

Regional Security Office – Investigations Unit, London

WEEKLY OPEN SOURCE UPDATE

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CURRENT TERRORIST THREATS IN UK

On 29 August 2014, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre raised the UK threat level from international terrorism from SUBSTANTIAL to SEVERE. This threat level means that a terrorist attack is highly likely. [Threat Levels](#) and [Source](#)

On 24 October 2012, the threat from Irish related terrorism on the mainland was lowered from SUBSTANTIAL to MODERATE meaning that an attack is considered possible, but not likely. [Source](#)

Protecting the UK against terrorism – Read the Government's Strategy at - [Source](#)

Everyone should remain alert to the danger of terrorism and report any suspicious activity to the police by telephoning 999 or by contacting the confidential, police anti-terrorist hotline on telephone number 0800 789 321

INTERESTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND EIRE

Mainland UK issues:

The Prime Minister and security chiefs have reviewed the risk of a Paris-style attack in the UK. They agreed that elements of the Paris attacks should be considered when planning future training exercises for the police and security services. There will also be heightened security to ensure activists cannot bring weapons into the UK. The UK terror threat level remains unchanged at "severe" [...] A Downing Street spokesman said the prime minister asked the police and military to continue to work closely together to ensure the police can call on appropriate military assistance when required across the country. [...] Mr Cameron said the UK was facing the same threat from the "fanatical death cult of Islamist extremist violence" [as Paris had done]. [Source](#) , [Related Article](#) and [Related Article 1](#) The meeting took place as the Director General of the Royal United Services Institute said that Islamist extremists were now intent on launching "marauding attacks", rather than targeting aircraft adding that the extremists were switching tactics. He told *BBC Radio 4's Today* program, "The jihadis are great creatures of fashion. The fashion at the moment is for what the police call marauding attacks – not terribly well-organized attacks but attacks which just take weapons and kill as many as they can in public places. [Source](#)

On the 8 January, the Director General of the Security Service, Andrew Parker, gave an address to the Royal United Services Institute at Thames House. In part of Mr Parker's address he said, "Outside Iraq and Syria, we believe that since October 2013 there have been more than 20 terrorist plots either directed or provoked by extremist groups in Syria". He then listed a few recent extremist attacks, and said, "We know that terrorists based in Syria harbor the same ambitions towards the UK – trying to direct attacks against our country, and exhorting extremists here to act independently" and added, "working with our partners [the police, GCHQ and SIS] we have stopped three UK terrorist plots in recent months alone. Deaths would certainly have resulted otherwise." Mr Parker disclosed that in England and Wales, terrorist-related arrests have increased 35% compared with four years ago and that since 2010, more than 140 individuals have been convicted for terrorism related offences. For a FULL text of the DG's address, please go to [Source](#) and [Related Article](#)

Britain will descend into "vigilantism" unless security measures are stepped up to counter the "vulnerability and fear" that people feel in the wake of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, the former head of MI5 has warned. Baron Evans of Weardale, who as Jonathan Evans worked for the Security Service for 33 years, also warned that the world faced a build-up of trained terrorists not seen since al-Qaeda ran training camps in Afghanistan before 9/11. He spoke in a House of Lords debate as police forces prepared to deploy officers at newsagents selling a special issue of *Charlie Hebdo* depicting the Prophet Mohammed after extremists said it would "definitely" provoke fresh terrorist attacks. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#)

Britain is on high alert for a beheading attack after jihadists were detected discussing plans to murder members of the armed forces, police officers and people working in the intelligence services. Monitoring by counterterrorism agencies has picked up "chatter" about copying Islamic State extremists by abducting a target, filming their murder and posting the footage on the Internet. Evidence from recently thwarted plots and intelligence gleaned from monitoring suspects has revealed conversations between jihadists in Britain and militants purporting to be in Syria about attacking police and soldiers. "It's a valid fear, probably the No 1 fear," one counterterrorism source said. [Source](#) and [Source 1 - Premium Site](#)

A French-Algerian terror suspect has pleaded guilty to possession of a field manual for making bombs. Lyes Outiren, 44, who lives in Newquay, Cornwall, admitted three offences at Kingston Crown Court on 9 January, including two counts of possession of terrorist materials. These included four Internet links to jihadist material and part of a bomb-making e-book. The Judge remanded Outiren in custody for sentencing on 30 January saying, "It is going to be custody, the only question is how long." Outiren also pleaded guilty to one count of disseminating a terrorist publication. He had emailed documents to the al-Qaeda publication Inspire. Police arrested him in what was described at the time as a pre-planned operation in November 2013. [Source](#)

Tackling terrorism is "the national priority" and UK security services will get all the resources they need, Chancellor George Osborne has said. He told the *BBC* an extra £100m had already been allocated to monitoring Britons going to Syria and Iraq. It comes as the head of MI5, speaking after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks on 7 January, said three recent UK plots had been stopped. [Source](#)

Reported on 10 January: Extra Jewish security patrol cars and police were out in force in North-West London yesterday [9 Jan] following the kosher store siege in Paris. The cars (*photo insert*) look very similar to police vehicles and bear the security group's name 'Shomrim' – Hebrew for 'guards' – along the sides and back. The Orthodox organization, which works closely with the Metropolitan



Police, tweeted: 'Following events in Paris we will have on extra patrols throughout NW London over Shabbos [the Jewish Sabbath].' Shomrim volunteers receive police training and uniforms, including knife-proof vests. [...] Based in Stamford Hill, the volunteers are trained by the Metropolitan Police and patrol the area regularly looking for anti-Semitic hate crimes, and general disorder in the neighborhood. [Source](#) and [Related Article](#) (*Photo insert by REX, as it appears in the Daily Mail newspaper*)

The five nations that make up the world's leading intelligence-sharing network will meet in London next month to confer on strategies to fight terrorism in the wake of the Paris attacks, Canada said this week. Canadian Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney said the so-called Five Eyes - the United States, Australia, Canada, Britain and New Zealand - had scheduled a meeting for Jan 22. A Canadian government official later said the five would actually meet in London sometime in February. Blaney's comments were unusual, since members of the Five Eyes network rarely talk about its activity. "We're going to have a meeting with our Five Eyes allies in London ... and this is serious stuff. Terrorism will be there" on the agenda, he told CTV television. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#)

A senior diplomat who dealt with the aftermath of Abu Hamza's terrorism in the Yemen which left three Britons dead has voiced his concern at the failure to prosecute the Islamic extremist in Britain. David Pearce provided consular assistance, both to the British hostage victims and the British terrorists involved in a series of terrorist-linked events traced back to Finsbury Park mosque in north London. The bloody terrorist incident in 1998 was one of the key focal points of Hamza's New York trial, which took place after a 10 year fight to extradite him from Britain. Pearce, the deputy British ambassador and consul general in Aden at the time of the kidnappings, said, "The trial should have been here. Taking it to America made us look weak. [Source](#) (*See Also - Interests of the United States*)

An elite armed police unit should be created to guard critical sites and respond to Paris-style terrorist emergencies, the country's most senior firearms officer said on 11 January. It would protect airports, power stations and landmarks while providing a "potent armed surge capability" in response to incidents. Deputy chief constable Simon Chesterman, the national lead on armed policing, told *The Times* that the immediate lesson for the British police from last week's events was that "we will have to enhance our armed capability." [Source - Premium Site](#) and [Source 1](#)

In a video posted to *YouTube* on 10 January, the extremist Muslim cleric Anjem Choudary told *United West's* Tom Trento that anyone who insults Islam or the prophet Mohammed must suffer capital punishment. He went on to say that [former] Pope Benedict deserved to die for comments he believed are an insult to Islam. But, he added, "that needs to be assessed by a judge in the Sharia, or Islamic State (IS, ISIS)." "If the Pope were to embrace Islam", he added, "all would be forgiven." In 2006, Benedict made a statement that angered many Muslims and prompted an apology from the Vatican. [Source](#) The day before, Anjem Choudary was reported to have said that Ireland was a legitimate target for attack because of its decision to allow American planes to refuel at Shannon Airport on their way to bombing Muslim countries. [Source](#)

British far-right groups are at their weakest for 20 years, according to a report by anti-racism campaigners. Hope Not Hate says the two main groups - the BNP and EDL - are splintered and directionless amid a loss of leadership. The results mirror academic analysis which has found the far right split in the UK despite its growth elsewhere. The report says that online far-right activity appears to remain strong - but new groups have failed to translate this into action on British streets. The annual survey by the anti-racism monitoring group says that 2014 saw a string of events that would have been previously used by far-right groups to seek recruits - including the Rotherham sexual grooming scandal, new terrorism threats and a rise in immigration. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#)

Northern Ireland Issues:

The *BBC* understands that the letter bomb sent to the Police Service of Northern Ireland's headquarters was addressed to the Chief Constable George Hamilton. It is understood it was delivered to the building on the Knock Road, Belfast, on 8 January. Bomb disposal officers were called to premises to examine the package and later declared it a "viable device". [Source](#) and [Source 1](#)

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair has admitted that it was a "mistake" for his government to send a letter to the alleged former IRA terrorist John Downey which allowed him to escape trial for the Hyde Park bombing and has apologised to the families of the victims of the atrocity. However, Mr Blair refused to apologise for the process of sending letters of comfort to so called "on the runs" advising them they were not wanted by the authorities because he said it was "integral" to bringing peace in Northern Ireland. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#)

Newly declassified documents released under the 30-year rule show the Government were anxious to extradite Donegal man, John Downey, in late 1984 in connection with his alleged involvement in the Hyde Park bombing. Mr Downey, who is from Creeslough and in his sixties, was arrested at Gatwick in 2013 but his prosecution, which was being brought over his alleged involvement in the 1982 IRA bombing, was thrown out at the Old Bailey last year. [Source](#) and [OPEN SOURCE Backgrounder](#)

Hundreds of sectarian attacks on Orange Halls have taken place across Northern Ireland, at an average rate approaching 40 per year since 2009, the *Sentinel* can reveal. A Londonderry DUP Councilor said that there was a clear campaign against the Orange Institution and its property, but that the number of attacks on Orange Halls should not allow those who want to drag us back to do so. Information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act shows that there have been 227 attacks on Orange Halls across Northern Ireland in the period from January 2009 to November 2014 - a rate of around 38 attacks per year. [Source](#)

Irish Republic Issues:

No issues of significance for this report.

INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has arrested a 20-year-old Ohio man on charges that he plotted to mount a bomb and gun attack on the US Capitol, and claimed to sympathize with the Islamic State (ISIS). Agents apprehended Christopher Cornell from Ohio, after he purchased two ArmaLite M-15 semi-automatic rifles and about 600 rounds of ammunition, according to a criminal complaint released by the bureau. Cornell, also known as Raheel Mahrus Ubaydah, had confided his alleged plan to “kill employees and officers working in and around the US Capitol” to a confidential FBI informant, who told agents about Cornell in exchange for leniency for his “exposure” on an unspecified but unrelated offense. [Source](#), [Source 1](#) and [Source 2](#) and [Later Article](#)



Radical Muslim cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri has been sentenced to life in prison by a court in New York for supporting terrorism. The cleric, who was born Mustafa Kamel Mustafa, was convicted last May in New York on 11 counts, including involvement in a plot to take Western tourists hostages in Yemen in 1998. Three Britons and an Australian died when the Yemeni army launched a rescue bid. He was also convicted of plotting

to set up a terrorism training camp in the US. His trial followed a lengthy extradition process from the UK in 2012. The Judge called Abu Hamza's actions "barbaric" and "misguided" and said she was sentencing him to life because she could not think of a time when it would be safe to release him. [...] The former nightclub bouncer turned extremist cleric was then sentenced to spend the remainder of his life in obscurity. [Source](#), [Source 1](#), [Source 2](#) and [Source 3](#) (Photo inset from AFP)

American airports are increasing security measures across the country in the wake of dual terrorist attacks in Paris and the publication by al-Qaeda of what counterterrorism experts say appears to be the most detailed, and potentially lethal, bomb recipe ever to be sent to their followers. The top security chiefs for major American airlines have been briefed about the troubling publication, according to a senior U.S. law enforcement official. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said the Transportation Security Administration has stepped up random searches of travelers and carry-on luggage in addition to enhanced screening that was ordered this summer at “certain foreign airports.” The bomb-making recipe, published in the most recent edition of the al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) English-language [Inspire] magazine in December, is a detailed guide to making the explosive, getting through security and even where to sit on the plane. [Source](#), [Source 1](#) and [Source 2](#) (See *Weekly Open Source No. 349* dated 30 Dec 14 – Page 6)

The New York City Police Department and other law enforcement personnel responded to a threat from ISIS after someone re-released a September 2014 message that tells followers to "rise up and kill intelligence officers, police officers, soldiers, and civilians." The threat named the United States, France, Australia and Canada as targets. In an internal memo, NYPD employees were told to "remain alert and consider tactics at all times while on patrol," especially in light of the attacks in France last week. The FBI and the Department of Homeland Security issued a similar bulletin to law enforcement across the country. That bulletin and the NYPD memo make it clear that this new message is consistent with previous threats that ISIS and others, including al Qaeda, have issued.

[Source](#)

Eleven years after filing a billion-dollar lawsuit, victims of terror attacks in Israel between January 2001 and February 2004 hope to prove to a Manhattan federal court that the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization were behind the attacks. Jury selection has begun in the lawsuit brought under the Antiterrorism Act. [Source](#) [Three] plaintiffs are set to testify in the trial that will call the Palestinian Authority and the PLO to task for allegedly supporting attacks in Israel carried out by Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades from 2001 to 2004. Their \$1 billion suit alleges seven terrorist acts — two shootings and five bombings that killed 33 and wounded at least 393 — were perpetrated by officers and employees of the PLO. It is the first case to go to trial against the groups. [Source](#)

On 18 February, the White House will host a Summit on Countering Violent Extremism to highlight domestic and international efforts to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from radicalizing, recruiting, or inspiring individuals or groups in the United States and abroad to commit acts of violence, efforts made even more imperative in light of recent, tragic attacks in Ottawa, Sydney, and Paris. [Source](#)

OTHER GLOBAL INTERESTS

Up to 5,000 Islamist fanatics are at large after returning to Europe from the front line in Syria, the Continent's police chief has revealed. Rob Wainwright, the British head of Europol, said the threat from home-grown terrorists was at its highest level since the September 11 attacks in 2001. Mr Wainwright, appearing in front of the Home Affairs Select Committee, said Europe now faces its 'most severe terrorist threat since 9/11'. He added, 'We are talking about 3,000 to 5,000 EU nationals who are potentially a threat. 'Clearly, we're dealing with a large body of mainly young men who have the potential to come back and have the potential or the intent and capability to carry out attacks we have seen in Paris in the last week.' [Source](#), [Source 1](#), [Source 2](#) and [Source 3](#)

This week the EU president Donald Tusk said that the bloc, reeling from the Islamist attacks in Paris, needs a "coherent" policy to ensure security while protecting essential democratic freedoms. The attacks in Paris have stoked calls for a sharp tightening up of security in the European Union, notably through increased intelligence cooperation and travel checks. Tusk told the European Parliament that "yet again we are facing the everlasting dilemma between security and freedom ... yet again we must find a wise balance between these two fundamental needs. If we are unable to build a coherent security policy ... sooner or later we will put at risk the freedoms we have built up," he warned. Some 3,000 European citizens are believed to have joined the jihadist cause in Syria and Iraq with around 30 percent returning home, according to EU figures given late last year. [Source](#)

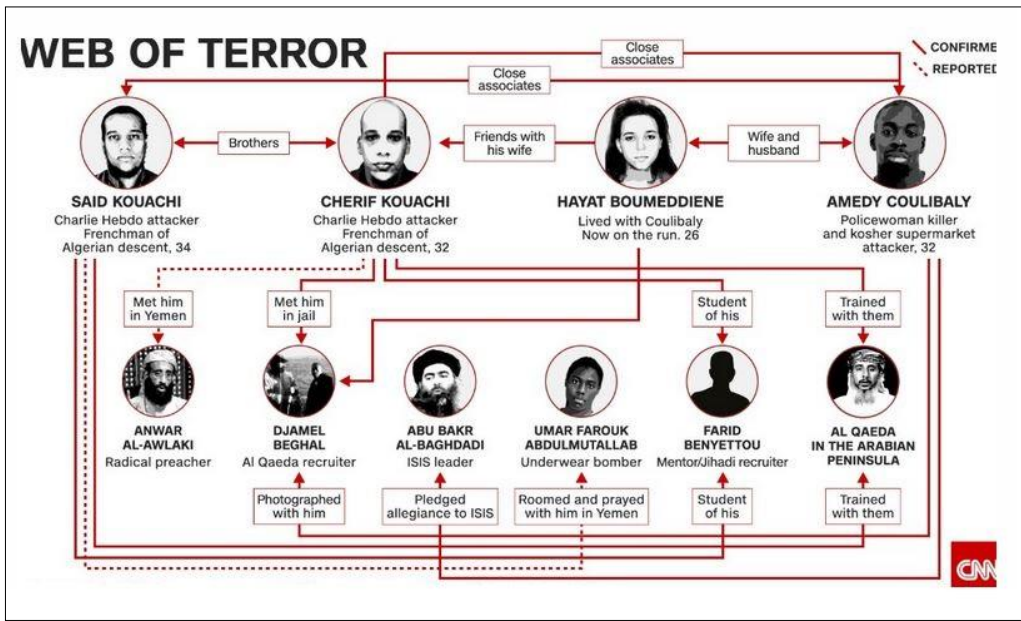
Said and Cherif Kouachi's fatal shooting of 12 people in Paris last week cast an international spotlight on the global intelligence community's ongoing struggle to identify and eliminate "lone wolf" terrorism. The *Charlie Hebdo* magazine massacre, along with a recent rash of other attacks, have made it clear that mass casualty events are no longer perpetrated solely by traditional militant groups. Faced with the enhanced surveillance and collaboration from Western intelligence agencies after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, militant groups like the Islamic State or al-Qaeda have increasingly called on sympathizers to act individually against their own communities. Other "lone wolves" develop their own ideology or reason for taking violent action against their neighbors. Traditional law enforcement tactics have proven ineffective at counteracting this new foe. One analyst said, "The consequences of attacks from terrorist groups are higher than from lone wolves. However, the likelihood of a lone wolf attack happening is higher, precisely because it's so difficult to prevent." [Source](#)

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has claimed responsibility for last week's rampage that killed 12 people at France's *Charlie Hebdo* satirical newspaper. The attack was years in the making, AQAP claimed. In a video, the group said the late Anwar al-Awlaki masterminded the attack. The US-born Muslim scholar and cleric was spokesman for AQAP before his death in 2011. The group did not claim responsibility for deadly siege at a kosher grocery store in Paris, but praised it. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#) and [See Also](#)

Police are investigating whether the gunmen involved in the Paris attacks had links with a terrorist cell in Spain. One of the three Islamic fundamentalists involved in the bloody rampage, Amedy Coulibaly, was reported to have spent three days in Madrid over the new year. He was accompanied by an unidentified person, according to detectives in Spain. Last week Coulibaly, 32, shot dead a trainee police officer in southern Paris before storming a kosher supermarket in the east of the French capital the following day, killing four hostages. Coulibaly's partner, Hayat Boumeddiene – the couple were married under Islamic law – travelled to Syria via Madrid and Istanbul before the attacks. The Turkish authorities have said that Boumeddiene crossed from Turkey into Syria on 8 January. [Source](#)

Belgian authorities have detained a man for arms dealing and are investigating whether he supplied one of the Islamist gunmen involved in the Paris attacks, prosecutors have said. [Source](#) According to the local press, the man sold Amedy Coulibaly the Skorpion submachine guns he used in the attack at the *Hyper Cacher* kosher supermarket, as well as the rocket propelled grenade launcher and the Kalashnikov automatic assault rifles that Said and Cherif Kouachi used to perpetrate the massacre at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*. The weapons were purchased [...] for less than 5,000 euros, according to the reports. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#)

Bulgarian police have arrested a French citizen suspected of links to one of the brothers behind the massacre at *Charlie Hebdo* magazine, officials said this week. Fritz-Joly Joachin was arrested on 1 January as he tried to cross the border into Turkey after French courts issued a warrant for his arrest for child abduction, according to Bulgarian officials. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#)



Graphic source: CNN [Source](#)

European Union counter-terrorism chief, Gilles de Kerchove, told *AFP* this week that there was no absolute way to prevent new terror attacks like those in Paris. “We can’t prevent (such attacks) 100 percent,” he said in an interview. He said the answer was not to jail jihadists returning to Europe from Syria and Iraq, as prisons had become “massive incubators” of radicalisation. “The threat remains serious,” said de Kerchove. He was meeting with European, US and Canadian security ministers in Paris after the Islamist attacks in the French capital last week in which 17 people were killed. He said the Islamic State group, which is being attacked by US-led forces in Iraq and Syria, has said it wants to attack western targets while a “strongly degraded” al-Qaeda wants to remain a force to be reckoned with. He warned that the al-Nusra Front, the al-Qaeda branch in Syria, is also looking for “clean skins,” Europeans with no record of radical activity, to mount attacks in Europe. [Source](#) and [See Also](#)

Al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQAP) is becoming more powerful as it gains support among Sunni tribes that are under pressure from Shia Houthis. The Houthis captured the capital, Sanaa, last September and have been pushing south against Sunni tribes ever since. The Sunni tribes previously fought against AQAP but are now looking to the group to provide fighters and suicide bombers to battle the Houthis. A member of AQAP told *AP* that al-Qaeda now has a presence in 16 out of 21 Yemeni provinces. The growing strength of AQAP in Yemen means that there are now at least six countries in the wider Middle East and North Africa where jihadis from Europe can expect to receive sanctuary. These are areas held by the Taliban in Afghanistan, by ISIS and other al-Qaeda type groups in Iraq and Syria, and parts of eastern Libya as well as in Yemen and Somalia. Given the numbers of foreign jihadis visiting these countries it is an impossible task for Western security agencies to monitor them all. [Source](#)

A record 25,000 people joined an anti-Islamization rally in Dresden, Germany, called in the wake of the Paris terror attacks. The protesters defied calls from German politicians to stay away from the PEGIDA organization's rally. Elsewhere across Germany, tens of thousands of people joined anti-PEGIDA rallies that have held weekly protests since October last year. PEGIDA - Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West - has organized a number of Dresden rallies, and drew 18,000 people a week ago. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#) and [More on PEGIDA](#)

Two people have been killed in a "counter-terrorism" raid in Verviers in eastern Belgium and the security alert level has been raised in the country, according to a Belgian prosecutor. He said that the suspects were on the verge of committing a major attack and that they immediately opened fire on security forces. [Source](#) Belgium's police HQ was last night under armed guard after anti-terror commandos shot dead two suspected Islamic State jihadis and arrested a third in an eastern town. Shots and explosions were heard, including machine gun fire, as heavily armed, masked officers moved against the alleged cell in the eastern town of Verviers, which is some 70 miles from Brussels. 'A second Paris has been avoided,' an official from Belgium's ministry of justice was quoted as saying, with reports claiming the jihadis had planned to launch attacks on police in the country. It comes after an Islamic State video published yesterday showed French-speaking fighters telling Muslims in Europe: 'If you see a police officer in the street, kill him. Kill them all. Kill all the infidels you see on the street.' [Source](#) The suspected terrorists shot dead by special forces during a raid in Belgium may have been planning to dress as police to launch a deadly gun and bomb attack, it has emerged. Special forces who raided a property in the town of Verviers, killing the two men as snipers patrolled the rooftops, found four Kalashnikovs and bomb-making equipment among police uniforms, *La Libre* reported. [Source](#)

Two Italian aid workers who have been held as hostages by Syria's largest al-Qaeda group since the summer have been freed, according to the office of Italy's prime minister, Matteo Renzi. Security sources told the Guardian that the women were released after the payment of a multimillion-dollar ransom to the al-Nusra Front, which has direct ties to al-Qaeda's leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri. One report from *Al Aan*, a Dubai-based media group, said the ransom was worth \$12m, but that report was not confirmed. [Source](#)

Canadian police have arrested a third man in an alleged terrorist conspiracy. Royal Canadian Mounted Police said 12 January that 21-year-old Suliman Mohamed has been charged with participating in the activity of a terrorist group. Three days earlier, twin brothers linked to Mohamed, Ashton Carleton Larmond and Carlos Larmond, were both charged with terrorism-related offences. Carlos Larmond was arrested at Montreal's airport on charges of intending to travel overseas for terrorist purposes. A government official familiar with the matter said they were trying to get to Syria. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#)

The Afghan Intelligence – National Directorate of Security (NDS) foiled a coordinated suicide attack plot in southern Kandahar city. According to a statement released by the National Directorate of Security (NDS), a group of six insurgents were arrested in connection to the attack plot. The statement further added that the group was looking to carry out the attack using two motorcycles packed with explosives in the crowded areas of Kandahar city. NDS also added that 27 magnetic bombs, 10 rounds of RPG-7 rockets, 4 rounds of artillery shells, 13 mortar shells, 7 hand grenades, one pistol and 3 motorcycles. [Source](#)

Boko Haram, with its chilling brutality, radical Islamic ideology and unstoppable seizure of Nigerian territory, is quickly emerging as the Islamic State of Africa. While much of the world has focused on the terror attacks in Paris and the Islamic militants' capture of swaths of Syria and Iraq, Boko Haram has gone on a bloody rampage through northeastern Nigeria. Human rights groups have sounded alarms about the al-Qaeda-linked organization's recent brutality: the slaughter of up to 2,000 people in the Nigerian towns of Baga and Doron Baga on 3 January and the subsequent strapping of explosives on girls as young as ten to detonate in public places. [Source](#) Boko Haram's 'deadliest massacre in its history': 2,000 feared dead in Nigeria. Amnesty International calls the killings [in the Nigerian town of Baga] 'a disturbing and bloody escalation' and a local defense group says its fighters have given up trying to count the bodies. [Source](#) , [Source 1](#) and [OPEN SOURCE BACKGROUNDER - Boko Haram](#)

CYBER ISSUES

With so much of our everyday communication and commercial activity now taking place via the Internet, the threat from cybercrime is increasing, targeting citizens, businesses and governments at a rapidly growing rate. The EU in particular is a key target because of its advanced Internet infrastructure and increasingly Internet-based economies and payment systems. The scale of cybercriminal activity represents a considerable challenge to law enforcement agencies and the total cost of cybercrime to society is significant. A recent report suggests that victims lose around €290 billion each year worldwide as a result of cybercrime, making it more profitable than the global trade in marijuana, cocaine and heroin combined. [Europol](#) See also the following Internet sites: [Security Service MI5 - Cyber Threats](#) and [CPNI - Cyber security](#) and [Homeland Security - Cybersecurity Publications](#)

The U.K. government is one step ahead of hackers trying to turn off the country's lights - for now. The prospect of cyber-attacks on the nation's power network is a major threat to the country's security, according to James Arbuthnot, a member of parliament who chaired the Defense Select Committee until last year. He plans to visit National Grid Plc next month to discuss the issue. "Our National Grid is coming under cyber-attack not just day-by-day but minute-by-minute," Arbuthnot, whose committee scrutinized the country's security policy, told a conference in London last year. "There are, at National Grid, people of very high quality who recognize the risks that these attacks pose, and who are fighting them off," he said, "but we can't expect them to win forever." [Source](#)

Britain's surveillance agency would work more closely with America to thwart cyber attacks under plans to be discussed this week by David Cameron and Barack Obama. The prime minister is visiting Washington just weeks after hackers with suspected links to North Korea caused chaos at Sony after gaining access to the entertainment group's computer systems. The attack came in response to 'The Interview', a Sony film about efforts to assassinate Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader. Mr Cameron and Mr Obama will discuss how GCHQ and the US National Security Agency can co-operate to prevent similar attacks as well as tackling the ISIS threat. [Source - Premium Site](#)

American internet companies must in future disclose details to the British security services of terrorists plotting atrocities online, David Cameron will tell Barack Obama. The Prime Minister is expected to use talks with the American President in Washington to raise the issue of US-based Internet companies not co-operating with the UK authorities during terror investigations. He wants British spies to be able to demand that US-based companies including *Twitter* give them access to the accounts of potential jihadists plotting attacks on social media. If the sites are aware of any extremist discussion on their networks, they should also tell the UK authorities so that any possible plot can be foiled, the Prime Minister believes. It follows anger from MPs after it emerged in November that *Facebook* failed to pass on information that could have prevented the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby. [Source](#)

“Cyber threats are an urgent and growing danger,” President Obama said during a speech in Virginia this week when outlining his proposals for new cybersecurity measures. [Source](#)

The *Twitter* and *YouTube* accounts of the US military command were suspended for a few hours after being hacked by a group claiming to back Islamic State. One message on Centcom's Twitter feed said, "American soldiers, we are coming, watch your back." It was signed by ISIS, another name for the Islamic State. Centcom said it was "cyber-vandalism" and not a serious data breach. In a statement it said there was no operational impact and no classified information was posted. "We are viewing this purely as a case of cyber-vandalism," it said. [Source](#), [Source 1](#), [Source 2](#) and [Source 3](#) The "CyberCaliphate" hacking group that attacked a *Twitter* account belonging to the Pentagon this week was founded by a Briton [Junaid Hussain, 20] who was once jailed for hacking the personal address book of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, according to government sources and private sector security experts. [Source](#)

Hacking group Anonymous has claimed responsibility for disabling an extremist website based in France. A post on *Twitter* said "Tango Down" and included a link to a site which has been linked to extremists. Anonymous "declared war" on jihadist websites last week after the Paris attacks. The group posted a video saying it would target extreme social media accounts as part of efforts to protect freedom of speech. The warning came in the same video as a tribute to the victims of the attack on French satire magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. Since it was posted on 8 January, more than 6½ million people have watched the clip, which shows a figure wearing the group's signature Guy Fawkes mask. [Source](#) and [Source 1](#) (Photo insert from the Internet)



Britain and the United States will create a joint “cyber cell” so spies can tackle the growing threat of terrorists plotting online attacks on the West. Following cyber attacks on the US by North Korea, British and American agents will share information about threats and respond to attacks that threaten to bring down financial or government organizations. David Cameron, who agreed to set up the cell during his visit to the US for talks with President Barack Obama, said it would help the two allies stay “one step ahead” of online terrorists. A report by GCHQ has disclosed that 80 per cent of large companies in the UK reported a cyber security breach last year, costing between £600,000 and £1.5 million. Robert Hannigan, GCHQ’s director, said that the attacks “show little sign of abating” and that “doing nothing is no longer an option”. Britain and the US will conduct war game exercises to test their resilience in the face of cyber attacks. [Source](#)

British and American "cyber-agents" are to join forces to protect the UK's biggest banks, as well as transport systems and energy supplies, from potentially crippling online terrorist attacks. The pioneering deal will be signed today by David Cameron and President Barack Obama in talks at the White House which will focus on combating terrorism and boosting the two nations' economic growth. [Source](#)

Hackers have targeted about 19,000 French websites since a rampage by Islamic extremists left 20 dead last week, a top French cyber defense official have said as the president tried to calm the nation's inflamed religious tensions. France is on edge since last week's attacks at the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*. The paper, repeatedly threatened for its caricatures of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad, buried several of its slain staff members this week as it reprinted another weekly issue with Muhammad on its cover. Calling it an unprecedented surge, the French head of cyber defense for the French military said about 19,000 French websites had faced cyberattacks in recent days, some carried out by well-known Islamic hacker groups. [Source](#)

AND FINALLY



Greater Manchester Police has released an image that should be up for the country's worst forged note in history. The note, pictured here, was accepted by an unnamed bar in Manchester and consists of two color photocopied printouts of a twenty pound note that was held together with staples. Posting the image on their *Twitter* profile, Greater Manchester Police held off identifying the business for fear of embarrassment. A Police Inspector said that they didn't

distribute the image to ridicule the establishment, but to remind staff to remain vigilant and told *Manchester Evening News*, "This is probably the worst forgery we have ever seen, it's just two paper photocopies of banknotes stapled together." [Source](#) (Photo inset from GMP/Twitter)

FORTHCOMING SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 16 Jan 2013 | Attack on gas facility near In Amenas, Algeria, kills 39, including three Americans; Those Who Sign With Blood Battalion led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar claimed responsibility |
| 17 Jan 1996 | The blind Egyptian Sheik, Abdul Rahman, is jailed for life for his role in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. |
| 17 Jan 1991 | Operation Desert Storm began against Iraq |
| 19 Jan 2015 | US Public Holiday: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| 20 Jan 1981 | Iran: The remaining 52 US Embassy hostages seized in November 1979 were released. |
| 20 Jan 2003 | Finsbury Park mosque in north London was searched by police following the discovery of ricin in a north London apartment. |
| 20 Jan 1987 | Archbishop of Canterbury envoy, Terry Waite is kidnapped in Lebanon. |
| 23 Jan 2002 | Pakistan: Islamist extremists kidnap and later murder the US Wall Street journalist, Daniel Pearl |

\Continued: January 2015

- 23 Jan 2001 Yemen: Hijacking of Yemeni flight with 91 passengers, including the US Ambassador. The hijacker is detained and passengers safely released
- 24 Jan 2011 Suicide bombing kills 36, wounds 180, at Domodedovo airport in Moscow
- 24 Jan 1987 In Beirut, Lebanon, US nationals Jesse Turner, Alan Steen, Robert Polhill, Mithileshwar Singh are all kidnapped.
- 24 Jan 1996 In Northern Ireland, the 'six Mitchell principles' were published for all Northern Ireland political parties to adopt in order to further the peace process in the Province.
- 25 Jan 2011 Ahmed Ghailani sentenced in civilian court in New York to life in prison for role in the August '98 bombing of U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam
- 25 Jan 1993 In the U.S., Mir Amal Kanshi killed two people and wounded three others outside the CIA Headquarters in McLean, Virginia
- 28 Jan 1982 Italian police rescue US Brigadier General James Dozier who had been held hostage for 42 days by the terrorist group, the Red Brigades.
- 30 Jan 1972 Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland when 13 demonstrators were shot dead by members of the Parachute Regt in Londonderry.
- 30 Jan 1948 Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated in New Delhi, India in 1948
- 31 Jan 2003 **British-born Richard Reid sentenced to life in jail for trying to set off a 'boot bomb' on an American Airlines flight carrying 197 people.**

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- 4 Feb 1974 A little-known group calling itself the Symbionese Liberation Army kidnaps a 19-year-old newspaper heiress Patty Hearst in the U.S.
- 6 Feb 2000 Afghan Ariana flight hijacked to London Stansted Airport. Ends on 10th Feb.
- 6 Feb 2004 Explosives detonate on the Moscow Metro, killing 40 and wounding 122
- 7 Feb 1991 Provisional IRA Mk 10 mortar attack on 10 Downing Street
- 9 Feb 1996 Provisional IRA mount VBIED attack in Canary Wharf. Two people killed. Marked the end of the then PIRA ceasefire.
- 9 Feb 2000 PKK announces formal halt to war; adopts new name, Kongra Gel, and re-elects Abdullah Ocalan as its leader
- 11 Feb 2003 Information about a claimed terrorist threat to civil aviation at London's Heathrow led to the largest security operation at the airport for more than 10 years.
- 12 Feb 2008 Assassination of the Hezbollah official, Imad Mugniyah, believed responsible for 18 April 1983 bombing of US Embassy in Beirut, killed by car bomb in Damascus.
- 12 Feb 1809 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday (Hodgenville, KY)
- 13 Feb 1984 Maqbool Butt, the co-founder of the Jammu and Kashmiri Liberation Front was hanged by the Indian authorities
- 14 Feb 1989 Death threat made against Salman Rushdie by Ayatollah Khomeini over the publication of the book, "The Satanic Verses"
- 15 Feb 1999 The Kurdish PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan is arrested in Nairobi sparking Europe-wide protests.
- 16 Feb 2015 US Public Holiday – President's Day
- 16 Feb 1992 Sheikh Musawi - spiritual head of Hezbollah, killed by Israeli helicopter gunships in Southern Lebanon
- 19 Feb 2015 Chinese New Year

UK THREAT PICTURE

Overview: Sources of Terrorism

- International terrorism from groups such as al-Qaeda presents a threat on a scale not previously encountered. Drawing on extremist messages presented by figures such as the late Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda and its related networks seek to carry out terrorist attacks around the world, aiming to carry out "high impact" attacks causing mass civilian casualties.
- Northern Ireland related terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to British interests. Although a peace process has been active for several years, some Republican terrorist groups oppose the peace process and continue to attack economic and political targets.
- Other domestic extremist groups, unrelated to the Northern Ireland situation, may aspire to campaigns of violence but lack developed terrorist capabilities. For the most part, they pose a threat to public order but not to national security. [Source](#)

On 29 August 2014, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre raised the UK threat level from international terrorism from SUBSTANTIAL to SEVERE. This threat level means that a terrorist attack is highly likely. [Threat Levels](#) and [Source](#)

Terrorists linked to or inspired by al-Qaeda have carried out bomb and gun attacks on British citizens and interests in a number of countries. The UK itself has also been targeted. Several terrorist plots involving both British citizens and foreign-born residents of the UK have been averted. The threat is constantly changing, presenting major challenges for the UK's intelligence and security agencies and the police. [Source](#) **See also**, Lone Actors, Foreign Fighters and Terrorist Training and Indoctrination at [Source](#)

Domestic terrorism related to Northern Ireland, principally from dissident Irish Republican ... remains a threat. Dissident Irish republican terrorism is the term used to cover the activity of republican groups that reject the 1998 Belfast Agreement and political engagement with the British or Irish Governments on any subject other than a united Ireland. The main dissident republican groups are the Continuity IRA (CIRA), and groups calling themselves the IRA and Óglaigh na hÉireann (ONH; 'soldiers of Ireland' in Irish Gaelic). There are also other dissident republican terrorist groupings not affiliated to CIRA, the new IRA or ONH. [Source](#)

On 24 October 2012, the threat from Irish related terrorism on the mainland was lowered from SUBSTANTIAL to MODERATE meaning that an attack is considered possible, but not likely. The threat level for Northern Ireland-related terrorism in the Province remains at SEVERE. [Source](#)

NOTE

SEVERE means that a terrorist attack is highly likely; SUBSTANTIAL that it is a strong possibility and MODERATE, that an attack is possible, but not likely.