

A Pool Re Solutions Report

The current state of Islamist terrorism in the UK



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The current state of Islamist terrorism in the UK

Islamist terrorism has been the primary terrorism threat to the UK for approximately two decades, but the threat has evolved greatly in this time.

In October 2024, Director General of MI5, Ken McCallum, gave an update on the current national security threats facing the UK. He stated that 'lone individuals, indoctrinated online, continue to make up most of the threats' in the Islamist terrorism space. McCallum went on to say the 'worsening threat from Al-Qaeda, and in particular from Islamic State,' is the terrorist trend that concerns him the most¹.

The purpose of this report is to provide a credible understanding of Islamist terrorism in the UK to the insurance market, security and counterterrorism professionals and academia.

This report seeks to explain and assess:

- What is Islamist terrorism?
- What does Islamist terrorism in the UK currently look like and what is the threat to the UK?
- What is the current state of global Islamist terrorism and how has it changed over the past decade?

Any reference to the UK is in reference to the UK mainland.

¹ Director General Ken McCallum gives latest threat update | MI5 - The Security Service



Executive summary

It is almost certain that Islamist terrorism will remain the most significant terrorism threat to the UK in the long term.

It is highly likely that any Islamist inspired attack in the UK would be conducted by a Self-Initiated Terrorist (S-IT)², or a small cell (2-3 people) at this time.

There is a realistic possibility that an Islamist inspired attack in the UK could be orchestrated or directed by a foreign terrorist organisation in the medium term. Ken McCallum stated in October 2024 that more than one third of MI5's top priority investigations have had some form of connection to organised overseas terrorist groups³.

It is highly likely that Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) poses the predominant overseas Islamist terrorism threat to the UK at this time.

It is likely that the Israel-Hamas conflict, and subsequent conflicts in the Middle East, will have some form of radicalising effect on individuals with the intent to conduct a terrorist attack in the UK.



² According to ProtectUK, a Self-Initiated Terrorist (S-IT) 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'.

³ Director General Ken McCallum gives latest threat update | MI5 - The Security Service

What is Islamist terrorism?



Islamist terrorism is the use of, or threat of, violence as a way of establishing a strict interpretation of an Islamic society. For some, the aim is to create a global Islamic caliphate based on the strict implementation of Shari-ah law. Islamist terrorists are driven by an extreme interpretation of Islam, as well as perceived grievances against 'the West'.

Importantly, Islamists (and Islamism) should not be confused with those following the religion of Islam. Islamism, not Islam, is a political ideology that aims to create a caliphate based on Shari-ah law. Some Islamist groups do not advocate for violence as a way of achieving this aim, but some groups do. It is the latter group that use violence and terrorism in pursuit of their aims. Not only do they believe that violence is necessary, but it is also an individual's religious duty.

Islamist terrorism takes many forms, but it is almost certain that the primary threat comes from Salafi-Jihadist terrorism. Salafi-jihadists believe that violence should be used to establish Islamic States and to confront the US and its allies. They believe in returning to a 'pure' form of Islam. Both al-Qa'ida (AQ) and Islamic State (IS) are well known examples of Salafi-Jihadist groups.

Salafism: Salafism is a branch of Sunni Islam. Those adhering to Salafism claim to emulate the traditions of the first three generations of Muslims in as many ways as possible.

Jihadism: In Islam, the term 'jihad' means 'striving' or 'struggle'. Violent Islamist groups typically translate the term as 'holy war', exploiting the term to legitimise the use of violence against non-Islamists.

Islamist terrorism in the UK

It is almost certain that Islamist terrorism will remain the most significant terrorism threat to the UK in the long term. Islamist terrorism accounted for approximately 75% of MI5's counter-terrorism caseload in 2024⁴.

It is highly likely that the predominant Islamist terrorism threat to the UK at this time stems from Self-Initiated Terrorists (S-ITs), for example:

- In January 2023, Mohammad Farooq, 28, was found in the grounds of St James' Hospital in Leeds in possession of a viable Improvised Explosive Device (IED), knives, and an imitation firearm. Prosecutor Jonathan Sandiford KC stated that Farooq's plan was to detonate the device, then attack as many people as possible with knives before using the imitation firearm to incite police to shoot him dead. Farooq was reportedly inspired by Islamic State propaganda but also held deep seated personal grievances against staff at the hospital which motivated his attack⁵.
- On 15 April 2024, a 16-year-old was sentenced to seven years in prison for plotting to conduct an Islamist-inspired terrorist attack at the Isle of Wright Music Festival, and had researched online about weapons, vehicles and stab vests⁶.



⁴ Director General Ken McCallum gives latest threat update | MI5 - The Security Service

⁵ Individual Guilty of Hospital Terror Plot - Pool Reinsurance

⁶ Teenager Jailed Following Music Festival Terror Plot - Pool Reinsurance



It is highly likely that the predominant threat currently posed by global terrorist actors is their ability to radicalise vulnerable UK-based individuals online and subsequently inspire those individuals to conduct low sophistication attacks in the UK.

There is a realistic possibility that an Islamist inspired attack in the UK could be orchestrated or directed by a foreign terrorist organisation in the medium term. Ken McCallum stated in October 2024 that more than one third of MI5's top priority investigations have had some form of connection to organised overseas terrorist groups⁷.

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.

- On 03 June 2017, three attackers drove a van into pedestrians on London Bridge and then launched a knife attack in Borough Market, killing eight people⁸. The three attackers were reportedly part of the UK-banned group, al-Muhajiroun, and held Islamist extremist mindsets⁹.

⁷ Director General Ken McCallum gives latest threat update | MI5 - The Security Service

⁸ London Bridge attack: What happened - BBC News

⁹ London Bridge attackers were part of banned jihadi network | UK News | Sky News

It is almost certain that Islamist terrorist actors would have the capability to conduct a low-sophistication attack in the UK at this time. For example, Bladed or Blunt Force Weapons, Vehicle as a Weapon, Fire as a Weapon, etc.

There is a realistic possibility that Islamist terrorist actors could have the capability to conduct a high-sophistication attack in the UK at this time. For example, 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.

Whilst it is highly likely that any Islamist terrorist actor in the UK would make use of both online and offline spaces, it is almost certain that the use of the online space, for example, social media and messaging apps, plays a significant role in the radicalisation processes of Islamist terrorist actors in the UK at this time.



Groups and facilitators of radicalisation in the UK

al-Muhajiroun (ALM)

On 23 July 2024, the leader of al-Muhajiroun (ALM), Anjem Choudary, was sentenced to life imprisonment for directing a terrorist organisation, membership of a proscribed terrorist organisation, and encouraging support for a terrorist organisation¹⁰.

It is almost certain that before his imprisonment, Anjem Choudary posed a significant threat to the UK due to his role as a facilitator of radicalisation in the UK. For example, in November 2022, Muhammed Hamzah Heyder Khan, a 17-year-old from Birmingham, was arrested on suspicion of trying to join Islamic State in Afghanistan. Khan had allegedly received advice over WhatsApp from Choudary on how to avoid checks on his phone when he left the UK and had specifically described Choudary as an inspiration¹¹.

There is a realistic possibility that any Islamist-inspired terrorist attack conducted in the UK at this time could be directly connected to, or associated with, ALM members, or who had previously had links to the group. ALM has reportedly been linked to the majority of significant Islamist terrorist attacks in the UK since its formation, for example the 2017 London Bridge attack and the 2019 Fishmongers' Hall attack¹².

Despite Choudary's imprisonment, and ALM's status as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the UK Government, it is highly likely that members of ALM continue to operate within disparate covert cells within the UK and contribute to the radicalisation of individuals.



Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT)

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) is an Islamist movement created in East Jerusalem in 1953. The British branch of HT was established in the 1980s and played a prominent role as a facilitator of radicalisation of individuals in the UK. On 19 January 2024, HT was proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK Government¹³.

It is likely that the proscription of HT will hinder the capabilities of Islamist actors in the UK to host and attend in-person events aimed at sharing Islamist beliefs and goals. Similarly, it is likely that, since its proscription in 2006, ALM would have moved to more covert methods of communication and organisation.



¹⁰ CPS statement: Convictions of Anjem Choudary and Khaled Hussein | The Crown Prosecution Service

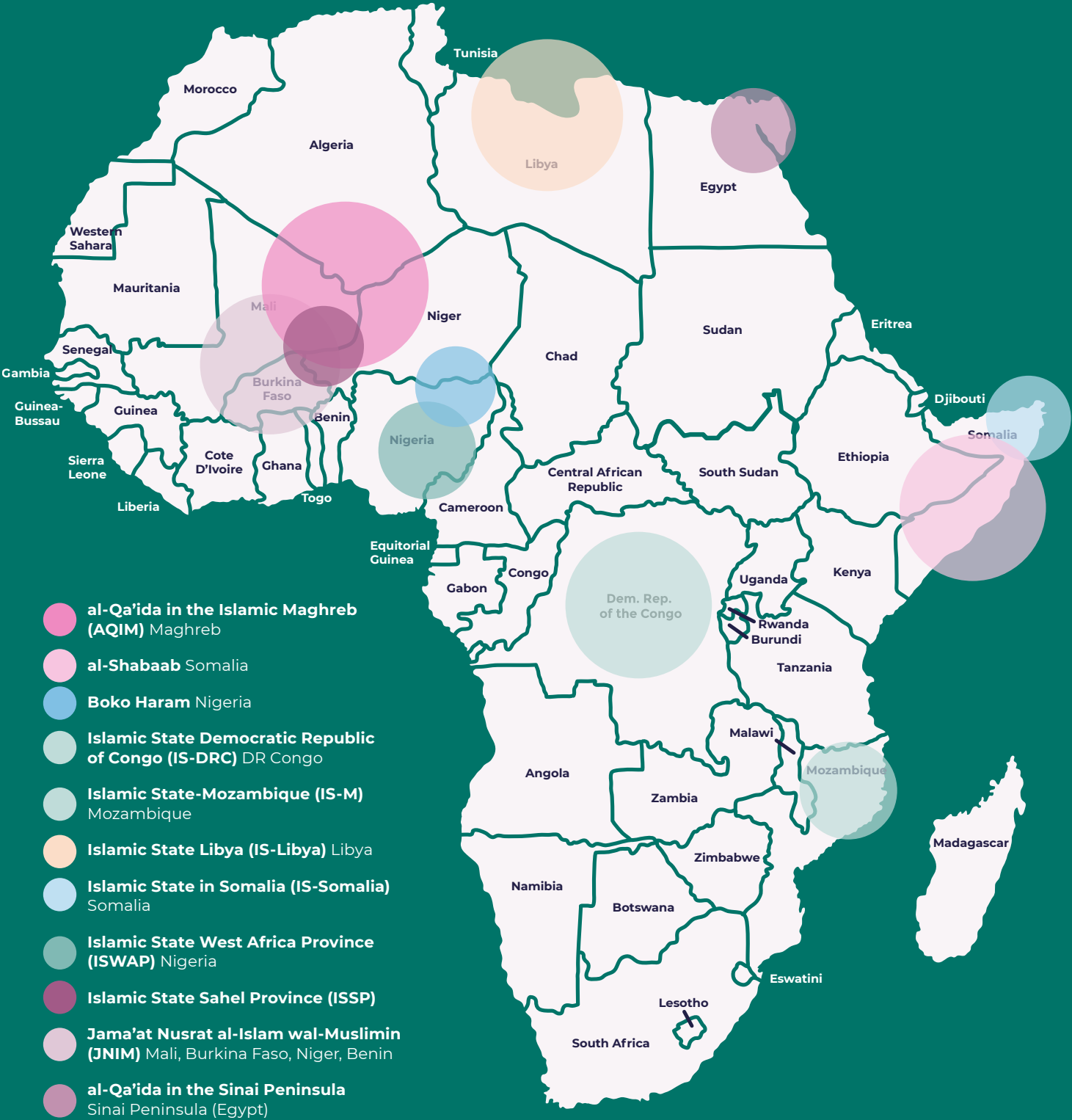
¹¹ Brothers who planned to join Islamic State jailed - BBC News, Anjem Choudary: Radical preacher jailed for life - BBC News

¹² Has al-Muhajiroun been underestimated? - BBC News

¹³ Hizb ut-Tahrir proscribed as terrorist organisation - GOV.UK

Global Islamist terrorism

Islamist terrorism across Africa



al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM): Formed in 2007, AQIM is a formal affiliate of al-Qa'ida based in Algeria. AQIM is dedicated to dismantling regional Governments and implementing sharia law in the Maghreb - Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Libya, Tunisia, and Niger¹⁴.

al-Shabaab: Formed in 2007 with the aim of establishing a fundamentalist Islamic State in Somalia. Al-Shabaab targets the Somali Government, neighbouring East-African countries and African Union peacekeeping forces. The group has pledged allegiance to al-Qa'ida¹⁵.

Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP): ISWAP originally developed as a faction of Boko Haram, but split from the group in 2016. ISWAP is an officially recognised affiliate of the Islamic State. Operational location spans from north-eastern Nigeria and southern Lake Chad Basin. In the past two years, ISWAP has increasingly expanded into southern Nigeria²².

• **Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP):** Islamic State Sahel Province was formerly known as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)²³. ISSP emerged as a distinct wing of ISWAP in 2019 and was given provincial status by Islamic State in 2022²⁴.

Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP):

- **Islamic State Democratic Republic of the Congo (IS-DRC):** IS-DRC was established in 2019 as a rebranding of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)¹⁷. The ADF was created in Uganda in the 1990s, but relocated to the DR Congo in 2001. In 2019, Islamic State acknowledged the ADF and the group became the IS-DRC, which formed part of the ISCAP¹⁸.
- **Islamic State-Mozambique (IS-M):** IS-M emerged in 2017 and was part of the Islamic State Central Africa Province. However, in May 2022, IS-M was formally recognised by Islamic State as its own Islamic State province¹⁹.

Africa

Boko Haram: Emerged in the 2000s and is based in Nigeria. Boko Haram aims to overthrow the Nigerian government and implement Sharia law. In 2016, the group split into two factions. One faction retains the name Boko Haram and is led by Abubakar Shekau. The other faction is affiliated with Islamic State and is known as Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAP)¹⁶.

Islamic State Libya (IS-Libya): Formed and based in Libya in 2014, IS-Libya is an officially recognised Islamic State affiliate. The group aims to establish three Islamic State provinces in Libya - Barqah, Fezzan, and Tripolitania²⁰.

Islamic State in Somalia (IS-Somalia): Based in Puntland in northern Somalia, the group emerged in 2015 after a small group of al-Shabaab members broke away, swearing allegiance to the Islamic State²¹.

Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM): An affiliate of al-Qa'ida, JNIM was established in 2017 when a coalition of four jihadist groups operating in the Sahel region of West Africa announced they had merged into one entity. JNIM operates in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, and aims to eradicate Western influences in the region²⁵.

¹⁴ [Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb \(AQIM\) | Counter Extremism Project](#)

¹⁵ [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁶ [Boko Haram](#)

¹⁷ [The Islamic State: Background, Current Status, and U.S. Policy](#)

¹⁸ [Allied Democratic Forces: The Ugandan rebels working with IS in DR Congo - BBC News](#)

¹⁹ [Actor Profile: Islamic State Mozambique \(ISM\)](#)

²⁰ [Islamic State in Libya \(IS-Libya\)](#)

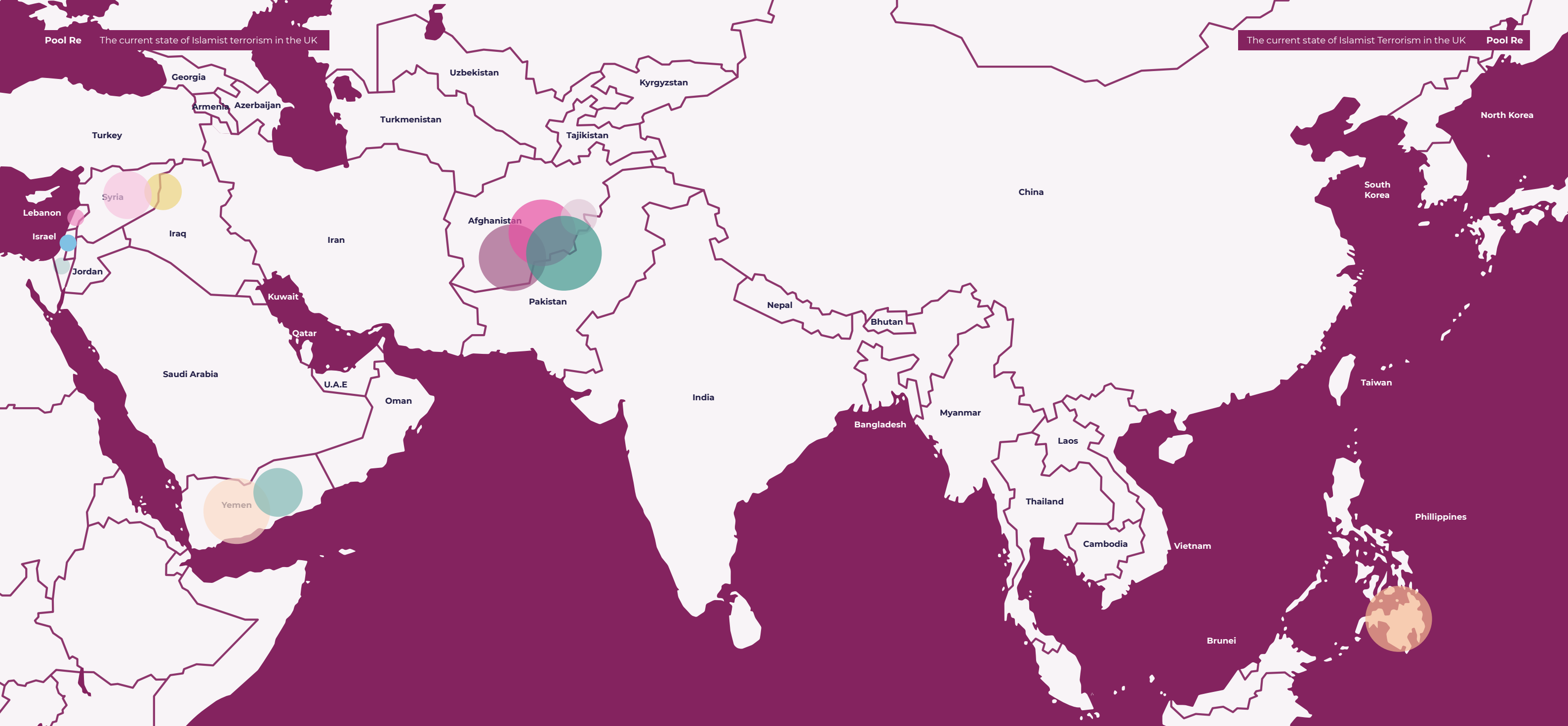
²¹ [The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat | Crisis Group](#)

²² [Islamic State West Africa Province](#)

²³ [IS Sahel's tactics cause mass, indiscriminate violence](#)

²⁴ [Newly restructured, the Islamic State in the Sahel aims for regional expansion](#)

²⁵ [Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin](#)



Islamist terrorism across the Middle East and Asia

- **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)**
Syria
- **Hizballah**
Lebanon
- **Islamic State Khorasan Province**
Afghanistan
- **Islamic State East Asia (ISEA)**
Philippines
- **Hurras al-Masra**
Gaza
- **Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah (Hamass)**
Gaza
- **The Houthis**
Yemen
- **Islamic State (Core) (aka ISIS, ISIL, Daesh)**
Syria
- **Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)**
Pakistan
- **al-Qa'ida (core)**
Afghanistan
- **al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)**
Yemen
- **al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)**

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS): HTS was originally set up under a different name, Jabhat al-Nusra, in 2011 as an affiliate of al-Qai'da. Jabhat al-Nusra was dissolved in 2016 to create HTS and ties with al-Qai'da were cut²⁶. HTS is a localised Islamist group rather than a transnational Salafi-Jihadist group such as AQ or Islamic State²⁷.

On 27 November 2024, HTS launched an offensive against the Syrian government. By 01 December 2024, HTS had taken control of large parts of Aleppo, Syria's second biggest city²⁸.

HTS now governs Syria following the collapse of the Assad regime on 08 December 2024²⁹.

Hizballah (Party of God): Established during the Lebanese civil war and the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Hizballah is a Shiite Muslim political party and militant group based in Lebanon. Hizballah is backed by Iran and is driven by its violent opposition to Israel and aims to seize Palestinian territories and Jerusalem from Israel³⁰.

Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP): Formed in 2014, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) is a branch of Islamic State that operates in the Khorasan region, which spans mainly Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran³¹.

Islamic State East Asia (ISEA) (Philippines): ISEA is one of Islamic State's provinces. A number of extreme organisations came together to form ISEA and pledged allegiance to Islamic State in 2015. ISEA opposes elected governments in the Philippines and seeks to remove them through violence³².

Middle East and Asia

Hurras al-Masra: Hurras al-Masra is a militant group based in Gaza. The group claimed rocket attacks on Israel in 2022 but has not been observed to be active since then. In September 2024, Hurras al-Masra published its mission statement on Telegram. The group opposes Iran and Islamic State, Instead, Hurras al-Masra remain ideologically aligned with al-Qa'ida, who have previously expressed support for Hurras al-Masra³³.

Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah (Hamas): Established in 1987, Hamas is a militant Islamist movement. Its ideology is related to that of the Muslim Brotherhood combined with Palestinian nationalism. Hamas aims to liberate Palestine from Israeli occupation and establish an Islamic State under Sharia law³⁴.

The Houthis AKA Ansar Allah (Supporters of God): Based in Yemen, the Houthis emerged in the 1990s but rose to prominence in 2014 when the group rebelled against the Yemeni government causing it to step down. Since then, the group, with Iran's backing, has been fighting a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia. The group is a Shiite Muslim movement and an armed political group³⁵.

²⁶ [Who are Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, HTS, the rebels seizing control of Aleppo? - BBC News](#)

²⁷ [Actor Profile: Hayat Tahrir al-Sham \(HTS\)](#)

²⁸ [Who are Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, HTS, the rebels seizing control of Aleppo? - BBC News](#)

²⁹ [Syria after Assad 2024/25: Consequences and next steps - House of Commons Library](#)

³⁰ [What Is Hezbollah? | Council on Foreign Relations: Threat posed by Hezbollah - House of Lords Library](#)

³¹ [ICCT Snapshot: Islamic State - Khorasan Province | International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - ICCT](#)

³² [Islamic State East Asia](#)

³³ [Briefing: Gaza militant group outlines ideology in mission statement - BBC Monitoring](#)

³⁴ [What Is Hamas? | Council on Foreign Relations: What is Hamas and why is it fighting with Israel in Gaza? - BBC News](#)

³⁵ [Who are the Houthis? A simple guide to the Yemeni group | Israel-Palestine conflict News | Al Jazeera: Who are Yemen's Houthis? | Wilson Center](#)



Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) meaning 'Party of Liberation': Founded in 1953, Hizb ut-Tahrir is an international Sunni Islamist political organisation whose goal is to establish a Caliphate under Sharia law. The group is based in Lebanon but has regional branches including Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain³⁶. The group considers itself non-violent but individuals associated with HT have been involved in violent acts³⁷.

Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP): TTP is made up of around 40 Pakistani militant groups fighting against the state of Pakistan and Islamic State. The group was founded in 2007 by a group of Pakistani militants who previously fought in Afghanistan alongside the Taliban and al-Qa'ida. TTP is an ally of the Afghan Taliban³⁸.

Islamic State (AKA ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh): Islamic State is a Sunni Islamic extremist group with a historic base of operations in Iraq and Syria. In 2014, Islamic State self-proclaimed a Caliphate and controlled large swathes of land in Iraq and Syria. By 2019, Islamic State had lost its territory but still maintains an active presence within its declared provinces³⁹.

al-Qa'ida (AQ): al-Qa'ida was formed in the late 1980s in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) in Pakistan by Usama bin Laden. The group focused on attacking the 'far enemy' – primarily Western targets – around the world and toppling governments across Asia and Africa⁴⁰. Al-Qa'ida was a centralised, tight-knit organisation but now it has become decentralised with

affiliate branches across Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP): Formed in 2009, AQAP is an officially recognised affiliate of al-Qa'ida based in Yemen. The group currently focuses on Yemeni targets but has interest in conducting attacks on the US and Western countries⁴¹.

al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS): Formed in 2014, AQIS is al-Qa'ida's newest affiliate. The group aims to fight the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Bangladesh. AQIS leadership resides in Afghanistan and Pakistan⁴².

³⁶ [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations - GOV.UK](#)

³⁷ [Hizb ut-Tahrir | Counter Extremism Project](#)

³⁸ [Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan \(TTP\) | Counter Extremism Project](#)

³⁹ [Islamic State](#)

⁴⁰ [Al-Qa'ida](#)

⁴¹ [Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula \(AQAP\)](#)

⁴² [Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent \(AQIS\)](#)

Where is al-Qa'ida now?

and what is the threat to the UK?



It is highly likely that al-Qa'ida's operational capability to conduct attacks domestically and internationally is significantly reduced at this time due to lost leadership, lack of recruitment, and lack of group cohesion⁴³.

There has not been an Islamist terrorist attack in the UK directed by al-Qa'ida since the 7/7 attacks in 2005 on London's transportation infrastructure. Two of the four attackers who conducted the attacks reportedly attended terrorist training camps in Pakistan and likely received some direction from AQ members⁴⁴.

It is highly likely that al-Qa'ida is currently attempting to rebuild its operational capability in Afghanistan. There is no consensus among specialists on the whereabouts of al-Qa'ida senior leadership. 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 time⁴⁵. 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 Iran⁴⁶.

It is highly likely that al-Qa'ida has devolved operational responsibility to its regional affiliates, for example to AQAP in Yemen and al-Shabaab in Somalia. It is highly likely that groups affiliated with al-Qa'ida are focused on regional priorities and remain prominent in their areas of operation at this time.

Due to the ideological intent of al-Qa'ida to project threat towards the West, it is highly likely that al-Qa'ida will remain a long-term threat to the UK⁴⁷.

It is highly unlikely that al-Qa'ida would have the capability to

conduct an attack on the UK mainland at this time.

It is highly likely that the main threat posed by al-Qa'ida to the UK is the ability of the group's ideology to radicalise vulnerable individuals in the UK.

It is highly likely that al-Qa'ida has taken advantage of the conflict in the Middle East since 07 October 2023 to revitalise its membership and its mission⁴⁸.

In July 2024, Saif al-Adel, released a new strategy for the group, which aimed to exploit the post-07 October reality worldwide. The strategy called for individuals to travel to Afghanistan to receive training and return to their home countries to apply lessons learned from training⁴⁹.

⁴³ [The State of al-Qa'ida Central - Combating Terrorism Center at West Point](#)
⁴⁴ [The Threat from Islamist Terrorism | ProtectUK](#)
⁴⁵ [23 Years After 9/11, What Does the Terror Threat Facing the U.S. Look Like? - The Soufan Center](#)
⁴⁶ [Al Qaeda: Background, Current Status, and U.S. Policy, The State of al-Qa'ida Central - Combating Terrorism Center at West Point](#)
⁴⁷ [The State of al-Qa'ida Central - Combating Terrorism Center at West Point](#)
⁴⁸ [The Gaza War Has Jump-Started a Weakened al-Qaeda | The Washington Institute](#)
⁴⁹ [The Gaza War Has Jump-Started a Weakened al-Qaeda | The Washington Institute](#)

Islamic State: then vs now

Bottom line up front

After controlling large swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria in 2015 and since territorial defeat in 2019, it is almost certain that Islamic State has transitioned to a decentralised network of branches, ('provinces') operating across Africa, Asia and the Middle East⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ Islamic State remains a potent threat five years after its military defeat





Then:

The self-proclaimed caliphate (2014-2019)

Islamic State emerged from the remnants of al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI), which formed after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. In 2013, the group changed its name to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and began seizing territory in Syria⁵¹.

ISIS launched offensives on two Iraqi cities, Mosul and Tikrit, in June 2014. Following these offensives, the then-leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, announced the formation of the caliphate that stretched from Aleppo to Diyala and renamed the group, Islamic State⁵².

In 2015, Islamic State expanded its network of affiliates and increasingly conducted attacks beyond the borders of the Caliphate by inspiring individuals overseas to conduct attacks on the groups behalf.

For example:

In July 2016, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, 31, conducted a Vehicle as a Weapon attack using a large truck in Nice, France, killing 86 people. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack although investigators never found proof that Lahouaiej-Bouhlel had links to the group⁵³.

On 19 December 2016, Anis Amri, 24, conducted a Vehicle as a Weapon attack using a lorry at a Christmas market in Berlin, Germany. 12 people were killed. Amri pledged allegiance to Islamic State in a video published by Islamic State's propaganda wing four days after the attack⁵⁴.

On 03 June 2017, three individuals conducted a Vehicle as a Weapon attack and a Marauding Knife attack on London Bridge and Borough Market, killing eight people and injuring 48 others. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, claiming the perpetrators were Islamic State 'fighters'⁵⁵.

In 2017, the United Nations (UN) estimated that 40,000 foreign terrorist fighters⁵⁶ had travelled to Syria and Iraq to join Islamic State. The UK Government estimated in 2019 that 900 UK citizens had travelled to join Islamic State⁵⁷.

By December 2017, it is estimated that Islamic State had lost 95 percent of the territory it had gained. The group held onto strips of territory in Syria until 2019. The battle for Baghuz signified the end of Islamic State's territorial control⁵⁸.

The Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve⁵⁹, worked consistently to defeat the Islamic State's territorial hold in Iraq and Syria. The operation conducted over 8,000 airstrikes against Islamic State targets in Iraq and Syria⁶⁰.

⁵¹ [The rise and fall of the Islamic State group: The long and short story - BBC News](#)

⁵² [Timeline: the Rise, Spread, and Fall of the Islamic State | Wilson Center](#)

⁵³ [Nice: Eight guilty over the deadly Bastille Day lorry attack - BBC News](#)

⁵⁴ [Berlin attacker Anis Amri pledged allegiance to Islamic State in video | World News | Sky News](#)

⁵⁵ [London terror attack: what we know so far | London Bridge attack 2017 | The Guardian](#), [London Bridge attacks: how atrocity unfolded | London Bridge attack 2017 | The Guardian](#)

⁵⁶ According to the United Nations (UN), foreign terrorist fighters are individuals who travel to a state, other than their state of residence or nationality, for the purpose of planning, or preparation or, participation in, terrorist acts or receiving terrorist training.

⁵⁷ [The Syrian civil war: timeline, UK aid and statistics - House of Commons Library](#)

⁵⁸ [Timeline: the Rise, Spread, and Fall of the Islamic State | Wilson Center](#), [The Islamic State Five Years Later: Persistent Threats, U.S. Options - United States Department of State](#)

⁵⁹ The Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve is a US-led international coalition set up in 2014 to 'destroy' Islamic State. The Campaign mainly involved US and British forces with the support of local forces, such as, Iraqi security forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

⁶⁰ [The Islamic State Five Years Later: Persistent Threats, U.S. Options | The Washington Institute](#)

After its territorial collapse in 2019, it is highly likely that Islamic State's operational capability was significantly reduced. However, it is highly likely that the threat from Islamic State did not disappear after 2019⁶¹.

In 2021, it is highly likely that the Islamic State's capability to conduct attacks in the UK and Europe was low due to a lack of funding and successful dismantling of cells by security forces⁶².

After its territorial collapse, Islamic State expanded its web of affiliates outside of Iraq and Syria. As a result, it is almost certain that Islamic State has decentralised with 'provinces' across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East at this time.

There is a realistic possibility that detention camps in Syria, created following the territorial defeat of Islamic State in 2019, could facilitate the radicalisation of individuals residing in the camps. As of July 2024, around 46,000 people were said to be held in detention facilities in Syria⁶³.

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 Syria⁶⁴. HTS is designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK Government.

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 and capability to break inmates out of prisons holding Islamic State members, for example, in al-Hasakah in January 2022⁶⁵.

It is likely that the current situation in Syria would provide a conducive environment for Islamic State to facilitate its resurgence in Syria and neighbouring countries⁶⁶. 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 takeover⁶⁷.



Now:

Five years later (2024)

⁶¹ [They'll be back: Islamic State presents an increasing threat in Western Europe](#)

⁶² [They'll be back: Islamic State presents an increasing threat in Western Europe](#)

⁶³ [Syria: tens of thousands marooned in detention camps and facilities where death, torture and disease are rife](#)

⁶⁴ [Syria after Assad 2024/25: Consequences and next steps - House of Commons Library](#)

⁶⁵ [IS prison break in Syria sparks days of clashes - BBC News](#)

⁶⁶ [The Islamic State Will Exploit the Current Situation in Syria to Its Advantage - The Soufan Center](#)

⁶⁷ [Syria after Assad 2024/25: Consequences and next steps - House of Commons Library](#)

Shift to Africa

Islamic State presence in Africa is not new; Islamist groups pledging allegiance to Islamic State have operated in Africa since 2014⁶⁸.

However, shortly after Islamic State's territorial defeat in 2019, the group became more focused on Africa, declaring new branches and officially recognising existing Islamist groups as part of Islamic State.

It is highly likely that Islamic State has exploited the instability of certain countries in Africa, particularly in the Sahel, in order to expand. For example, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have experienced military coups in recent years, leading to increased instability allowing Islamic State to exploit these areas⁶⁹.

It is highly likely that Islamic State provinces in Africa currently have a strong operational capability in their areas of operation.



In 2024,

70%

of Islamic State claimed terrorist attacks occurred in Africa, according to the BBC World Service⁷⁰.

According to the State Department's Counterterrorism Bureau,

60%

of Islamic State's propaganda currently originates from sub-Saharan Africa, particularly from Islamic State affiliates in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mozambique⁷¹.

⁶⁸ [A Global Strategy to Address the Islamic State in Africa | International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - ICCT](#)

⁶⁹ [Islamic State group still a danger, 10 years since its peak - BBC News](#)

⁷⁰ [The evolution of the Islamic State Group - The Global Jigsaw podcast, BBC World Service - YouTube](#)

⁷¹ [The Islamic State Five Years Later: Persistent Threats, U.S. Options - United States Department of State](#)

What does this mean for the UK?

1

It is almost certain that Islamic State has the intent to conduct attacks in the UK at this time. In October 2024, Ken McCallum, Director General of MI5, stated that the worsening threat from the Islamic State is the most concerning terrorist trend in the UK⁷².

2

It is highly likely that the predominant threat currently posed by Islamic State is from their ability to radicalise vulnerable UK-based individuals online and subsequently inspire those individuals to conduct low sophistication attacks in the UK.

3

It is highly likely that the Islamic State is using, and will continue to use, the conflict between Israel and Shiite forces in the Middle East to bolster its propaganda and encourage individuals to conduct attacks domestically⁷³.

4

It is unlikely that Islamic State provinces in Africa would currently have the intent to conduct attacks against the UK as it is highly likely these groups are focusing on regional goals at this time.



⁷² Director General Ken McCallum gives latest threat update | MI5 - The Security Service

⁷³ Al-Naba 462: Propaganda on Israel-Shiite Forces' Conflict



Islamic State Khorasan Province

Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) emerged in 2014 as a collective of disenchanted members of al-Qa’ida, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and the Afghan Taliban. The group initially focused on the historical Khorasan region, which spans Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran⁷⁴.

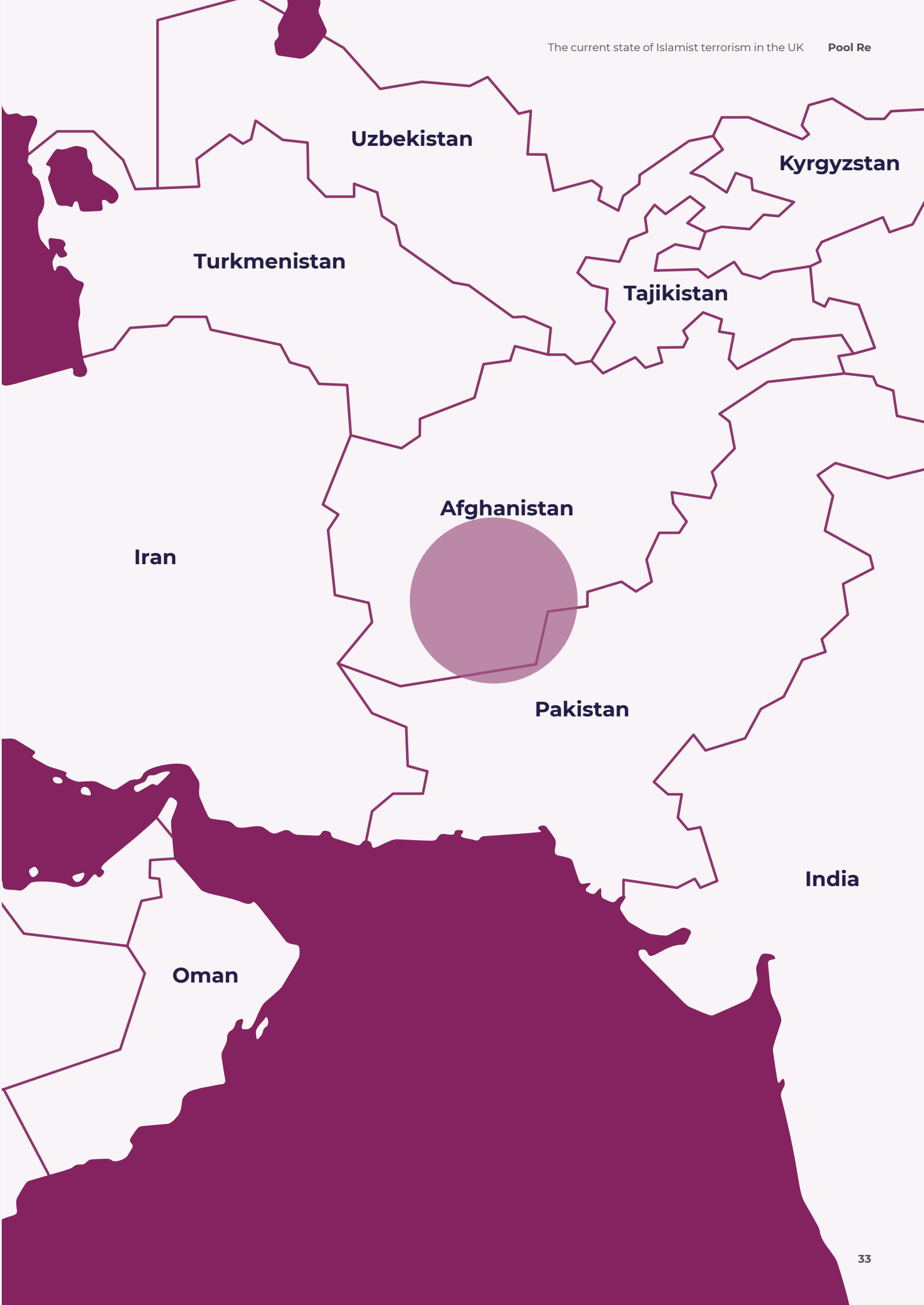
Islamic State formally announced the formation of its ‘Khorasan’ province (ISKP) in January 2015⁷⁵. The goals of ISKP are closely aligned with Islamic State but its operational focus has primarily been on the Khorasan region⁷⁶.



⁷⁴ [ICCT Snapshot: Islamic State - Khorasan Province | International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - ICCT](#), [IS-K: Who are the Islamic State jihadists blamed for Moscow attack?](#) - BBC News

⁷⁵ [Islamic State Khorasan Province](#)

⁷⁶ [From Tajikistan to Moscow and Iran: Mapping the Local and Transnational Threat of Islamic State Khorasan](#) - Combating Terrorism Center at West Point



ISKP attacks in Afghanistan

At its peak, ISKP conducted 353 attacks against Afghanistan in 2021⁷⁷.

However, since late 2022, ISKP attacks in Afghanistan have been limited compared to previous years⁷⁸. From August 2022-August 2023, ISKP conducted 69 attacks inside Afghanistan⁷⁹.

It is likely that ISKP's capability to conduct attacks in Afghanistan has decreased due to decreased funding since 2018 and counterterrorism efforts by the Taliban since their takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021⁸⁰. The Taliban has been successful

in conducting targeted killings of prominent ISKP members, such as Omar Bilal, one of ISKP's most active commanders⁸¹.

According to a US official, the Taliban have 'made progress' in combating ISKP, but they have reportedly struggled to dismantle ISKP cells and 'prevent attacks on soft targets'⁸². It is highly likely that ISKP operates as a network of decentralised cells at this time⁸³. It is highly likely that ISKP retains the capability to conduct attacks in Afghanistan at this time despite Taliban efforts to destroy the group⁸⁴.

⁷⁷ CTC-SENTINEL-052024_cover-article.pdf

⁷⁸ The Islamic State in Khorasan Province: Exploiting a Counterterrorism Gap

⁷⁹ ISKP Goes Global: External Operations from Afghanistan | The Washington Institute

⁸⁰ The Islamic State in Khorasan between Taliban counter-terrorism and resurgence prospects | International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - ICCT

⁸¹ Centre on Armed Groups — Shadow wars: the Taliban's campaign against the Islamic State Khorasan Province

⁸² <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10604>

⁸³ Centre on Armed Groups — Shadow wars: the Taliban's campaign against the Islamic State Khorasan Province

⁸⁴ Centre on Armed Groups — Shadow wars: the Taliban's campaign against the Islamic State Khorasan Province

Going global

It is likely that in response to their decreased capability to conduct attacks in Afghanistan, ISKP has broadened its propaganda outreach to recruit members in South and Central Asia.

From 2023, ISKP expanded its translated content. There was a notable uptick in content written in the Tajik and Uzbek languages⁸⁵.

At the same time, ISKP has expanded Westwards, increasing its efforts in inciting individuals in the West to conduct attacks on behalf of ISKP⁸⁶. ISKP now publishes an English-language propaganda magazine⁸⁷.

ISKP recruitment efforts originally focused on Tajik immigrants in the West but has now broadened its efforts to recruit those from other communities, such as Afghan nationals, who may feel isolation and alienation in Western countries⁸⁸.

It is likely that ISKP has had the capability to conduct transnational attacks since 2020. For example,

in April 2020, four Tajik nationals linked to the Islamic State were detained over a plot to attack US and NATO military facilities and personnel in Germany⁸⁹.

In January 2024, two ISKP members conducted two suicide bombings in Iran at the commemoration for an Iranian general that was killed by a US drone strike in 2020. Two months later, ISKP claimed responsibility for an attack on the Crocus City Hall in Moscow. These high-level attacks put the group in the spotlight and highlighted the intent and capabilities of ISKP to mount large scale attacks outside of Afghanistan.



⁸⁵ [Surge in Islamic State Khorasan content online coincides with increased reports of linked activities and arrests in Europe and elsewhere - Centre for Information Resilience](#)

⁸⁶ [ISKP's Latest Campaign: Expanded Propaganda and External Operations - GNET](#)

⁸⁷ [Islamic State Khorasan's Westward Network Expansion Into Iran, Turkey, and Europe - The Diplomat](#)

⁸⁸ [ISIS-K threat grows as it targets disaffected Muslims with sophisticated propaganda](#)

⁸⁹ [CTC-SENTINEL-012021.pdf](#)



Timeline

of ISKP related incidents:

November 2020 – Kabul, Afghanistan – ISKP claimed responsibility for a Marauding Firearms Attack on Kabul University. At least 22 were killed and 27 injured. This was the second attack on the university in just over a week⁹⁰.

August 2021 – Kabul, Afghanistan – a suicide bombing occurred at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. ISKP claimed responsibility for the attack that killed more than 100 people, including 13 US service members and 90 Afghan nationals⁹¹.

October 2021 – Kandahar, Afghanistan – ISKP claimed responsibility for a bombing attack during Friday prayer at the Bibi Fatima mosque in Kandahar. More than 40 people were killed⁹².

October 2021 – Kandahar, Afghanistan – ISKP claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing attack on the Said Abad mosque that occurred during Friday prayers. At least 50 people were killed⁹³.

December 2023 – Cologne, Germany – Five individuals affiliated with ISKP were arrested for plotting to attack Cologne Cathedral on New Year's Eve using a explosives-laden car⁹⁴.

January 2024 – Kerman, Iran – ISKP claimed responsibility for two attacks on a crowd that had gathered at a cemetery to mark the fourth anniversary of the death of Iranian general, Qasem Soleimani⁹⁵. The twin attacks killed nearly 100 people and injured 284⁹⁶.

January 2024 – Istanbul, Turkey – Two ISKP members conducted a firearms attack a Catholic church in Istanbul, killing one man⁹⁷.

March 2024 – Moscow, Russia – Four individuals, reportedly affiliated with ISKP, conducted a Marauding Firearms Attack during a concert at the Crocus City Hall. 133 people were killed and more than 140 were injured⁹⁸.

March 2024 – Stockholm, Sweden – Two Afghan nationals were arrested in Germany for planning to attack the Swedish parliament. The two individuals were reportedly tasked by ISKP to carry out the attack in retaliation against incidents of Quran- burning in Sweden⁹⁹.

April 2024 – ISKP's media arm, al-Azaim media group, incited attacks against football stadiums before and during the UEFA Champions League¹⁰⁰.

June 2024 – Paris, France – An 18-year-old – who was communicating with ISKP - was arrested for allegedly plotting to attack spectators and staff during the Paris Olympic games¹⁰¹. More generally, ISKP members and supporters threatened to target the Paris Olympic Games¹⁰².

August 2024 – Vienna, Austria – Individuals with links to ISKP had planned an attack against Taylor Swift concerts. The individuals intended to kill 'tens of thousands'¹⁰³.

October 2024 – Oklahoma, US – Nasir Ahmed Tawhedi, 27, was arrested for conspiring to commit a terrorist attack on the day of the US election in November 2024. A US official confirmed that IS-K orchestrated Tawhedi's planned attack¹⁰⁴.

⁹⁰ [Death toll from Kabul University attack rises to at least 35 as anger grows | Reuters](#)

⁹¹ [Kabul Airport Attack Kills 13 U.S. Service Members, at Least 90 Afghans - WSJ](#)

⁹² [Afghanistan: Suicide attack hits Kandahar mosque during prayers - BBC News](#)

⁹³ [Afghanistan: Deadly attack hits Kunduz mosque during Friday prayers - BBC News](#)

⁹⁴ [German police detain fifth suspect in Cologne Cathedral plot - DW - 01/02/2024](#)

⁹⁵ [Islamic State claims responsibility for deadly Iran attack, Tehran vows revenge | Reuters](#)

⁹⁶ [Terrorist Bombings in Iran: Implications and Potential Responses | The Washington Institute](#)

⁹⁷ [Istanbul church attack: Gunmen kill one person during Sunday morning mass - BBC News](#)

⁹⁸ [Gunmen kill 133 at Crocus City Hall in Moscow attack - BBC News](#)

⁹⁹ [Germany arrests 2 Afghans over Swedish parliament attack plot - POLITICO](#)

¹⁰⁰ [Briefing: Pro-IS incitement to attack stadiums in run-up to major sports events - BBC Monitoring](#)

¹⁰¹ [The Terrorism Threat to the 2024 Paris Olympics: Learning from the Past to Understand the Present | International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - ICCT](#)

¹⁰² [L'inquiétant profil de Rokhman B., 18 ans, soupçonné d'un projet d'attentat pendant les JO 2024 - Le Parisien](#)

¹⁰³ [Taylor Swift concert terror plotters intended to kill 'huge number' of people, CIA says | World News | Sky News | The August 2024 Taylor Swift Vienna Concert Plot - Combating Terrorism Center at West Point](#)

¹⁰⁴ [\[ISIS K behind failed Nov. 5 Election Day terror plot: DOJ\]](#)

What is the threat from ISKP to the UK?



It is highly likely that ISKP represents the predominant overseas Islamist terrorism threat to the UK at this time.

There is a realistic possibility that ISKP could direct radicalised UK individuals to conduct attacks in the UK at this time. Ken McCallum, Director General of MI5, stated in October 2024 that the 'ISKP attack in Moscow was a brutal demonstration of its capabilities. We [the UK] and many European partners are detecting IS-connected activity in our homelands, which we are moving early to disrupt'¹⁰⁵.

It is unlikely that ISKP has the capability to directly conduct attacks in the UK at this time. It is highly likely that ISKP's online propaganda will continue to target UK audiences in the short to medium term'¹⁰⁶.

According to Tech Against Terrorism, ISKP is currently actively targeting diaspora communities and that their focus on the UK surpasses that of other Western nations. ISKP currently publishes more propaganda in more languages, particularly English, than any other Islamic State province since the self-declared Caliphate'¹⁰⁷.

- In November 2023, two brothers in the UK were jailed for planning to travel to Afghanistan to join ISKP. The two brothers reportedly became 'increasingly radicalised' over the course of 2022'¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁵ [Director General Ken McCallum gives latest threat update | MI5 - The Security Service](#)
¹⁰⁶ [Tech Against Terrorism Highlights ISKP's Escalating Online Threat in Response to MI5 Director General's Warning](#)
¹⁰⁷ [Tech Against Terrorism Highlights ISKP's Escalating Online Threat in Response to MI5 Director General's Warning](#)
¹⁰⁸ [Brothers who planned to join Islamic State jailed - BBC News](#)

Guest expert



Dr Antonio Giustozzi,
Senior Research Fellow,
Terrorism and Conflict, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

Perspective on the current state of ISKP:

ISKP was thrown into the world of international terrorism by changes that took place in Syria and Turkey in 2020-21, preventing the unit tasked with carrying out attacks in Europe from remaining operational. ISKP was deemed to be the most suitable branch to step in, because of the presence of many Central Asians in Syria and Turkey, who were no longer needed on the battlefield. In 2021-23, ISKP reluctantly obliged, but was clearly less than enthusiastic about its new task, the more so given the lack of success. It is only the Kerman and Crocus Hall attacks of early 2024 that changed that.

During 2024, ISKP tried frantically to score more successes, trying to deploy cells from Turkey to Europe, sending fresh recruits from Afghanistan, recruiting among refugees and migrants in Turkey, and inviting sympathisers already in Europe to set up their own attacks. One should keep in mind that carrying out terrorist attacks is not an exclusive task of ISKP. Other branches, especially Middle Eastern ones, are still involved. Not all plots taking place in Europe are ISKP's. Overall, the last three quarters of 2024 have been disappointing for ISKP. Its lack of expertise easily transferable to Europe showed: ISKP did not send to Europe its few good bomb makers and terror cell members, but raw recruits of dubious loyalty.

Now it seems that the leadership has accepted that this approach is not working and at least some of those waiting in Turkey for transfer to Europe have been called back to Afghanistan. A rethinking seems to be going on. Although the funding level has increased in 2024, internal divisions have resurfaced, as some of the policies of the current Governor of Khorasan being questioned. There are big debates about relations with foreign intelligence agencies and other Islamist organisations.



Iranian linked Islamist groups

Iran's 'Axis of Resistance'

The 'Axis of Resistance' is a loose network of autonomous militant Islamist groups through which Iran can project its power and expand its influence in the Middle East¹⁰⁹.



Hamas

Hamas has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007, after violently ousting rivals¹¹⁰.

On 07 October 2023, Hamas launched an attack against Israel from the Israeli-Gaza border, killing 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals. Approximately 251 people were also taken hostage by Hamas¹¹¹.

Following the attack, Israel launched a military offensive against Hamas in Gaza, including air strikes and ground invasions¹¹².

After approximately 15 months of conflict, a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel was agreed on 15 January 2025 and came into effect on 19 January 2025. The ceasefire deal included a release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas and the release of a number of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails¹¹³.

Hizballah

As a consequence of the 07 October 2023 attack by Hamas, Hizballah and Israeli tensions have increased. In September 2024, tensions rose following two Israeli attacks on Hizballah operatives using electronic devices. A ceasefire deal between Hizballah and Israel came into effect on the 27 November 2024¹¹⁴.

It is highly likely Hizballah is currently facing severe setbacks following its recent conflict with Israel. It has been reported that several thousand Hizballah operatives have been killed between October 2023 and November 2024, with most killed during September 2024¹¹⁵.

It is highly unlikely that Hizballah has the intent or capability to conduct attacks in the UK at this time, as it is highly likely the group is currently focusing on regional goals and regrouping.

The Houthis

It is highly likely that the Houthis are expanding their alliances and regional influence at this time. Notably the Houthis are intensifying their contacts with Russia. Russia's military intelligence personnel are present in Houthi-held areas of Yemen and the Houthis are in talks with Russia regarding provision of weapons¹¹⁶.

It is highly likely that the Houthis could have the intent and capability to conduct attacks against UK ships in the Red Sea at this time.

However, there is a remote chance that the Houthis would have the intent and capability to conduct attacks on UK mainland at this time.

¹⁰⁹ [Iran's 'axis of resistance' is a potent coalition but a risky strategy | Iran | The Guardian](#)
¹¹⁰ [What is Hamas and why is it fighting with Israel in Gaza? - BBC News](#)
¹¹¹ [Hamas terrorist attacks on October 7: The deadliest day in Israel's history](#)
¹¹² [What is Hamas and why is it fighting with Israel in Gaza? - BBC News](#)
¹¹³ [Gaza ceasefire deal: What do we know and how will it work? - BBC News](#)
¹¹⁴ [Lebanon ceasefire: What we know about Israel-Hezbollah deal - BBC News](#)
¹¹⁵ [Still counting its dead, Hezbollah faces long road to recover from war | Reuters](#)
¹¹⁶ [Beyond the Axis: Yemen's Houthis are Building their 'Network of Resistance' | Royal United Services Institute](#)

Israel-Gaza as a driver of terrorism in the UK

At the time of writing, there has been one terrorist attack in the UK where Israel/Hamas has been the primary motivating factor for conducting the attack.

On 15 October 2023, Ahmed Ali Alid injured his housemate before fatally stabbing a member of the public, Terence Carney, in Hartlepool. Alid's motivation for the attack was the conflict in Gaza¹¹⁷.

It is likely that the Israel-Hamas conflict, and subsequent conflicts in the Middle East, 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. It is almost certain that the conflicts in the Middle East will be exploited by terrorist groups in propaganda to encourage attacks, recruitment, and funding. According to the Soufan Centre, in late October 2023, Islamic State's Central Command issued its 'most overt and aggressive call yet' for attacks on Israeli, Jewish, and Western targets. al-Qa'ida issued its 'most specific call to attack the United States in the last five years' following the Hamas attack on Israel¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁷ UPDATED WITH SENTENCE: Man jailed for life for murder and attempted murder in Hartlepool | The Crown Prosecution Service

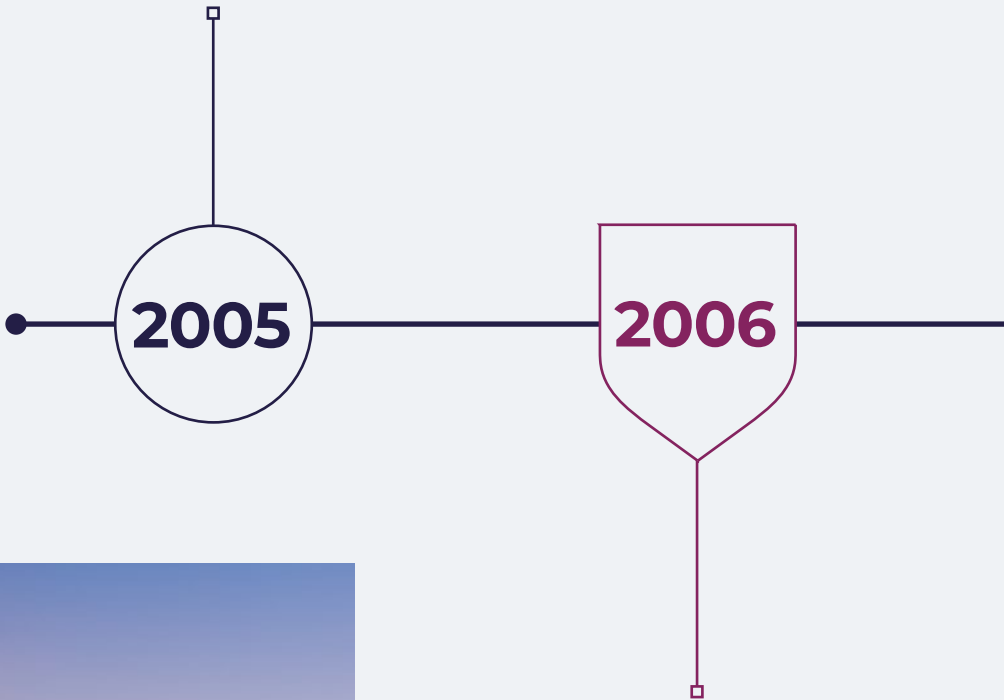
¹¹⁸ TSC Special Report Accelerating Hate The Impact of October 7 on Terrorism and Political Violence in the West



July 2005 – London – Shezhad Tanweer, Mohammed Sidique Khan, Germaine Lindsay, and Habib Hussain conducted four separate Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks against London’s transport infrastructure. Tanweer detonated his device at Aldgate, Khan at Edgware Road and Lindsay between King’s Cross and Russel Square. Hussain detonated his device onboard a bus at Tavistock Square. The attacks killed 52 people¹¹⁹.

Timeline

of Islamist terror attacks and plots in the UK



DISRUPTED 2006 – London
Three British men planned to target at least seven transatlantic flights from London to North America and Canada using bombs made from liquid explosives in plastic bottles. The plot was thwarted, and the men were arrested just days before an alleged dry run of the attack was planned¹²⁰.

○ Attack ▮ Disrupted plot

¹¹⁹ [Terror in the UK: Timeline of attacks | UK News | Sky News](#)
¹²⁰ [Three terrorists convicted of plotting to blow up jets over Atlantic | UK security and counter-terrorism | The Guardian](#)



DISRUPTED 2012 – London

Four men, inspired by al-Qa’ida, planned to send five mail bombs to the London Stock Exchange. The plot was uncovered by undercover police before firm dates could be set for the attacks¹²³.

June 2007 – Glasgow

A jeep laden with propane gas cylinders and petrol canes was driven into the Glasgow Airport departure area. The vehicle was stopped from entering the departure area by a concrete pillar at the main door. Five were injured¹²¹.

March 2017 – London

Khalid Masood drove a hired car over Westminster Bridge, mounting the pavement and began to hit pedestrians. Five people were killed, including one police officer. Once near the Houses of Parliament, Masood, armed with a knife, ran towards Parliament but was stopped and killed by police¹²⁵.



2007

2009

2012

2013

2017

2017

**DISRUPTED
December 2009 – US**

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian citizen and former student at University College London, attempted to blow up a commercial plane by concealing a bomb in his underwear. The bomb failed to detonate fully and no passengers were injured¹²².

May 2013 – London

Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale conducted a Vehicle as a Weapon and Bladed Weapons attack against Fusilier Lee Rigby outside the Woolwich Barracks in southeast London. Both perpetrators claimed they were “soldiers of Allah”, motivated by the plight of Muslims abroad to carry out their attack¹²⁴.



May 2017 – Manchester

22 people were killed after Salman Abedi detonated a Person Bourne Improvised Explosive Device in the lobby of Manchester Arena following an Ariana Grande concert¹²⁶.



○ Attack
◡ Disrupted plot

¹²¹ [The day terror came to Glasgow Airport - BBC News](#)
¹²² [Underwear bomber Abdulmutallab sentenced to life - BBC News](#)
¹²³ [London Stock Exchange bomb plot admitted by four men - BBC News](#)

¹²⁴ [Lee Rigby murder: Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale found guilty | Woolwich attack | The Guardian](#)
¹²⁵ [Westminster attack: What happened - BBC News](#)
¹²⁶ [Terror in the UK: Timeline of attacks | UK News | Sky News](#)

June 2017 – London

Three attackers drove a van into pedestrians on London Bridge and then launched a knife attack in Borough Market, killing eight people¹²⁷. The three attackers were reportedly part of the UK-banned group, al-Muhajiroun, and held Islamist extremist mindsets¹²⁸.



November 2019 – London

Two people were killed and three injured in a stabbing attack at London Bridge. The attack began at Fishmonger's Hall. The perpetrator had been arrested on terrorism charges prior to this attack¹³⁰.



September 2017 – London

Ahmed Hassan planted a home-made bomb on a London tube intending to kill those on board. The IED partially detonated at on a tube at Parsons Green Station, roughly 50 people were injured¹²⁹.

2022

DISRUPTED

July 2022 – Isle of Wight

A 16-year-old boy plotted a terror attack after researching the Isle of Wight Festival as a potential target. The boy had an Islamist extremist mindset and planned to attack people he believed had insulted Islam¹³¹.

2023

DISRUPTED

January 2023 – Leeds

Mohammad Farooq created a bomb from a pressure cooker and planned to detonate the bomb at St James's Hospital in Leeds. Farooq was talked down by a patient at the hospital outside the hospital grounds¹³².



Intelligence cut-off date

13 February 2025



○ Attack

◡ Disrupted plot

¹²⁷ London Bridge attack: What happened - BBC News

¹²⁸ London Bridge attackers were part of banned jihadi network | UK News | Sky News

¹²⁹ Parsons Green Tube Bomber Convicted | Counter Terrorism Policing

¹³⁰ London Bridge: What we know about the attack - BBC News

¹³¹ Isle of Wight Festival terror plot: Teen jailed for seven years - BBC News

¹³² Leeds hospital bomb plotter guilty of terror charge - BBC News

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