

Tennis clubs



Terrorism threat to tennis clubs

- It is likely that terrorist actors in the UK would have the intent to conduct attacks against tennis clubs due to the routine gathering of large crowds and mass media coverage of events held at such sites.
- It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted against a tennis club 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 tennis club 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.
- It is almost certain that the threat posed to any tennis club in the UK would be subject to change and dependent on the public profile and attendance of the ground. E.g., It is almost certain that terrorist actors would prioritise attacks against matches hosted at major grounds such as Wimbledon, Davis Cup, Rothesay International Eastbourne etc., compared to smaller, lesser-known locations.
- The assessments in this report were made using the PHIA Probability Yardstick, for further information please see the Assessment Methodology [section below](#).

Previous terrorist incidents related to tennis clubs in the UK and overseas

- At this time, there have been no previous terrorist attacks conducted at tennis clubs in the UK and overseas. However, the potential terrorism threat to tennis clubs has previously been recognised globally, including:
 - **2017 UK;** Reporting suggests that a pro-Islamic State Telegram channel, “Lone Mujahid”, called for a “lone wolf attack” to be conducted at the Wimbledon Championships. SITE Intelligence Group reportedly monitored a map of the venue being distributed on the channel, along with messages calling for individuals to “copycat the May 22, 2017 Manchester Arena [attack]”.¹
 - **2017 UK;** Security was stepped up at the Wimbledon Championships following a number of terrorist attacks conducted in the UK in 2017. The measures included the installation of Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) to protect fans outside of the venue. The Metropolitan Police also announced the presence of firearms officers throughout the ground, as well as a mobile unit which could “respond to emerging incidents”.²

Other potential threats to tennis clubs in the UK

- Due to the sophisticated search and screening procedures at large/high-profile tennis clubs in the UK, there is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors could prioritise attacks against a site’s external spaces, proximal locations, or at points of security challenge. E.g., Approaches to the ground, external concourses, transport hubs, security checkpoints, etc.
- There is a realistic possibility that there could be a heightened threat to tennis clubs in the UK hosting high-profile individuals. E.g. Celebrities, politicians, etc. The Wimbledon Championships held at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, for example, provide a Royal Box where celebrities and important dignitaries watch the tournament.
- There is a realistic possibility that staff employed at tennis clubs could pose an insider threat in several ways, including:
 - Temporary event staff, in-house staff, and/or third party providers could enable terrorist actors in the UK to access the site with malicious items by allowing such individuals to bypass security mitigations and vetting procedures in place.
 - Temporary event staff, in-house staff, and/or third party providers could grant terrorist actors access to high-profile players or guests in the back-stage areas of a tennis club.
- Although it is highly unlikely that any such event would be designated as terrorism, it is highly likely that Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) Protest groups would have the intent to stage protests at tennis clubs in the UK. NVDA Protest groups have previously demonstrated the intent and capability to target tennis clubs, including:
 - **2024 Italy;** Activists from the climate crisis protest group, Last Generation, disrupted two games at the Italian Open by throwing confetti on to the court and trying to glue themselves to the stands.³
 - **2024 UK;** Three Just Stop Oil activists were found guilty of aggravated trespass after disrupting the 2023 Wimbledon Championships. Three individuals reportedly entered Court 18 during live play and threw confetti and puzzle pieces onto the court. Two separate games were interrupted.⁴
 - **2023 US;** The US Open semi-final was interrupted by activists from the climate crisis protest group, Extinction Rebellion. Four activists reportedly shouted during open-play and one of the individuals glued their feet to the floor of the stands.⁵
- There is a realistic possibility that the threat posed by Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) Protest groups could be heightened as a result of the high-level sponsorships of major tennis clubs, their perceived role in the climate crisis, and the unique impact that climate change is perceived to have on tennis as a sport.⁶

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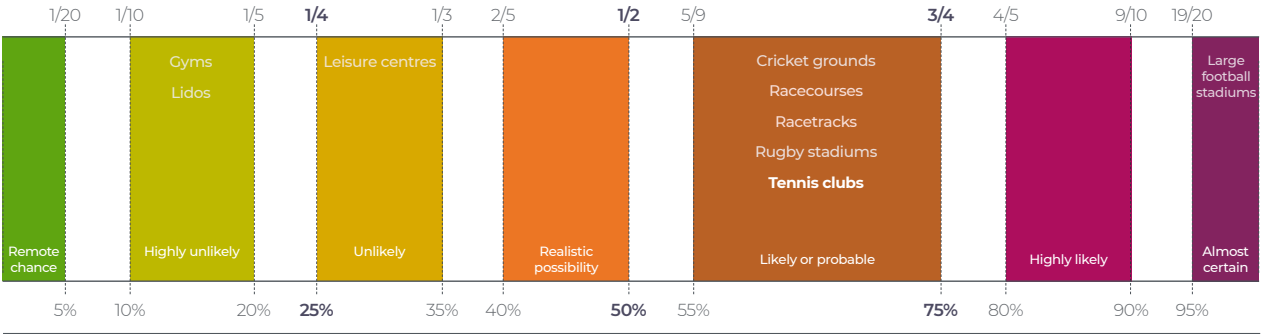
Threat visualisation

The diagram below outlines the intent of terrorist actors in the UK to conduct attacks against tennis clubs within the arts, culture and entertainment 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 arts, culture and entertainment 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: 21 June 2024

For more information please contact solutions@poolre.co.uk

Bibliography

1. [Wimbledon 2017: Isis supporters urge Manchester-like lone wolf attacks on the tennis championships - The Independent](#)
2. [Wimbledon 2017: Security stepped up after terror attacks - BBC News](#)
[Armed police and security barriers to beat terror threat at Wimbledon tennis championships - \(thetimes.co.uk\)](#)
3. [Climate protesters stop play in Rome before Keys sets up Swiatek meeting | Tennis - The Guardian](#)
[Climate protesters interrupt two Italian Open matches in Rome - BBC Sport](#)
4. [Just Stop Oil: Three protesters guilty after disrupting Wimbledon tennis matches | UK News - Sky News](#)
5. [US Open semi-final interrupted as climate protester glues feet to floor in stands | US Open Tennis 2023 - The Guardian](#)
6. [Tennis Australia ends partnership with Santos after one year | Australia sport - The Guardian](#)
[Why Climate Protesters Are Focusing on Tennis - The New Republic](#)

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