

Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare



Countering the terrorist threat:
The UK Government's strategy

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The aim of the UK Government's counter-terrorism strategy is to reduce the risk we face from international terrorism so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

Introduction

Keeping the UK and its people safe is the Government's first priority.

Keeping the UK safe

Terrorism is not new to the UK. There is a continuing domestic threat from dissident Irish republican groups. But the most serious threat we face is from international terrorism.

Since 2003 we have had a comprehensive strategy in place to counter international terrorism.

In March 2009 we published the first major revision of our strategy.

This booklet provides a brief introduction to the revised counter-terrorism strategy, to some of the people behind it, and to the work that is going on to keep the UK safe from the terrorist threat.

You can download the full strategy document free at www.official-documents.gov.uk or buy copies at www.tsoshop.co.uk

To find out more about our counter-terrorism work, visit the Home Office website www.homeoffice.gov.uk

The threat to the UK

Al Qa'ida and similar groups are the main international terrorist threat to the UK. They deliberately target innocent people and attack without warning, regardless of faith, race, or background. They aim to inflict mass casualties and are motivated by a violent extremist ideology, which wrongly uses religion to justify violence.

The 11 September 2001 attacks showed that these terrorists are willing and able to carry out devastating acts of violence. Since then, terrorists have killed hundreds of people around the world.

British citizens, working with Al Qa'ida, were responsible for the 7 July London bombings in which 52 people were murdered. These were the first successful attacks of their kind in the UK. There have been a number of plots against us since.

We know that some British citizens still travel abroad to be trained in how to commit terrorist attacks, that terrorists want to strike the UK again, and that they will keep on trying.

The current threat to the UK is severe, meaning an attack is highly likely and could happen at any time without warning.

Countering the terrorist threat

Our counter-terrorism strategy sets out a comprehensive plan for dealing with the terrorist threat.

The strategy involves thousands of people – police and intelligence officers, the emergency services, local authorities, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, governments and other partners – working in partnership across the UK and the world to protect the public.

The strategy has four key elements:

Pursue – to stop terrorist attacks

Prevent – to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism

Protect – to strengthen our protection against terrorist attack

Prepare – where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact

These four areas of work complement and reinforce each other to reduce the terrorist threat to the UK and our overseas interests.

The strategy includes action at the international, national and local level. Thanks to the dedication of the many people and partnerships who work tirelessly to counter the terrorist threat, we have stopped the majority of planned attacks against us. The international problem we face needs international solutions:

we work with partners across the globe to tackle problems at their source and improve our collective security. Our strategy is closely coordinated with our counter-insurgency work overseas, notably in Afghanistan and Iraq, led by the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

We have a parallel Olympic and Paralympic Safety and Security Strategy which will protect the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games so that they are safe, secure and resilient against all types of risks including terrorism.

By 2011 the Government will spend £3.5 billion a year on counter-terrorism and security measures in addition to the considerable sums invested by the private sector.

Our revised strategy

The terrorist threat and the risks we face are always changing.

We have updated our strategy to take account of this changing threat, the lessons we have learned and new challenges which we face.

Our revised strategy:

- Provides a context for this work by describing the recent history of the international terrorist threat.
- Sets out the underlying causes that create and sustain terrorism: areas of unresolved conflict in the world and failed and fragile

states where terrorism can thrive; terrorists' use of new technology; the ideology behind violent extremism; and the process of radicalisation that convinces some people to support or carry out terrorist acts.

- Creates comprehensive programmes of action here and overseas to tackle both the symptoms and the causes of terrorism.
- Indicates how new resources and techniques will be used to disrupt terrorist operations planned against this country and prosecute those responsible.
- Develops new action to stop the source of terrorist recruits by preventing people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism. This work draws on a new and deeper understanding of how individuals become radicalised.
- Strengthens our protection of terrorist targets, including transport and essential services.
- Includes new work to counter the threat of attack using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear devices.
- Ensures action in the UK is thoroughly coordinated with our work internationally, so it has maximum impact in countering the terrorist threat.

- Involves a wider range of people and resources than ever before, ensuring we are all working together to counter the threat.

Rights and freedoms

The principles and values that form the very basis of our society are at the core of our counter-terrorism strategy.

Terrorism threatens some of our most fundamental rights, including the most important human right of all – the right to life.

Protecting the lives of the British people is our most important job.

The aim of our strategy is to allow people to live normally, free from fear.

We put respect for human rights at the centre of our response to the terrorist threat and we go to great lengths to ensure our response is proportionate, fair and effective. Where necessary, to ensure this, we have put in place robust, independently monitored safeguards and checks.

Pursue terrorists wherever they are and stop terrorist attacks



“We now have more than 3,000 police officers dedicated to countering terrorism across England and Wales, with more in Scotland and Northern Ireland.”

Bob Quick
Assistant Commissioner,
Metropolitan Police

Disrupting terrorist attacks

Our top priority is to disrupt terrorists' activities and stop them from carrying out attacks that threaten the lives of people in the UK.

Thousands of dedicated police officers work closely with the security and intelligence agencies to investigate terrorist activities, stop their plans and bring those responsible to justice.

As a result, many terrorists who planned to kill UK citizens are behind bars, and terrorist plots that could have caused hundreds of deaths have been prevented.

They include stopping two plots in 2004 in which the conspirators considered using radiological materials in a 'dirty bomb', plans by a London-based terrorist cell to buy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades in 2005, and a plot in early 2007 to kidnap and kill a British soldier.

Bob Quick is the UK's most senior counter-terrorism police officer.

He says: "Over the last couple of years, several major attacks have been thwarted. If they had come to fruition, we have no doubt we would have seen mass murder, probably on the scale of 7 July 2005.

"We have been remarkably effective in the UK in foiling terrorist attacks over many decades.

"And I think that comes from a partnership between the police, communities and the public.

"We can't guarantee we won't be attacked, but I think if we continue to develop that confidence and trust we will be even more successful.

"We live in a democracy. We always seek to prosecute people engaged in terrorism and violent extremism through the criminal justice system. In a very small minority of cases, we cannot prosecute individuals who represent a threat to us, and so use other legal powers to place constraints on their activities. We aim to deport foreign nationals who pose a public danger."

Prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism

A man wearing a white skullcap and a dark blue zip-up jacket over a white collared shirt is standing and speaking to a group of people. He is gesturing with his right hand. The background shows a room with wood-paneled walls and a framed picture on the wall.

“Islam absolutely does not allow any kind of violent extremism or terrorism, end of story.”

Sohail Nawaz
Iqra Mentoring Programme

The best long-term solution to prevent terrorism is to stop people becoming terrorists in the first place.

To do this we need to prevent people supporting violent extremism and the ideology that fuels terrorism.

Protecting vulnerable individuals who might be attracted to the ideology of violence is not just a job for the police, but also for local government, schools and universities, local communities and all of us who come into contact with them.

Part of our *Prevent* work is to challenge those who support violence. But we also want to actively promote the shared values (including democracy and the rule of law) on which our society and the cohesion of our communities depend.

From experience and through research, we now know more than ever before about how some British citizens are being drawn into terrorism. We are using this understanding with partners to divert people away from this path.

We work directly with people in their communities to:

- challenge the ideology behind violent extremism and support mainstream voices
- disrupt those who promote violent extremism

- support individuals who are vulnerable to recruitment, or have already been recruited by violent extremists

- increase the resilience of communities to violent extremism

- address the grievances which ideologues are exploiting.

The Iqra Mentoring Programme in Preston works to provide a safe space for young people to discuss their concerns and seek support and advice.

Mentor Sohail Nawaz says: “It’s vital to educate and galvanise youngsters with Islamic knowledge to counter and challenge some of the violent extremist messages that they might come across.

“If these young people were targeted by violent extremists and given leaflets filled with violence and hate they would have the knowledge and confidence to resist them. These young people are the building blocks of a strong community, resilient to the rhetoric of violent extremists, able to run them out of town.

“Islam absolutely does not allow any kind of violent extremism or terrorism, end of story. But you’ve got to have dialogue within communities and between communities; through that dialogue will come understanding – the understanding will take away the fear because we fear what we don’t understand.”

Protect the UK by strengthening our defences against terrorism

A blurred photograph of an airport border control area. In the background, a large sign reads "UK Border". To the left, a smaller sign says "Have your passport ready for inspection by the Immigration". To the right, another sign says "Expect some delay due to document checks and high volume of arrivals". The foreground is filled with the blurred figures of people moving through the area.

UK Border

Have your passport ready for inspection by the Immigration

Expect some delay due to document checks and high volume of arrivals

Our borders are stronger as a result of new technology.

Terrorists aim to attack high-profile targets, where they can have maximum impact and cause the most casualties.

We have developed comprehensive plans to protect these targets:

- **Critical National Infrastructure.** We have significantly improved protection of essential services such as emergency services, power, water, IT, telecoms and transport.
- **Crowded places.** We have provided security advice to sports venues and shopping centres and expanded protective programmes for air, sea and rail travel, to provide proportionate, sustainable and efficient security for passengers and staff.
- **Border security.** Our borders are stronger as a result of new technology such as biometric visa and travel tracking programmes. The National Identity Register and identity cards will make it harder for terrorists to use multiple identities.

The e-Borders programme is using technology to strengthen our borders and spot terrorist suspects sooner. This will ensure that we can keep a comprehensive record of everyone who crosses our border and strengthen the security of those who live in and visit our country.

Julie Gillis, e-Borders Director, says: “e-Borders is part of a much wider programme to modernise the UK border.

“It’s about collecting passenger information from the carriers in advance, checking that data against watch lists, and then issuing alerts to front-line staff.

“We are also using the latest biometric technology to help secure the border. We use both iris and facial recognition gates to confirm your identity and check it against watch lists. Then you simply look into a camera or swipe a biometric passport, and pass through.”

We are also working with architects and planners to design future buildings and public places that are safer and better protected.

With industry, we have designed improved materials ranging from tougher glass that stops pieces flying in an explosion, which is a major cause of injury and deaths, to bollards and barriers that can withstand the impact of a speeding truck.

We are investing in cutting-edge science and technology. For example, we have developed equipment to detect and intercept smuggled radiological materials at UK ports and airports.

We also work to protect UK interests overseas, providing advice to the private sector and to British citizens who travel or live abroad.

Prepare to respond to an attack to lessen its impact

A high-angle photograph of a busy shopping mall. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair is seen from behind, looking down. Below her, several people are on a downward-moving escalator. Two police officers in high-visibility vests and helmets are also on the escalator, one appearing to assist a person. Other shoppers are visible on the escalator and on the ground floor. In the background, there are store windows, one of which has a large 'SALE' sign with a '£' symbol and a 'logo'.

Tens of thousands of people throughout the UK have been trained to deal with the aftermath of a terrorist attack.

The attempted terrorist attack in Exeter has shown we need to be prepared throughout the country to deal with a terrorist incident and to minimise its effects.

We have studied every attack and plot against the UK to learn everything we can about how to improve our resilience.

Thousands of emergency services workers and key officials have been trained and equipped to deal with an incident, including attacks with chemical, biological and radiological weapons.

Every region in the country has plans to deal with an attack and ensure a return to normal as soon as possible.

Lorraine Shepherd is head of the London Resilience Team. She says: “We test and exercise our plans regularly. It’s vital for people to work together and know each other, so that when they respond to an emergency they work well together and trust each other’s decisions.”

Training goes beyond officials to store, pub and club managers, who all work in crowded places that might be targeted by terrorists.

- Police in London have spoken to every pub and nightclub operator about the nature of the terrorist threat.

- Every shopping centre in the UK has received advice.

Kevin Smith was a store manager in the Princesshay shopping centre in Exeter when a bomb went off in a restaurant in May 2008.

Under Project Argus, a multimedia simulation of a terrorist attack, he had already received training in how to deal with such an emergency.

He says: “The Argus training was absolutely invaluable. The first thing we thought of was getting people away from flying debris like glass. It does make you think about important issues like safe routes out of a building.”

Kevin Bowen is a counter-terrorism security adviser, training businesses all over Devon and Cornwall.

He says: “The idea is to prepare pub, club and shop managers for such an attack, to ensure they are taking responsibility and decisions for themselves.

“If an incident happens, you will take better decisions if you are prepared.”

What you can do

The terrorist threat remains real and there is no room for complacency. The public should remain alert and aware of their surroundings at all times. If something strikes you as suspicious or you are unsure about somebody's activities or behaviour, however insignificant it may seem at the time, call the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on **0800 789 321**.

A textphone service is available for people with speech or hearing difficulties on **0800 032 45 39** (text messages from mobiles are not accepted).

Any information passed to the anti-terrorist hotline is treated in the strictest of confidence and is thoroughly analysed and researched before, and if, any police action is taken.