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The UK terrorism threat level is SUBSTANTIAL, this means an attack is LIKELY.



As of 1 November, there have been no confirmed terrorist attacks in the UK in 2023.



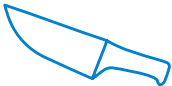
It is almost certain that Islamist terrorism remains the principal terrorist threat to the UK.



It is highly likely that there is a significant threat posed by Extreme Right-Wing terrorism in the UK at this time.



Between January 2017 and June 2023, the UK police and security services disrupted 39 late-stage attack plots.¹



It is highly likely that any terrorist attack conducted in the UK would be conducted by an individual actor or small cell using a low-sophistication methodology. E.g., Bladed and Blunt Force Weapons, Vehicle as a Weapon, Fire as a Weapon, Fake Suicide Vests, etc.



There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors could have the capability to conduct a high-sophistication attack in the UK. E.g., Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) (Placed/ Person-Borne) or a marauding attack with Firearms. 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 highly unlikely that terrorist actors would have the capability to conduct a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) attack at this time as a result of the significant barriers in the acquisition, production, and delivery of a device of that size.

Threat Actors

Islamist Terrorism

- Islamist Terrorism remains the principal terrorist threat to the UK, accounting for roughly three quarters of the MI5 caseload in 2023.²
- It is almost certain that Islamist terrorists maintain the intent to commit indiscriminate mass casualty attacks in the UK by targeting Publicly Accessible Locations.
- It is almost certain that Islamist terrorists would have the capability to conduct a low-sophistication attack at this time.
- There is a realistic possibility that Islamist terrorists could have the capability to conduct high-sophistication attacks using methodologies such as IEDs or Firearms. However, the UK police and security services have demonstrated the capability to disrupt higher-sophistication plots.

Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism

- Extreme Right-Wing terrorism remains a vector of UK terrorism threat in 2023.
- It is likely that the Extreme Right-Wing terrorism threat has continued to evolve away from structured groups such as the proscribed organisation, National Action, to a more disparate online threat, further complicating the detection of affiliated actors and plots.
- It is almost certain that Extreme Right-Wing terrorist actors would have the capability to conduct a low-sophistication attack in the UK.
- It is highly likely that any Extreme Right-Wing terrorist attack would target sites and individuals associated with the UK government, online and traditional media companies, and minority groups with protected characteristics e.g. LGBTQIA+, migrant communities, religious minorities and more.

Left-Wing, Anarchist, and Single-Issue Terrorism (LASIT)

- LASIT encompasses a wide range of ideologies including the political far left, anarchists, and single-issue actors who seek to use violence in opposition to a specific policy or practice.
- It is almost certain that the threat from single-issue terrorism is dynamic in nature as individual actors become radicalised by diverse and complex issues that prove almost impossible to define and disrupt.
- The majority of Left-Wing extremism remains focused on protest action, including environmentalism, animal rights and pro-Palestine protest. Whilst it is highly likely that the majority of individuals associated with these groups practice Non-Violent Direct Action protest methodology, there is a realistic possibility that fringe members of such groups could mature towards conducting violent actions against property that could be considered as terrorism in the next 12 months.
 - E.g., In May 2023, an activist linked with the Palestine Action Group protest group was found guilty of conspiracy to commit criminal damage following a pro-Palestine protest at a factory in east Wales. Reporting suggests the protest caused up to £1.2 million of damage to the factory and the prosecutor of the case reportedly likened the incident to a "terrorist" attack.³
 - E.g., Throughout 2023, members of Just Stop Oil demonstrated the capability to conduct Non-Violent Direct Action protests at several major events in the UK, including; the Ashes Test cricket match, the World Snooker Championship, Wimbledon, and the BBC Proms. The group also conducted several sit-ins, paint protests, and slow marches at major venues in the UK.

Northern Ireland-Related Terrorism (NIRT)

- While the UK terrorism threat level is SUBSTANTIAL, meaning an attack is likely, it is highly unlikely that NIRT actors would have the capability to conduct any significant attack against the UK mainland at this time.
- On 28 March 2023, the NIRT terrorism level in Northern Ireland was raised to SEVERE, meaning an attack is highly likely. It is highly likely that the increase in threat level is reflective of the evolving threat environment following the shooting of DCI John Caldwell (February 2023),⁴ the 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement (April 2023), the visit of the US president to Northern Ireland (April 2023), and the discovery of four suspected pipe bombs in Derry (April 2023).⁵
- Whilst it is almost certain that NIRT actors maintain the intent to conduct attacks against members of the security services in Northern Ireland, it is highly likely that the operational capability of NIRT actors across Northern Ireland has been significantly diminished by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and wider UK security services.

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State Threat

- On 15 September 2023, the Wagner Group was proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK Home Office. At this time, it is unlikely that the proscription of the Wagner Group would have any tangible effect on the threat posed to the UK by the Wagner Group itself due to the group's primary focus on activity in sub-Saharan Africa and Ukraine. However, it is almost certain that the Russian state will maintain the intent to influence and destabilise the UK through third-party proxies, organised criminal groups, and covert action in the long term.⁶
- Throughout 2023, there have been repeated calls from both Labour and Conservative politicians to proscribe Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), an Iranian state military and intelligence capability. However, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office have emphasised the role of current sanctions placed on the IRGC, as well as certain individuals who are members of it, in curtailing the threat to the UK, and that proscription of the group "would mean that [the UK] could have no direct diplomatic relations with Iran".⁷ Calls for the proscription of the IRGC were renewed in October 2023 following allegations that they assisted proscribed terrorist group Hamas in their terrorist attack against Israel on 07 October 2023.⁸ These allegations remain unconfirmed.
 - In February 2023, the head of Counter Terrorism Policing Matt Jukes reported that there had been 15 Iranian plots by Iran to kidnap or kill British or UK-based individuals since January 2022. During the same month, a UK-based Iranian broadcaster closed their London headquarters and relocated to the US following advice from the Metropolitan Police, who had warned of serious "safety" concerns for the broadcaster's staff.⁹
 - In October 2023, a UK counter terrorism source reportedly stated that they were "alive to the risk" of Iran encouraging extremist and/or terrorist activity in the UK as the Israel-Hamas conflict continues. Sources from Whitehall have stated that the IRGC, which works closely with Hamas, has built up a network of influence in the UK, including through over 10 mosques and educational institutions across the country.¹⁰
- It is almost certain that China will maintain the intent and capability to influence and destabilise the UK in the next 12 months through covert action and espionage. However, it is highly unlikely that China would have the intent to conduct terrorist activity in the UK.
 - In October 2023, Director General of MI5 Ken McCallum highlighted the sharp rise in "aggressive attempts by other states to steal competitive advantage." McCallum emphasised that the most significant risks relating to the exploitation by state-backed and other hostile actors of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and synthetic biology, are linked to the Chinese government.¹¹
 - MI5 also revealed in October 2023 that an estimated 20,000 Britons have been approached by Chinese state actors on LinkedIn in industrial and technological espionage attempts, putting an estimated 10,000 UK businesses at risk.¹² The announcement came following the arrest in March 2023 of two individuals under the Official Secrets Act, including a parliamentary researcher following claims he was spying for China.¹³ Whilst it is almost certain that espionage attempts by the Chinese state actors will continue into 2024, it is highly unlikely that the Chinese regime would conduct any terrorist activity targeting the UK in the medium term.

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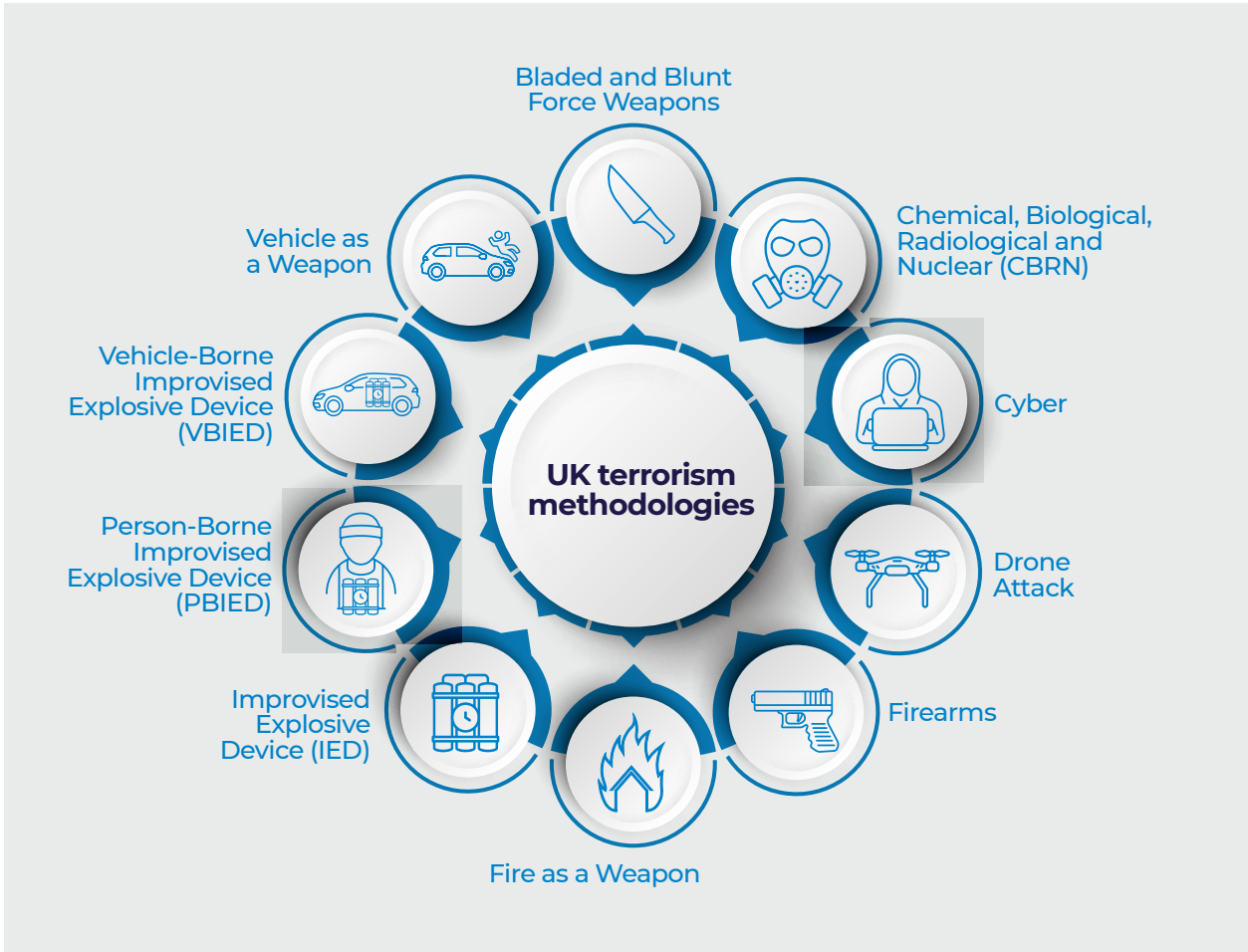
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Methodologies

The graphic below outlines the UK's key terrorist attack capabilities:



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CBRN

- As of 1 November 2023, there were no successful terrorist attacks involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological, or Nuclear (CBRN) agents in the UK in 2023.
- It is almost certain that terrorist actors continue to possess the intent to weaponise CBRN agents, due to their destructive potential as well as their psychological impact.
- The intent by terrorists to weaponise CBRN agents was highlighted in the 2021 Integrated Review predicting that a successful CBRN attack, by terrorists, is likely to take place in the UK by 2030.¹⁴
- There is a realistic possibility that terrorist actors could seek to use a low sophistication methodology to conduct a chemical attack at this time.
- However, it is highly unlikely that terrorist actors would have the capability to carry out a high-sophistication CBRN attack at this time as a result of the significant barriers which currently exist to the acquisition, production, and delivery of CBRN weapons.

Cyber Terrorism

- Currently, it is highly unlikely that any terrorist group would have the capability to conduct a significant cyber terrorist attack in the UK.
- It is highly unlikely that UK terrorist actors would have the capability to cause physical damage to people or property using cyber-attack capabilities in the next 12 months.

Global Terrorism

- Following the defeat of Islamic State (IS) in 2017, the group in Iraq and Syria has likely split into a disparate set of small covert cells spread across the region. Whilst some IS affiliate groups in Afghanistan (Islamic State Khorasan Province) and Africa (Islamic State West Africa) have demonstrated the capability to conduct a high level of operational activity, it is highly likely that any operational affiliates and covert cells are focused on accessible regional targets at this time. Whilst reports suggest that it is almost certain that IS and its affiliate groups maintain the intent to conduct directed attacks against the UK, it is unlikely that the group or its affiliates would have the capability to project a major threat to the UK at this time.¹⁵
- On 27 March 2023, a United Nations report stated that an individual known as Saif-al-Adel is considered the de facto Emir (leader) of al-Qa’ida by member states. It is almost certain that al-Qa’ida maintain the intent to project threat toward the UK and there is a realistic possibility that the appointment of a new leader could alter the strategic direction of the group to prioritise this intent in the long term. However, it is unlikely that al-Qa’ida would have the capability to conduct a direct, coordinated attack against the UK mainland at this time due to diminished organisational structures, lack of overtly strong global leadership, and continued focus on regional conflicts.¹⁶
- At this time, it is highly likely that the predominant threat posed by global terrorist actors is from their ability to radicalise vulnerable UK-based individuals online and subsequently inspire those individuals to conduct low sophistication attacks in the UK. It is highly likely that overt and covert online media provides a global network through which UK individuals can be radicalised and inspired to conduct attacks. It is highly likely that this applies to all terrorism ideologies in the UK, but particularly Right-Wing and Islamist terrorism ideologies.

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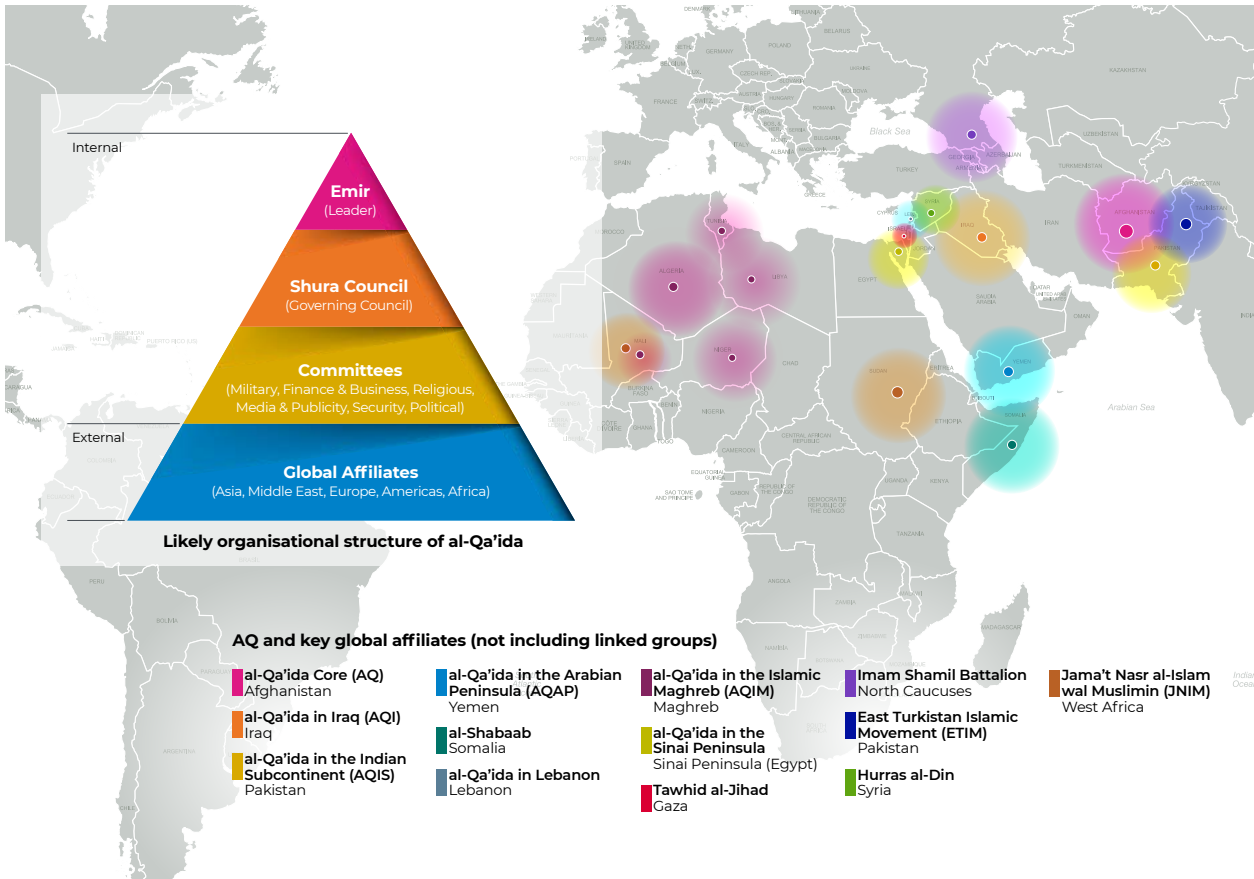
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Emerging Drivers of Terrorism Threat

Israel-Hamas Conflict

It is highly likely that the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas will act as a driver of terrorism threat in the short term. Since 07 October 2023, individuals have gathered across major cities to demonstrate support for different sides in the conflict and acts of antisemitism, Islamophobia, vandalism, and social tensions have been reported by police forces throughout the UK. Between 1 October and 18 October, the Met Police recorded 218 incidents of antisemitism compared to 15 in the same period in 2022. The force also recorded an increase in Islamophobic offences from 42, to 101¹⁷. There is a realistic possibility that individuals in the UK could be inspired or radicalised to conduct terrorist attacks in the short to medium term in response to the current conflict in the Middle East.

Refugee Crisis

It is highly likely that the ongoing refugee crisis in the English Channel and Europe more widely will continue to act as a driver of terrorism threat in the short to medium term. In 2023, UK protests outside hotels and accommodation facilities housing asylum seekers and migrants turned violent, with arrests being made for assault and violent disorder. On at least two occasions, buildings, police vehicles, and police officers were attacked with projectiles, fireworks, and fire¹⁸. There is a realistic possibility that further individuals could mature to violence in the short term and that their actions could be designated as terrorism.

Climate Change

It is likely that climate change will continue to emerge as a driver of global terrorism threat in the long term. Experts suggest that climate change as a destabilising force has already become a significant driver for terrorism conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. It is highly likely terrorist actors would have the intent to exploit instability in regions exposed to climate crises in order to further their aims¹⁹.

Russia-Ukraine War

There is a realistic possibility that the Russia-Ukraine war will act as a driver for terrorism threat in the UK in the long term. There is a realistic possibility that European terrorist networks could seek to exploit the likely increase in the number of unregulated weapons available on the European criminal marketplace following the conflict to facilitate operational activity in Europe and the UK. However, at this time, it is highly likely that UK firearms and ammunition legislation and UK police and intelligence services have significantly reduced the capability of terrorist actors in the UK to access firearms.

Cost-of-Living Crisis

It is highly likely that the ongoing cost-of-living crisis will be a key factor in driving UK terrorism threat in the short term. It is highly likely that certain individuals would become increasingly disenfranchised from society and more susceptible to radicalisation online and in-person. It is highly likely that the cost-of-living crisis also increases the opportunity for businesses to be impacted by insider threat, as individuals struggling with financial difficulties may become more susceptible to bribery and corruption.

Political Division

It is highly likely that continued political division in the UK and the West more generally will continue to render some individuals more susceptible to radicalisation and, in a small number of extreme cases, more open to being inspired to conduct terrorist attacks.

In 2023, several incidents of Quran burning took place in Sweden, leading to violent riots and threats from Islamist terrorist groups. On 16 October 2023, two Swedish football fans were killed and a third injured in an Islamist terrorist attack in Brussels, Belgium²⁰. The perpetrator shared a video following the attack noting the Swedish nationality of the victims²¹. Media reporting has suggested that the individuals were targeted in retaliation for the Quran-burning incidents in Sweden. There is a realistic possibility that any acts considered politically or religiously divisive that take place in the UK or across Europe could lead to an increased terrorist threat in the UK.

Stability in Northern Ireland

There is a realistic possibility that any major changes to the level of political and economic stability in Northern Ireland could lead to an increased terrorism threat to the UK mainland. Certain actors within Northern Ireland will highly likely possess the intent to disrupt the political settlement and protest over the impact of the Northern Ireland Protocol and subsequent Windsor Framework. Groups such as the New IRA are still active.

Artificial Intelligence

There is a realistic possibility that the growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) could be exploited for terrorist purposes in the medium term. On 25 October 2023, a UK government discussion paper included possible future scenarios in which AI could be used to conduct cyber-attacks by 2025 and have the potential to “enhance terrorist capabilities” in attack planning, weapons development, and propaganda production. Experts theorised in the same scenario that AI could also be used by terrorists to develop bioweapons by 2023.²²

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Islamist terrorism is almost certain to continue as the dominant terrorism threat in the UK in the next 12 months.



It is highly likely that Extreme Right-Wing terrorism will continue to emerge as a significant terrorism threat in the UK in the long term.



There is a realistic possibility that the proscription of the Wagner Group in 2023 could lead to the UK Home Secretary moving to proscribe other hostile foreign state-linked groups in the long term.



It is likely that there would be a rise in single-issue and "salad bar" terrorism in the next 12 months. Salad bar terrorism refers to individuals or groups that adhere to ideologies that overlap, converge – or even in some cases contradict.



Whilst currently continuing to promote the use of Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) protest methodologies, there is a realistic possibility that individual, extreme climate activists and campaigners could evolve the intent to conduct malicious activity against property in the next 12 months.



It is highly unlikely that UK terrorist actors will develop the capability to cause physical damage to people or property through cyber-attacks in the next 12 months.



It is highly unlikely that terrorist actors would have the capability to carry out a major CBRN attack in the UK in the long term.

UK National Security Apparatus

- The UK benefits from the presence of a strong countrywide terrorism risk mitigation infrastructure including both public and private security and safety capabilities.
- The UK police and security services have regularly demonstrated the capability to disrupt a diverse range of terrorism-related attack plots and threats.
- It is highly likely that the introduction of Martyn's Law into law, currently anticipated for 2024, will enhance protective and preparedness capabilities across all premises in scope.

Intelligence cut-off date: 06 November 2023

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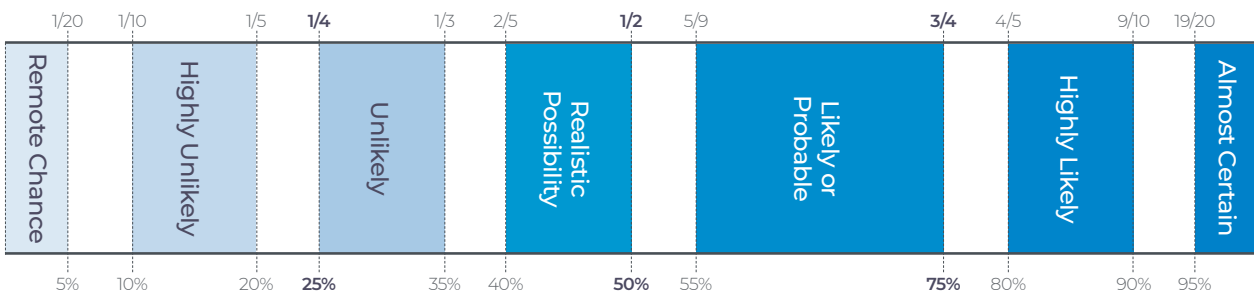
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Assessment Methodology

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

- **Almost Certain:** An event is assessed to have a greater than 90% chance of occurring.
- **Highly Likely:** An event is assessed to have a 76% to 90% chance of occurring.
- **Likely:** An event is assessed to have a 61% to 75% chance of occurring.
- **Realistic Possibility:** An is assessed to have a 41% to 60% chance of occurring.
- **Unlikely:** An event is assessed to have a 26% to 40% chance of occurring.
- **Highly Unlikely:** An event is assessed to have an 11% to 25% chance of occurring.
- **Remote Chance:** An event is assessed to have a less than 10% chance of occurring.



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