

# Petrol stations





## Terrorism threat to petrol stations

- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could have the intent to conduct attacks against petrol stations due to their publicly accessible nature and the potential to cause significant damage through the targeting of flammable materials.
- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted against a petrol station in the UK would be conducted by an individual or a small cell using a low sophistication methodology. E.g., Vehicle as a Weapon, Fire as a Weapon, Bladed or Blunt Force Weapons.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could have the capability to conduct a high-sophistication attack at petrol stations in the UK. E.g., Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), Person Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (PBIED), or Firearms attack. The complex nature of plotting a high-sophistication terrorist attack makes it highly likely that there will be greater opportunity for UK police and security services to disrupt potential attacks.
- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted against a petrol station in the UK at this time would target individuals at or in close proximity to the site, rather than site infrastructure. Previous terrorist attacks conducted at petrol stations globally have demonstrated the intent of terrorist actors to target civilians, rather than infrastructure (see below).
- 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 petrol stations in the UK

- It is highly likely that there would be an increased terrorism threat to petrol stations in major cities and those in proximity to iconic sites and/or major transport hubs. There is a realistic possibility that petrol stations located in proximity to iconic sites and/or busy public spaces could be impacted by a Marauding Terrorist Attack in proximity to their site.

### Previous terrorist incidents related to petrol stations in the UK and overseas

- Terrorist actors have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks at petrol stations globally, including:
  - **2022 Israel;** On 22 March 2022, Muhammad Galeb Ahmad Abu Alqian conducted a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) at a Retail Park in Israel. The attack began with a Bladed Weapons attack against an individual at a petrol station. In total, three individuals were stabbed and a fourth was rammed by a vehicle. There were four fatalities, and several others were wounded. Alqian had reportedly previously been jailed for supporting Islamic State after he had planned to leave for Syria to join the group.<sup>1</sup>
  - **2022 Thailand;** Petrol stations were targeted as part of a range of attacks conducted in Thailand's southern provinces; Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala. In one incident, police reportedly received a report that a suspect had entered a petrol station and placed a bag inside, warning employees to leave if they did "not want to die". There were no fatalities. Three civilians were reported injured.<sup>2</sup>
  - **2022 Israel;** On 15 November 2022, an 18-year-old individual conducted a Bladed Weapons and Vehicle as a Weapon attack against civilians at a petrol station in proximity to a Jewish settlement in the West Bank. There were three fatalities.<sup>3</sup>
  - **2017 Northern Ireland;** On 23 January 2017, a police officer was injured during a drive by Firearms attack conducted at a petrol station in Belfast. The main line of inquiry following the attack was "violent dissident republicans".<sup>4</sup>
  - **2011 Pakistan;** On 08 March 2011, a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) attack was conducted outside a petrol station in Pakistan. There were 20 fatalities and more than 100 people were injured. The attack reportedly caused secondary explosions at the petrol station, resulting in further damage.<sup>5</sup>
  - **2002 Israel;** On 27 October 2002, an Islamist terrorist conducted a Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED) attack at a petrol station in Israel. There were three fatalities and roughly 20 people were injured. The attack was later claimed by the Palestinian terrorist organisation, Hamas.<sup>6</sup>
- There is a realistic possibility that petrol stations could be indirectly impacted by terrorism-related incidents in proximity to their location. Petrol stations have previously been indirectly impacted by terrorism-related incidents globally, including:
  - **2022 UK;** Following a firebomb attack at an immigration centre in Dover, UK, the attacker, Andrew Leak, 66, of High Wycombe, took his own life at a petrol station in close proximity to the site of the original incident.<sup>7</sup>
  - **2015 France;** The perpetrators of the 2015 Charlie Hebdo attack robbed a petrol station following their attack. The perpetrators were reportedly heavily armed during the incident.<sup>8</sup> There were no fatalities.
  - **2015 US;** The perpetrators of the 2015 Boston Marathon bombing stopped at a petrol station to refuel their car while still on the run from police and security services. A hostage within the car escaped to a neighbouring petrol station and called the police.<sup>9</sup>

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Other potential threats to petrol stations in the UK

- It is almost certain that any terrorist actor with the intent to conduct an attack against petrol stations would have open access to the site and the capability to conduct uninterrupted hostile reconnaissance due to the relaxed security posture and publicly accessible nature of petrol stations in the UK.
- Although it is unlikely that any such event would be designated as terrorism, there is a realistic possibility that Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) protest groups could have the intent to stage protests at petrol stations in the UK in response to government inaction on climate change and the cost-of-living crisis. NVDA Protest groups have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to target petrol stations in the UK, including:
  - **2022 Surrey and Kent;** Just Stop Oil protesters were arrested after smashing display glass and gluing themselves to petrol pumps during a protest at Cobham services in Surrey and Clacket Services in Kent.<sup>10</sup>
  - **2022 London;** Just Stop Oil protesters damaged pumps, staged sit-down protests, and glued themselves to pumps at petrol stations in central London. Electronic displays on petrol pumps were smashed and spray painted, and the stations’ signage was graffitied.<sup>11</sup>
- There is a realistic possibility that staff employed at petrol stations could pose an Insider Threat to petrol stations in the UK, including:
  - Staff employed at petrol stations could facilitate access to petrol tanker vehicles and the use of such a vehicle to conduct a terrorist attack. E.g., Vehicle as a Weapon attack or Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED).
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could have the intent to exploit petrol stations in the UK in order to gain access to material that could be used to conduct an attack. Terrorist actors in the UK have previously demonstrated the intent to exploit petrol stations to facilitate terrorism-related activity, including:
  - **2006 UK;** On 07 November 2006, Dhiren Barot, 34, , was convicted for plotting synchronised attacks in the UK. Barot was inspired by an Islamist ideology and intended to conduct the attack on behalf of al-Qa’ida. Part of Barot’s plan was to hijack petrol tankers that would later be used to ram into a target.<sup>12</sup>

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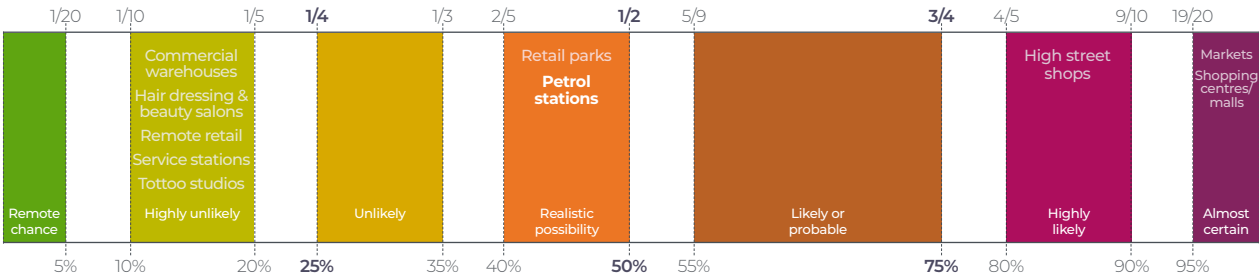
Threat visualisation

The diagram below outlines the intent of terrorist actors in the UK to conduct attacks against petrol stations within the retail & wholesale 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 retail & wholesale sector in the UK is subject to change based on the assessments outlined in this report.

**Note:** The terrorism threat to any given site is not based solely on intent, but also the capability of terrorist actors in the UK as outlined in this report. Terrorism threat is also mitigated by the UK's countrywide terrorism risk mitigation infrastructure including both public and private security and safety capabilities.



Assessment Methodology

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

- **Almost certain:** An event has a greater than 90% chance of occurring.
- **Highly likely:** An event has a 76% to 90% chance of occurring.
- **Likely:** An event has a 55% to 75% chance of occurring.
- **Realistic possibility:** An event has a 40% to 54% chance of occurring.
- **Unlikely:** An event has a 25% to 39% chance of occurring.
- **Highly unlikely:** An event has an 10% to 24% chance of occurring.
- **Remote chance:** An event has a less than 10% chance of occurring.

Time spans

- **Short Term:** 0–6 Months.
- **In the next 12 months.**
- **Medium Term:** 12 months–5 Years.
- **Long Term:** 5+ Years.

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9. Timeline: Boston bombings, manhunt, aftermath - CNN
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