16 individuals were injured.⁷
 - **2018 Egypt;** Reporting suggests that terrorist actors conducted an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack against a tourist bus in Egypt. There were four fatalities, and 10 others were injured.⁸

Continued

Other terrorist threats to bus and coach stations in the UK

- Due to the busy and publicly accessible nature of bus and coach stations in the UK, it is highly likely that potential terrorist actors would be able to conduct hostile reconnaissance without detection and to develop an understanding of the security mitigations, best access points, and most suitable areas to target.
- It is highly likely that the threat posed to coach and bus stations in the UK would be dynamic and subject to change based on the time of day and specific events throughout the year as terrorists in the UK would seek to conduct attacks in peak, high footfall periods. E.g., During rush hour, night-time economy, football games, New Years Eve, Christmas Eve, etc.
- There is a realistic possibility that the threat to bus and/or coach stations could be heightened due to the presence of high-profile individuals. E.g., Individuals with terrorist intent could seek to target high-profile individuals, such as politicians, celebrities, influencers, etc.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors with the intent to travel by bus or coach to conduct a terrorist attack, or the intent to target bus and coach stations directly, could accidentally trigger sensitive Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) whilst moving through stations. Similarly, if challenged by police, security, or members of the public whilst in the station, there is a realistic possibility that actors could deliberately or unintentionally advance their attack plans if met with resistance.
- There is a realistic possibility that staff employed at UK bus and/or coach stations could pose an insider threat in several ways, such as members of staff could gain or grant access to vehicles for malicious purposes.

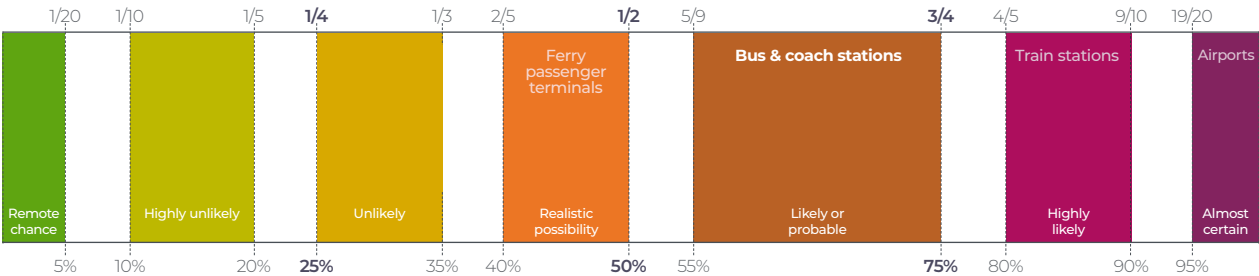
Threat visualisation

The diagram below outlines the intent of terrorist actors in the UK to conduct attacks against bus and coach stations within the transport 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 transport 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.

Continued

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Egypt explosion: Tourists on bus injured near Giza pyramids - BBC News
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