

Fact Sheet 16: Terrorism

Terrorism is a real threat to the UK and overseas

Between 11 September 2001 and the end of 2009, 235 persons in the UK were convicted of terrorism related offences (with further persons awaiting prosecution).

28 trials for terrorism related offences were completed during 2009 – 93% of defendants were convicted.

Terrorists in the UK plan attacks, raise funds, recruit, spread propaganda and receive orders, training and inspiration from overseas.

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Threats emanating from those countries highlighted (Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia) currently pose the greatest risk to the UK and its interests

The National Security Risk Assessment identifies terrorism as a Tier One risk



The terrorist attacks on the London transport system on 7 July 2005 killed 52 people

The most significant terrorist threat to the UK and its interests overseas comes from the Al Qaeda senior leadership in Pakistan and their affiliates and supporters.

The current threat to the UK from international terrorism is judged to be Severe, meaning that an attack in this country is highly likely. The threat is becoming more diverse as groups affiliated to and inspired by Al Qaeda develop more autonomy in directing operations.

Separately, the UK also faces a threat from residual terrorism related to Northern Ireland. The threat level to Great Britain from this is now Substantial, meaning that an attack is a strong possibility.

The threat to the UK from international terrorism must be countered through a comprehensive strategy

The aim of the UK's strategy for countering international terrorism (CONTEST) is to 'reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence'.

The National Security Tasks and Planning Guidelines set out an approach that tackles terrorism at every stage. The CONTEST strategy seeks to:

- **Pursue:** stop terrorist attacks
- **Prevent:** stop people becoming terrorists
- **Protect:** strengthen our protection against terrorist attack
- **Prepare:** mitigate the impact of attacks.



A participant in a counter-terrorism exercise being hosed down

The SDSR sets out new measures for countering terrorism

The SDSR has identified areas in which we need to adapt our strategy for countering terrorism. We will:

- review counter-terrorism and security powers as part of a broader programme to enhance civil liberties;
- reform the counter-radicalisation workstream of CONTEST, introducing a clearer separation from our work on integration being taken forward by Communities and Local Government (CLG);
- take forward a programme to maintain our communications capabilities, with all the necessary regulations and safeguards;
- continue to prioritise the counter-terrorism elements of policing, which we depend on to investigate and charge terrorists;
- enhance further the firearms capabilities of police armed response units;
- put in place new measures to reduce vulnerability to unconventional terrorist attack. The aim of our work is to reduce the likelihood of such an attack happening and to minimise the impact should it occur;
- deliver a safe and secure Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 in keeping with the Olympic culture and spirit – while ensuring that this programme is as cost-effective as possible;
- continue to support the devolved institutions of Northern Ireland to tackle the terrorists who threaten stability and prosperity.

The proposals identified in the SDSR will be taken forward in the CONTEST revision in 2011.