

# Cafés & coffee shops





# Terrorism threat to cafés & coffee shops

- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could have the intent to conduct attacks against cafés and coffee shops in the UK due to their easily accessible nature and the routine gathering of people both inside and outside their sites.
- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted against a café or coffee shop in the UK would be conducted by an individual or small cell using a low sophistication methodology. E.g., Bladed or Blunt Force Weapons, Vehicle as a Weapon, or Fire as a Weapon.
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors in the UK could have the capability to conduct a high-sophistication attack at a café or coffee shop in the UK. E.g., Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), Person Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (PBIED), or Firearms attack. The complicated nature of plotting a high-sophistication terrorist attack makes it highly likely that there will be greater opportunity for UK police and security services to disrupt potential attacks.
- 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 cafés & coffee shops in the UK

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

## Previous terrorist incidents related to cafés & coffee shops in the UK and overseas

- Although cafés and coffee shops in the UK have not yet been directly targeted by terrorist actors, they have previously been impacted by terrorism-related activity in proximity to their site. E.g., Several businesses in proximity to Borough Market were indirectly impacted by the 2017 terrorist attack conducted against civilians at London Bridge. It has been estimated that the attack cost businesses nearly £2 million.<sup>1</sup>
- Terrorist actors have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks against cafés and coffee shops globally, including:
  - **2024 Somalia;** On 17 October 2024, an individual conducted a Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED) attack at a café in close proximity to a police training school in Mogadishu. Islamist group, al-Shabaab, claimed responsibility for the attack that killed seven people and injured six others.<sup>2</sup>
  - **2024 Nigeria;** On 31 July 2024, an individual conducted a Person-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (PBIED) attack at a teahouse in Northeast Nigeria that killed 19 people and injured 27 others. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>3</sup>
  - **2023 Russia;** On 02 April 2023, Darya Trepova, killed war blogger, Vladlen Tararsky, whilst he was inside a café, by handing him a statuette which later exploded. There was one fatality and more than 30 people were injured. In January 2024, Trepova was charged with terrorism and sentenced to 27 years in prison. Reporting suggests that the National Republican Army, an anti-regime group, claimed it conducted the attack.<sup>4</sup>
  - **2020 Germany;** On 19 February 2020, Tobias Rathjen, conducted a Firearms attack in the German city of Hanau. There were nine fatalities, and five others were injured. During the attack, the Arena Bar and Café was targeted. Rathjen was reportedly inspired by an Extreme Right-Wing ideology.<sup>5</sup>
  - **2016 Bangladesh;** On 01 July 2016, five individuals affiliated with Islamic State conducted a Firearms and Bladed Weapons attack as part of a siege on Holey Artisan Cafe.<sup>6</sup> There were 22 fatalities.<sup>7</sup> A police investigation found 21 individuals were involved in plotting and conducting the attack.<sup>8</sup>
  - **2015 France;** On 13 November 2015, during a complex high-sophistication Islamic State attack in Paris, a cafe was targeted by individuals who conducted a Marauding Firearms attack.<sup>9</sup> In total, there were 130 fatalities as a result of the wider attacks.<sup>10</sup>
  - **2014 Australia;** On 15 December 2014, Man Haron Monis, conducted a 16-hour hostage operation in the Lindt Chocolat Café in Sydney, Australia. Monis was inspired by an Islamist ideology. There were two fatalities and four people were injured.<sup>11</sup>
  - **2011 Morocco;** On 28 April 2011, Adil Al-Atmani, conducted an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack against a well-known tourist café in Marrakech. Al-Atmani was inspired by an Islamist ideology. There were 17 fatalities and over 20 were injured.<sup>12</sup>
  - **2008 India;** On 26 November 2008, the Leopold Café was targeted as part of a complex, high-sophistication terrorist attack against multiple locations that left 166 dead. Media reporting suggests that approximately 10 people were killed in the attack on the café.<sup>13</sup>

Continued

Other potential threats to cafés & coffee shops in the UK

- It is almost certain that any terrorist actor with the intent to conduct an attack against a café or coffee shop 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 any café or coffee shop in the UK.
- It is highly likely that the threat posed to cafés and coffee shops in the UK would be dynamic and dependent on the nature of the business and/or events hosted at the site. For example, a café associated with the LGBTQIA+ community could face an increased threat from Extreme Right-Wing or Islamist terrorist actors.
  - **2023 USA;** The “UpRising Bakery and Café” in Chicago was forced to close following threats to the premises after it hosted a drag performance. Prior to closing, the café had its windows smashed and its storefront graffitied.<sup>14</sup>
- Although it is highly 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 cafés and coffee shops in the UK. NVDA Protest groups have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to target cafés and coffee shops in the UK, including:
  - **2015 UK;** On 26 September 2015, anti-gentrification activists attacked the “Cereal Killer Café” in Shoreditch, London. Media reporting suggests that protesters spray painted the café’s windows and threw a smoke bomb inside the doorway.<sup>15</sup>
- There is a realistic possibility that there could be a heightened threat to cafés or coffee shops associated with a specific minority community. For example, an Extreme Right-Wing terrorist could have the intent to conduct an attack against a local Middle Eastern coffee shop or café.

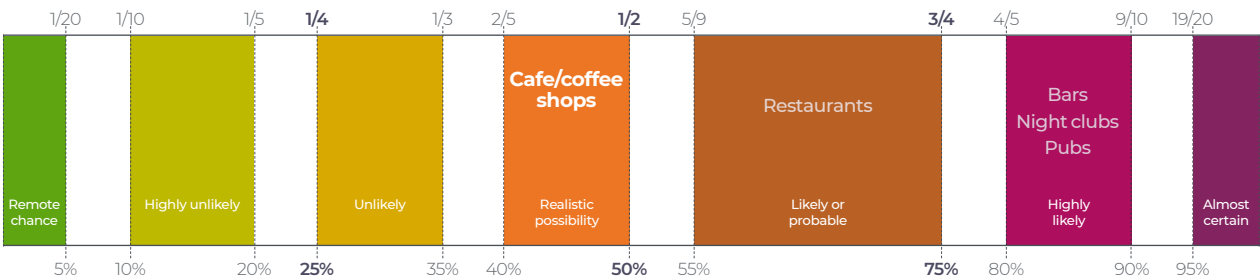
Threat visualisation

The diagram below outlines the intent of terrorist actors in the UK to conduct attacks against cafés & coffee shops within the hospitality 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 hospitality sector in the UK is subject to change based on the assessments outlined in this report.

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



Assessment Methodology

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

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

Time spans

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

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Intelligence cut-off date: 23 July 2025

For more information please contact [solutions@poolre.co.uk](mailto:solutions@poolre.co.uk)

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