

[UK terrorism
Overview](#)

[Threat Actors](#)

[Methodologies](#)

[Global Terrorism](#)

[Emerging Drivers](#)

[2025 Outlook](#)

[UK National
Security](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix](#)

2024 Annual Threat Report

UK Terrorism Overview

[UK terrorism Overview](#)

[Threat Actors](#)

[Methodologies](#)

[Global Terrorism](#)

[Emerging Drivers](#)

[2025 Outlook](#)

[UK National Security](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix](#)



The UK terrorism threat level is **SUBSTANTIAL**, this means an attack is **LIKELY**.



As of 12 December, there has been **one confirmed terrorist attack** in the UK in 2024.



13% of all those being investigated by MI5 for involvement in UK terrorism are under 18-years-old¹.



It is almost certain that **Islamist terrorism remains the primary terrorist threat** to the UK.



It is almost certain that **Extreme Right-Wing terrorism will remain a significant terrorism threat** in the UK in the long term.



Between March 2017 and October 2024, there have been **43 late-stage attack plots disrupted** by UK police and security services².



In the last 12 months, police and security services have reportedly **disrupted three late-stage attack plots** two Islamist inspired plots and one Extreme Right-Wing inspired plots³.



It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted in the UK at this time would be **conducted by an individual or small cell using a low-sophistication methodology**. E.g., Bladed and 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** in the UK at this time. E.g., Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) (Placed/Person-Borne) or a marauding attack with Firearms. 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.



There is a **remote chance that terrorist actors would have the capability to conduct a significant Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) attack** at this time as a result of the significant barriers in the acquisition, production, and delivery of a device of that size⁴.

Continued

⁴In this context, VBIED refers to a small or large car used to carry an explosive device ranging between 100kg-200kg

Threat Actors

Islamist Terrorism

- Islamist terrorism remains the primary terrorist threat to the UK, accounting for approximately 75% of MI5's counter-terrorism caseload in 2024⁴.
- It is highly likely that any Islamist inspired attack conducted in the UK at this time would be conducted by a Self-Initiated Terrorist (SIT)⁵.
- It is highly likely that Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) currently poses the greatest overseas Islamist terrorism threat to the UK. It is highly likely that ISKP would have the intent to conduct attacks in Europe and the UK at this time.
- ISKP is a branch of Islamic State that operates in the Khorasan region, which spans mainly Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran⁵. Whilst the group was focused on regional targets, it is highly likely that since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, ISKP has shifted its intent towards also targeting countries outside of Afghanistan, namely in central Asia and Europe⁶.

[UK terrorism Overview](#)

[Threat Actors](#)

[Methodologies](#)

[Global Terrorism](#)

[Emerging Drivers](#)

[2025 Outlook](#)

[UK National Security](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix](#)

“Islamist terrorism makes up 75% of MI5’s counter-terrorism casework”

- It is almost certain that Islamist terrorist actors would maintain the intent to commit indiscriminate mass casualty attacks in the UK by targeting Publicly Accessible Locations.
- It is almost certain that Islamist terrorist actors would have the capability to conduct a low-sophistication attack at this time. E.g., Bladed or Blunt Force Weapons, Vehicle as a Weapon, Fire as a Weapon, etc.
- There is a realistic possibility that Islamist terrorists could have the capability to conduct high-sophistication attacks at this time, e.g., IEDs or Firearms. However, it is highly likely the plotting of a high-sophistication attack presents more opportunities for UK police and security services to disrupt the plot.

Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism

- It is almost certain that Extreme Right-Wing terrorism will remain a significant terrorism threat to the UK in the long term. In 2024, Extreme Right-Wing terrorism, accounted for approximately 25% of MI5's counter-terrorism caseload⁷.
- **In August of 2024**, individuals rioted following a mass stabbing conducted in Southport, UK, on 29 July 2024. Whilst debate surrounding the riots questioned whether violent acts conducted during this time could be considered terrorism, as of 12 December 2024, no incident conducted during the riots has been designated as an act of terrorism. It is highly likely that Extreme Right-Wing terrorists would have the intent to exploit the riots and wider political division within the UK for their own recruitment and radicalisation strategies.
- It is likely that the Extreme Right-Wing terrorism threat has continued to evolve away from structured groups such as the proscribed organisation, National Action, to a more disparate online threat, further complicating the detection of affiliated actors and plots.
- It is almost certain that Extreme Right-Wing terrorist actors would have the capability to conduct a low-sophistication attack in the UK at this time, as demonstrated by the Bladed weapons attack conducted by Calum Parslow on 02 April 2024.* Parslow stabbed a man at the Pear Tree Inn, in Worcester, which was previously used by the UK Government to house asylum seekers. Parslow conducted the attack in protest against small boat crossings to the UK⁸.
- It is highly likely that any Extreme Right-Wing terrorist attack conducted in the UK at this time would target sites and individuals associated with the UK Government, online and traditional media companies, and minority groups with protected characteristics e.g. LGBTQIA+, migrant communities, religious minorities and more.

[Continued](#)

*According to ProtectUK, a Self-Initiated Terrorist is defined as 'person(s) who threaten or mobilise to violence without material support or personal direction from a terrorist organisation, but who may still be influenced or encouraged by the rhetoric or ideology of a group'.

Threat Actors (continued)

[UK terrorism Overview](#)

[Threat Actors](#)

[Methodologies](#)

[Global Terrorism](#)

[Emerging Drivers](#)

[2025 Outlook](#)

[UK National Security](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix](#)

Left-Wing, Anarchist, and Single-Issue Terrorism (LASIT)

- LASIT encompasses a wide range of ideologies including the political far-left, anarchists, and single-issue actors who seek to use violence in opposition to a specific policy or practice.
- It is almost certain that the threat from single-issue terrorism remains dynamic in nature as individual actors become radicalised by diverse and complex issues that have become increasingly difficult to define and disrupt.
 - E.g., **On 13 September 2024**, Patrick Ruane, 55, was found guilty of two counts of encouraging terrorism. Ruane reportedly believed in conspiracy theories about a “hidden agenda” in the government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He routinely posted on Telegram in 2021 in an attempt to incite chat group members to attack COVID-19 vaccination staff, centres, and politicians⁹.
- It is highly likely that the majority of left-wing activism remains focused on protest action, including environmentalism, animal rights and pro-Palestine protest. Whilst it is highly likely that the majority of individuals associated with such groups practice Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) protest methodology, there is a realistic possibility that fringe members of such groups could mature towards conducting violent actions against property that could be considered as terrorism in the next 12 months.
 - **In November 2024**, ten individuals were arrested under the Terrorism Act 2000 in connection with an ongoing investigation into an attack on Elbit Systems UK in August 2024¹⁰. The individuals broke into Elbit Systems UK as part of a pro-Palestinian protest and caused extensive property damage¹¹.
 - **On 27 September 2024**, three Just Stop Oil activists threw soup at a Vincent van Gogh painting in London’s National Gallery. The incident occurred hours after members of the same group were jailed for conducting an identical act in 2022¹².

Northern Ireland-Related Terrorism (NIRT)

- While the UK terrorism threat level is SUBSTANTIAL, meaning an attack is LIKELY, it is highly unlikely that NIRT actors would have the capability to conduct any significant attack against the UK mainland at this time.
- It is almost certain that NIRT actors remain focused primarily on activity within Northern Ireland, rather than the UK mainland.
- **On 06 March 2024**, the NIRT terrorism level in Northern Ireland was lowered from SEVERE, meaning an attack is HIGHLY LIKELY, to SUBSTANTIAL, meaning an attack is LIKELY.
- Whilst it is almost certain that NIRT actors maintain the intent to conduct attacks against members of the security services in Northern Ireland, it is highly likely that the operational capability of NIRT actors across Northern Ireland has been significantly diminished by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and wider UK security services.

State Threats

- In the last 12 months, state threat investigations by MI5 have increased by 48%. It is almost certain that the threat posed by hostile foreign states to the UK will remain heightened in the long term¹³.

Russia

- It is almost certain that the Russian state will maintain the intent to influence and destabilise the UK through third-party proxies, organised criminal groups, and covert action in the long term.
 - **In October 2024**, the Director General of MI5, Ken McCallum, highlighted the GRU* as an actor on a “sustained mission to generate mayhem on British and European streets”, using arson and sabotage¹⁴.
 - **On 22 July 2024**, a parcel, believed to have arrived by air, caught alight at a DHL warehouse in Birmingham¹⁵. This incident is suspected to be part of a Europe-wide Russian backed arson campaign¹⁶.
 - **On 20 March 2024**, an arson attack occurred at a warehouse linked to a Ukrainian business. Two British men, Jake Reeves and Dylan Earl, admitted to carrying out the attack on behalf of Russia. Both have been charged under the National Security Act 2023¹⁷. Reeves accepted payment from a foreign Intelligence agency¹⁸.

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*The GRU, or Main Directorate of the General Staff, is Russia’s military intelligence service.

Threat Actors (continued)

Iran

- It is almost certain that the Iranian State will maintain the intent to influence activity and aggressively target individuals in the UK in the long term . Since January 2022, there have been 20 Iran-backed lethal plots towards British citizens and UK residents¹⁹.
- It is almost certain that Iran will continue to use third-party proxies to silence Iranian dissidents in the UK in the short to medium term.
 - **On 29 March 2024**, Iran International TV journalist, Pouria Zeraati, was stabbed outside of his home in London. According to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), two Romanian nationals have been charged with wounding and wounding with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm²⁰. Reporting suggests that the individuals were acting on behalf on the Iranian state²¹. It remains unclear if this incident would be considered terrorism at this time.
 - **On 28 November 2024**, former soldier, Daniel Khalife, was found guilty of espionage offences related to the Iranian state. Khalife had been sharing sensitive military information with Iranian agents²².
- It is highly unlikely that Iranian-backed terrorist organisations, Hamas and Hizballah, would have the intent or capability to conduct attacks on the UK mainland at this time.

- [UK terrorism Overview](#)
- [Threat Actors](#)
- [Methodologies](#)
- [Global Terrorism](#)
- [Emerging Drivers](#)
- [2025 Outlook](#)
- [UK National Security](#)
- [Bibliography](#)
- [Appendix](#)

“ MI5’s state threat investigations have increased by 48% ”

China

- It is almost certain that China will maintain the intent and capability to influence the UK in the next 12 months through covert action and espionage.
- There is a remote chance that China would have the intent to conduct terrorist activity in the UK in the long term. It is highly likely that the Chinese state would have the intent to conduct intellectual property theft against UK businesses and academic institutions in the long term.
 - **In April 2024**, MI5 warned during a brief to Vice-Chancellors of 24 universities, that states could be targeting British academic institutions and their research. Although there were no direct references made to any one state during the brief, Parliament’s Intelligence and Security Committee has previously warned that China could be gaining undue influence in British academic research²³.
 - **In April 2024**, a UK parliamentary researcher and another individual were charged under the Official Secrets Act for engaging in espionage for China. The individuals are accused of giving articles, notes, documents and information to a foreign state that would be “useful to an enemy”²⁴. It is almost certain that espionage attempts by Chinese state actors will continue into 2025.

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Methodologies

The graphic below outlines the capabilities of terrorist actors in the UK:



[UK terrorism Overview](#)

[Threat Actors](#)

[Methodologies](#)

[Global Terrorism](#)

[Emerging Drivers](#)

[2025 Outlook](#)

[UK National Security](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix](#)

- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted in the UK at this time would be conducted using a low-sophistication methodology. E.g., Bladed and Blunt Force Weapons, Vehicle as a Weapon, Fire as a Weapon, etc.
- **On 25 October 2024**, Callum Parslow, 32, was found guilty of attempted murder following a Bladed Weapons attack against a man on 02 April 2024. Parslow had planned to kill migrants housed by the UK government at the Pear Tree Inn, Worcester. Parslow asked the victim where he was from and then proceeded to stab him with a knife. Parslow was inspired by an Extreme Right-Wing ideology²⁵.
- **On 06 December 2024**, three individuals conducted a Fire as a Weapon attack against the Adass Israel Synagogue in Melbourne, Australia. The incident is being treated as an act of terrorism at this time²⁶. The investigation remains ongoing.
- **On 04 December 2024**, German authorities disrupted a planned Vehicle as a Weapon attack targeting a Christmas market in Bavaria. A 37-year-old suspect from Iraq, who had reportedly glorified Islamic State on social media, had planned to drive a car through the market²⁷. The investigation remains ongoing.

Cyber Terrorism and CBRN

- It is highly unlikely that any terrorist group would currently have the capability to conduct a significant cyber terrorist attack in the UK.
- It is highly unlikely that terrorist actors would have the capability to carry out a high-sophistication CBRN attack at this time as a result of the significant barriers which currently exist in the acquisition, production, and delivery of CBRN weapons.

[Continued](#)

Global Terrorism

- It is almost certain that the Islamic State (IS) has split into a disparate set of small covert cells spread across the Middle East, Asia and Africa, following the territorial defeat of the group in 2017. Whilst it is almost certain that IS maintains the intent to conduct directed attacks against the UK, it is highly likely that the majority of IS affiliates and covert cells are focused on accessible regional targets at this time²⁸.
- It is highly likely that ISKP would have the intent to conduct attacks in Europe and the UK at this time. ISKP has previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct high level attacks in Europe, including:
 - **E.g., In August 2024**, individuals with links to ISKP plotted to conduct an attack against Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna, Austria, using Bladed Weapons and explosives. A local media outlet reported one of the individuals had also planned a Vehicle as a Weapon attack outside of the stadium²⁹. The small cell reportedly had the intent to kill 'tens of thousands' of individuals³⁰.
 - **E.g., In March 2024**, two individuals under the direction of ISKP were arrested for planning an attack using Firearms against police officers and others in the vicinity of the Swedish parliament in Stockholm³¹.
 - **E.g., In March 2024**, four individuals affiliated with ISKP conducted a Marauding Firearms and Fire as a Weapon attack during a concert at the Crocus City Hall in Moscow, Russia. 133 people were killed and more than 140 were injured³².
 - **E.g., In January 2024**, two ISKP members conducted a Firearms attack at a Catholic Church in Istanbul, Türkiye. One individual was killed³³.

[UK terrorism Overview](#)

[Threat Actors](#)

[Methodologies](#)

[Global Terrorism](#)

[Emerging Drivers](#)

[2025 Outlook](#)

[UK National Security](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix](#)

“ It is highly likely that ISKP would have the intent to conduct attacks in Europe and the UK ”

- According to the Soufan Centre, al-Qa’ida senior leadership is currently operating out of Afghanistan. The group is allegedly operating training camps in Afghanistan at this time³⁴. Reporting suggests al-Qa’ida is also using Iran as a command centre. The de facto leader of the group, Saif al-Adel allegedly resides in Iran³⁵.
- It is almost certain that al-Qa’ida maintain the intent to project threat toward the UK. However, it is highly unlikely that al-Qa’ida would have the capability to conduct a direct, coordinated attack against the UK mainland at this time due to lost leadership, lack of recruitment, lack of group cohesion and financial problems³⁶.
 - JNIM is an affiliate of al-Qa’ida operating in Nigeria. The group has demonstrated the capability to conduct a high level of operational activity and it is almost certain that JNIM maintains the capability to conduct large scale attacks throughout West Africa at this time³⁷. For example, in September 2024, JNIM conducted an attack against a military training school and airport, killing 70 people³⁷. It is highly unlikely that JNIM would have the intent or capability to conduct attacks against the UK mainland at this time.

“ The predominant threat from global terrorists is their ability to radicalise UK-based individuals online and inspire them to conduct low sophistication attacks ”

Continued

Global Terrorism (continued)

- It is highly likely that the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East since the 07 October 2023 have greatly reduced the operational capability of both Hamas and Hizballah. It is highly unlikely that Hamas and Hizballah would have the intent or capability to conduct attacks on the UK mainland at this time as they remain focused on regional conflicts and goals.
- It is highly likely that the predominant threat currently posed by global terrorist actors is from their ability to radicalise vulnerable UK-based individuals online and subsequently inspire those individuals to conduct low sophistication attacks in the UK. It is highly likely that overt and covert online media provides a global network through which UK individuals can be radicalised and inspired to conduct attacks. It is highly likely that this applies to all terrorism ideologies in the UK, but particularly Extreme Right-Wing and Islamist terrorism ideologies.

[UK terrorism Overview](#)

[Threat Actors](#)

[Methodologies](#)

[Global Terrorism](#)

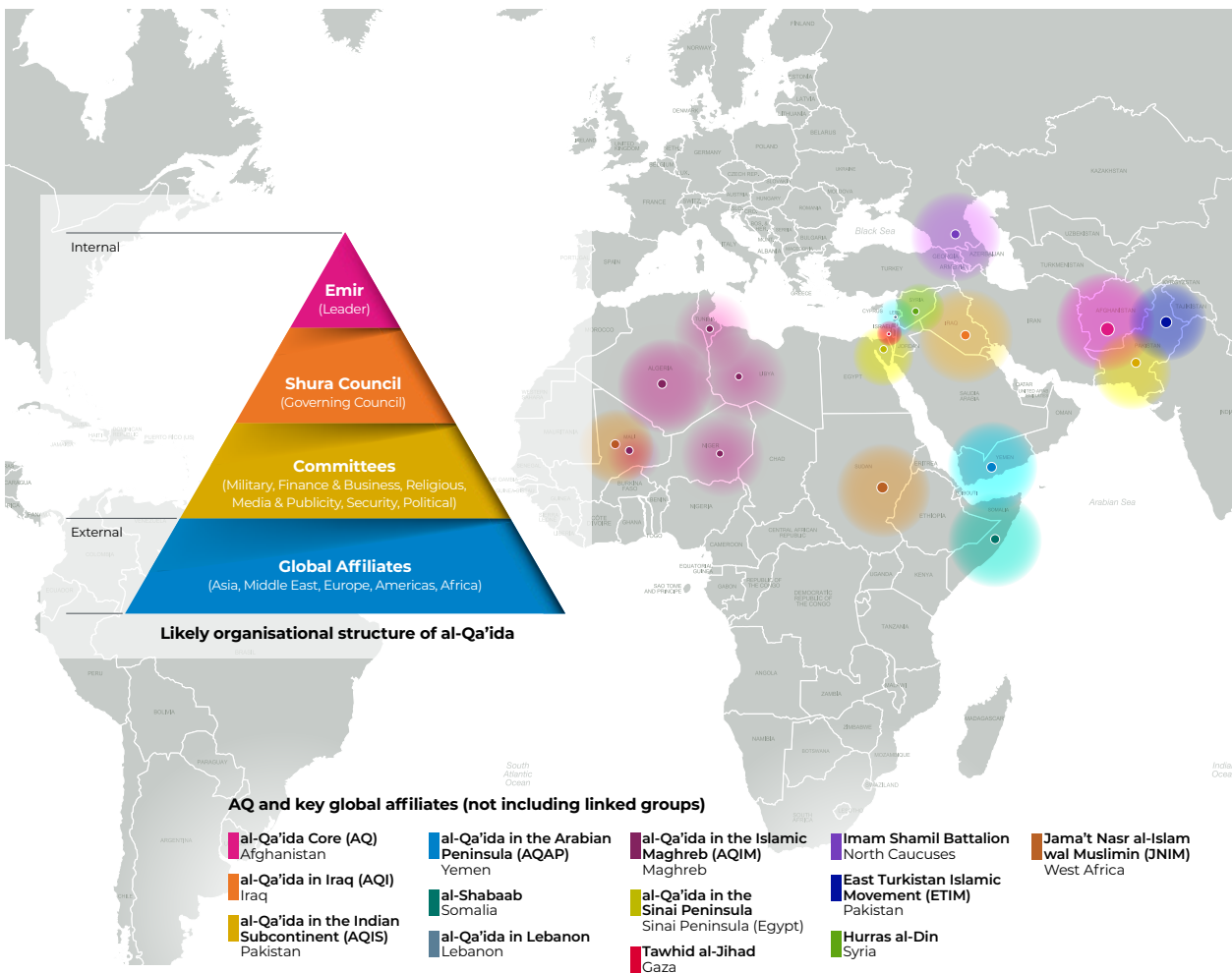
[Emerging Drivers](#)

[2025 Outlook](#)

[UK National Security](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix](#)



Continued

Emerging Drivers of Terrorism Threat

Israel-Hamas Conflict

- There has not been a spike in terrorism incidents in the UK following the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023 and Israel's subsequent invasion of Gaza. However, it is highly likely that the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas and resultant crises in the Middle East will act as a driver of terrorism threat in the UK in the long term³⁸.
- There is a realistic possibility the Israel-Hamas conflict will have some form of radicalising effect on individuals with the intent to conduct a terrorist attack in the UK. However, it is unlikely that the Israel-Hamas conflict would be the sole motivation of an attack in the UK.
- There has been one confirmed terrorist attack in the UK where the Israel-Hamas conflict has been the primary motivating factor. On 17 May 2024, Ahmed Ali Alid, was sentenced to life imprisonment for conducting a Bladed Weapons attack in Hartlepool town centre on 15 October 2023. Alid used a Bladed Weapon to injure a housemate before killing a member of the public. Alid claimed the attack was motivated by the Israel-Hamas conflict³⁹.
- Acts of antisemitism, Islamophobia, vandalism, and social tensions have been reported by police forces throughout the UK.
 - According to Community Security Trust – which monitors antisemitism and provides security for the Jewish community – between 07 October 2023 and 30 September 2024, 5,583 antisemitic incidents have been recorded, three times higher than the previous year⁴⁰.
 - There has also been an increase in Islamophobic incidents. According to Tell Mama UK – which records and measures anti-Muslim incidents in the UK – between 07 October 2023 and 30 September 2024, 4,971 incidents of anti-Muslim hate were recorded, the highest total in the past 14 years⁴¹.

Climate Change

- It is likely that climate change will continue to drive global terrorism threat in the long term. Experts suggest that climate change as a destabilising force has already become a significant driver for terrorism conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. It is highly likely terrorist actors would have the intent to exploit instability in regions exposed to climate crises in order to further their aims⁴².
 - E.g., Somalia experienced extreme drought between 2020 and 2023 which Islamist group, Al-Shabaab, exploited in order to further their goals in Somalia. For example, the group has sought to control water and other natural resources in order to control local communities and generate revenue⁴³.

“ It is likely that climate change will continue to drive global terrorism threat ”

Refugee Crisis

- It is almost certain that the refugee crisis and the current debate surrounding migration and refugees in the UK will continue to act as a driver of Extreme Right-Wing terrorism threat in the short to medium term.
- The refugee crisis likely played into the motivation for some of the individuals that rioted in August 2024. It is highly likely that the refugee crisis will continue to impact the motivation of Extreme Right-Wing terrorist actors in the UK in the next 12 months.

Cost of living crisis

- It is almost certain that the ongoing cost-of-living crisis will remain a driver of UK terrorism threat in the short to medium term. It is highly likely that certain individuals would become increasingly disenfranchised from society and more susceptible to radicalisation online and in-person. There is a realistic possibility that the cost-of-living crisis also increases the opportunity for businesses to be impacted by insider threat, as individuals struggling with financial difficulties may become more susceptible to bribery and corruption.

[UK terrorism Overview](#)

[Threat Actors](#)

[Methodologies](#)

[Global Terrorism](#)

[Emerging Drivers](#)

[2025 Outlook](#)

[UK National Security](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix](#)

Continued

Emerging Drivers of Terrorism Threat (continued)

Global Instability

- It is almost certain that geopolitical instability and uncertainty will continue into 2025. In November 2024, Sir Richard Moore, Chief of the UK Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), stated he has "never seen the world in a more dangerous state"⁴⁴. It is highly likely that terrorist actors would have the intent to take advantage of ongoing instability and uncertainty globally in order to achieve their aims.
- Issues which have historically featured high on the list of the Extreme Right-Wing, such as immigration, have increasingly found a place in the discourse of mainstream parties. Over the past 12 months, there has been a rise in the success of far-right political parties in Europe, for example in Austria, Romania, Germany and France.
 - In the EU and UK, it is almost certain that Extreme Right-Wing ideologues would have the intent to exploit the normalisation of Extreme Right-Wing grievances in order to enhance support for their cause and inspire individuals to conduct violent acts. Extreme Right-Wing actors in the UK have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to combine legitimate grievances with dangerous conspiracy theories to encourage terrorist action.

Syria

- On 08 December 2024, Islamist group, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), took control of Damascus, leading to the collapse of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria. At this time, HTS governs Syria⁴⁵. HTS is designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK Government. It is highly likely that the situation in Syria will remain extremely dynamic in the short term as the goals and ruling-style of HTS remains unclear at this time.

“ It is highly likely terrorist actors would have the intent to take advantage of ongoing global instability in regions such as Afghanistan and Syria ”

- There is a realistic possibility that prison camps in northeastern Syria holding suspected Islamic State members and their families may experience break outs in the short term. Islamic State would likely intend to conduct a prison break in the short term as security surrounding the prisons remains at risk. The group has previously demonstrated the intent to break inmates out of prisons holding Islamic State members, for example in al-Hasakah in January 2022⁴⁶.
- The current situation in Syria likely provides a conducive environment for Islamic State to facilitate its resurgence in Syria and neighbouring countries⁴⁷. It is highly likely that Islamic State will seek to exploit the current uncertainty and instability in Syria. According to the US military, Islamic State had been attempting to reconstitute throughout 2024, prior to the HTS takeover⁴⁸.

Emerging Technologies

- Terrorist actor exploitation of Artificial Intelligence (AI)⁴⁹. However, there is a realistic possibility that the growth of AI could be exploited for terrorist purposes in the medium term.
- It is likely that terrorist actors in the UK would have the intent to create firearms and weaponry using 3D printing technology in the short term, particularly Extreme Right-Wing terrorist actors.
 - E.g., On 14 October 2024, Jack Robinson, 20-years-old, of Portsmouth, UK, was sentenced for attempting to manufacture a weapon and possessing documents that could be used for preparing an act of terrorism. Robinson had reportedly downloaded more than 400 documents containing information on how to assemble weapons and 3D-printed guns and was at an "advanced stage" of building a semi-automatic rifle and accompanying ammunition. He was reportedly motivated by an Extreme Right-Wing ideology⁵⁰.
- It is highly unlikely that terrorist actors in the UK would have the intent and capability to conduct an attack using drones at this time. While drones have been used by terrorist actors overseas, as of 12 December 2024, there has not been a successful drone attack by a terrorist actor in the UK⁵¹.
- However, as emerging technologies, such as drones and 3D printing technology, mature, they will likely become cheaper and more accessible for terrorists to use in the medium to long term.

[UK terrorism Overview](#)

[Threat Actors](#)

[Methodologies](#)

[Global Terrorism](#)

[Emerging Drivers](#)

[2025 Outlook](#)

[UK National Security](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix](#)

[Continued](#)

Outlook for 2025

- [UK terrorism Overview](#)
- [Threat Actors](#)
- [Methodologies](#)
- [Global Terrorism](#)
- [Emerging Drivers](#)
- 2025 Outlook**
- UK National Security**
- [Bibliography](#)
- [Appendix](#)



Islamist terrorism is almost certain to continue as the dominant terrorism threat in the UK in the next 12 months.



It is almost certain that Extreme Right-Wing terrorism will continue to pose a significant terrorism threat in the UK in the long term.



Although it is unclear if any such incident would be designated as terrorism, it is almost certain that hostile states will continue to use criminal organisations and third-party proxies to project threat and aggression against the UK in the medium term.



It is highly likely that personal grievances and past life experiences would feature more explicitly in the motivation of individuals with the intent to conduct terrorist attacks in the UK in the short term to medium term.



Whilst currently continuing to promote the use of Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) protest methodologies, there is a realistic possibility that individual, extreme activists and campaigners could have the intent to conduct malicious activity against property in the next 12 months.



It is almost certain that Palestine Action group would have the intent and capability to conduct malicious activity against property in the next 12 months. It remains unclear if any such incident would be designated as terrorism.



There is a realistic possibility that regions of instability, such as Afghanistan and Syria, could create permissive environments that allow terrorist actors to recruit, radicalise, and further their goals.

UK National Security Apparatus

- The UK benefits from the presence of a strong countrywide counter-terrorism infrastructure including both public and private security and safety capabilities.
- The UK police and security services have regularly demonstrated the capability to disrupt a diverse range of terrorism-related attack plots and threats.
- The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, known as Martyn’s Law, was introduced to parliament on 12 September 2024. As of 12 December 2024, the Bill is awaiting its second reading in the House of Lords set to occur on 07 January 2025. The successful introduction of Martyn’s Law into law will enhance protective and preparedness capabilities across all premises in scope.
- Pool Re continues to engage with partners in Government and policing regarding the terrorism threat landscape in order to provide a credible understanding of the current UK terrorism threat to the UK insurance industry.

Continued

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- [UK terrorism Overview](#)
- [Threat Actors](#)
- [Methodologies](#)
- [Global Terrorism](#)
- [Emerging Drivers](#)
- [2025 Outlook](#)
- [UK National Security](#)
- [Bibliography](#)
- [Appendix](#)

Continued

Bibliography (continued)

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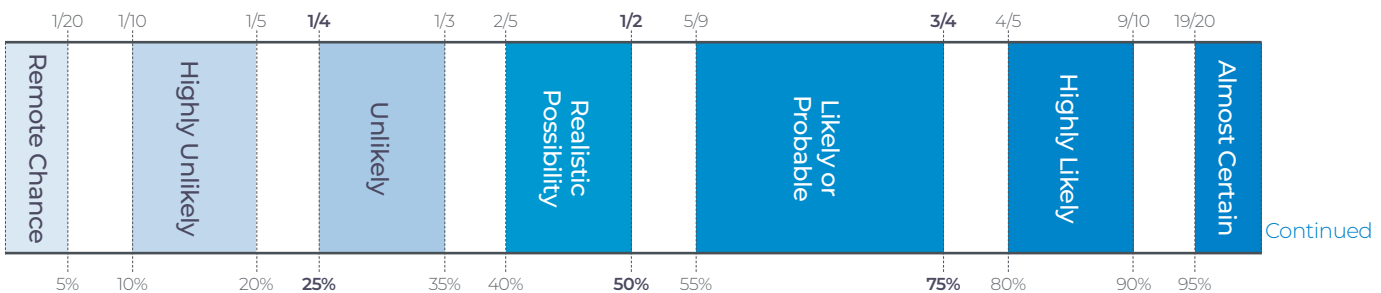
- [UK terrorism Overview](#)
- [Threat Actors](#)
- [Methodologies](#)
- [Global Terrorism](#)
- [Emerging Drivers](#)
- [2025 Outlook](#)
- [UK National Security](#)
- [Bibliography](#)
- [Appendix](#)

Appendix:

Assessment Methodology

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

- **Almost Certain:** An event is assessed to have a greater than 90% chance of occurring.
- **Highly Likely:** An event is assessed to have a 76% to 90% chance of occurring.
- **Likely:** An event is assessed to have a 61% to 75% chance of occurring.
- **Realistic Possibility:** An is assessed to have a 41% to 60% chance of occurring.
- **Unlikely:** An event is assessed to have a 26% to 40% chance of occurring.
- **Highly Unlikely:** An event is assessed to have an 11% to 25% chance of occurring.
- **Remote Chance:** An event is assessed to have a less than 10% chance of occurring.



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[Global Terrorism](#)

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[Appendix](#)

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