

SECURITY INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

JANUARY 2024



UK Threat Level: **SUBSTANTIAL**



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About Us

Sentinel Group Security (SGS) was formed in July 2005 and became a fast-growing security services provider within United Kingdom and Ireland. We first partnered with our customers to provide specialised and effective security solutions including open-source intelligence reporting, security vulnerability assessments and training. Our capability is defined by our employees and the high level of skills and experience they possess and the procedures they adopt.

Intelligence led security

With a 360° approach to threat detection and intelligence service provision. Outside of dealing with major incidents, the SGS National Operations Centre proactively assesses the various security threats that your business, people, assets, and brand might face by monitoring social and conventional media to identify:

- On-going threats
- Specific industry threats
- Future trends
- Best practice



Disclaimer

In compiling this report SGS has relied on the veracity of public information available at the time of publication. SGS accepts no legal, equitable or other liability whatsoever for any actual or consequent loss incurred by the client in relation to this report or for the accuracy of any statement herein.

United Kingdom's National Security Threat



Introduction

The main threats to national security are terrorism, espionage, cyber threats and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, many of which impact on the UK's national infrastructure.

National infrastructure sectors represent core strategic interests for foreign intelligence services, whose targeting against the sectors is likely to include espionage for economic, political, military, or commercial gain.

While the threat from terrorism to the UK as a whole is high, and historically both international and Northern Ireland terrorist groups have targeted UK infrastructure, the current terrorist threat to the national infrastructure can be characterised as generally limited and often aspirational.

The exception is transport which continues to face enduringly high levels of threat from international terrorism. In addition, the emergency services and defence sectors,

specifically police and military personnel, also face a high level of threat from both international terrorism and dissident republican groups in Northern Ireland, for whom they are a priority target for attack.

Generally higher levels of effective and visible protective security at national infrastructure sites are likely to act as a deterrent to terrorists, who increasingly favour 'soft' targets which allow them to achieve their aims with greater chance of success. Nevertheless, with the continual diversification of the threat, the ambition and capability of terrorist groups to target UK infrastructure is likely to continue to evolve.

<https://www.cpni.gov.uk/national-security-threats>

United Kingdom's Threat Definitions



International terrorism

International terrorism from groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al Qaida present a threat from many others. They hold territory in places without functioning governments, making it easier for them to train recruits and plan complex, sophisticated attacks. Drawing on extreme interpretations of Islam to justify their actions, these groups often have the desire and capability to direct terrorist attacks against the West, and to inspire those already living there to carry out attacks of their own.

Northern Ireland-related terrorism

Northern Ireland-related terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to British interests. Although the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) has ceased its terrorist campaign and is now committed to the political process, some dissident republican groups continue to mount terrorist attacks, primarily against the security forces.

Domestic extremism

Domestic extremism mainly refers to individuals or groups that carry out criminal acts in pursuit of a larger agenda, such as "right-wing extremists". They may seek to change legislation or influence domestic policy and try to achieve this outside of the normal democratic process.

<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/counter-terrorism>

Cyber

“Cyberspace” is the term used to describe the electronic medium of digital networks used to store, modify, and communicate information. It includes the Internet but also other information systems that support businesses, infrastructure, and services.



Cyberspace lies at the heart of modern society; it impacts our personal lives, our businesses and our essential services. A secure online environment is essential to HM Government, which is providing an ever-increasing number of online services to UK citizens and businesses as part of a major digital services transformation programme. The ability to conduct online transactions securely is central to the delivery of public and commercial services and communications. However, some individuals and groups use cyberspace for malicious purposes. We call these people 'hostile actors' and they exploit cyberspace to conduct espionage operations or launch damaging computer network attacks.

Cyber security affects both the public and the private sector and spans a broad range of issues related to national security, whether through terrorism, crime or state and industrial espionage.

<https://www.cpni.gov.uk/cyber>

Espionage

The potential impact of successful State-sponsored espionage against the UK is both wide reaching and significant. The threat of espionage (spying) did not end with the collapse of Soviet communism in the early 1990s. Espionage against UK interests continues and is potentially very damaging. Several foreign intelligence services (FIS) seek to gather intelligence on a broad range of subjects, including foreign policy, defence, financial, technological, industrial and commercial interests.

<https://www.cpni.gov.uk/espionage>

Serious and Organised Crime



Serious and organised crime is defined in the 2018 Serious and Organised Crime Strategy as individuals planning, coordinating, and committing serious offences, whether individually, in groups and/or as part of transnational networks.

The main categories of serious offences covered by the term are:

- Child sexual abuse
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Organised immigration crime
- Illegal drugs
- Illegal firearms
- Organised acquisitive crime
- Cybercrime
- Fraud
- Money laundering, bribery, corruption and sanctions evasion.

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/>

United Kingdom Current Threat Levels

Introduction

Members of the public should always remain alert to the danger of terrorism and **report any suspicious activity to the police on 999** or the anti-terrorist hotline: **0800 789 321**. If your information does not relate to an imminent threat, you can also contact them at <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/contact-us>

What the threat levels mean

Threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack.

LOW

- Means an attack is unlikely

MODERATE

- Means an attack is possible, but not likely

SUBSTANTIAL

- Means an attack is likely

SEVERE

- Means an attack is highly likely in the near future

CRITICAL

- Means an attack is highly likely in the near future

Current national terrorism threat levels

The threat to the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) from terrorism is **SUBSTANTIAL**.

The threat to Northern Ireland from Northern Ireland-related terrorism is **SEVERE**.



Open-Source Security Incident News

'Stab survival cupboards' installed in Liverpool amid national rise in knife crime deaths

"Stab survival cupboards" have been installed in Liverpool in the first initiative of its kind in the UK to help reverse a national rise in deaths from knife crime. The bright-red cabinets containing medical equipment are designed to enable members of the public and police officers, who are often first on the scene of an attack, to treat victims before ambulances crews arrive.

Police, trauma medics and charities say such interventions could make the difference between life and death, as it can take only five minutes to bleed to death from a wound – but seven minutes on average for an ambulance to arrive. It is the first time the units have been installed in the UK.

The cupboards – officially known as "bleeding control cabinets" – contain scissors, gloves, tourniquets and chest wound sealants to stem the bleeding from a wound. They can be accessed 24/7 using a code which is provided by calling 999. The first six are being installed on walls in Liverpool city centre.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk>

Shoplifters to benefit most from ending short jail terms in England and Wales

Shoplifters will benefit most from the government's plans to impose a moratorium on jail sentences of less than 12 months in England and Wales, figures show. Despite Rishi Sunak's attempt to introduce tough sentences for criminals in the run-up to the general election, shoplifters, offenders convicted of battery, and those who have assaulted emergency workers, are the top three groups who will avoid prison under the government's new measure.

Shoplifters account for more than one in eight offenders who will not face jail and who will instead receive a suspended sentence, the data shows.



In October the justice secretary, Alex Chalk, set out measures for criminals facing jail sentences of under 12 months to receive suspended sentences and community service, as part of wider plans to tackle overcrowding in prisons across England and Wales.

<https://www.theguardian.com>

Colchester man denies charges of funding terrorism over 8-month period

A man from Essex has denied charges of funding terrorism over an 8-month period. Farhad Mohammad, 45, was charged with five counts of entering into an arrangement as a result of which money or other property was made available to another knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that it would or might be used for the purposes of terrorism.

The dates of the alleged offences ranged from May 3, 2017, to January 10, 2018. On Friday, Mohammad, of Osborne Street in Colchester, Essex, appeared at the Old Bailey to deny the offences. A trial has been set for April 2 next year at the same court. Mohammad was granted continued conditional bail.

<https://www.essexlive.news>

Scottish skipper among three arrested as £96m of cocaine seized on Spanish yacht

Three people including a Scottish skipper have been arrested after cocaine worth £96 million was seized from a vessel at sea.

The trio were arrested as part of an international operation against drug trafficking led by the National Crime Agency (NCA).

The NCA worked with other agencies in France and Spain to target an alleged drug trafficking group who were suspected of shipping the class A substance to Europe.

The operation led to the interception of a Spanish-registered yacht, found around 1,200 miles east of Martinique, an island that is part of the French West Indies. The boat was intercepted by a French navy frigate on December 18.

Officers then recovered around 40 bales of cocaine which weighed roughly 1.2 tonnes.

The NCA said the estimated street value was around £96 million if it were to be mixed with other substances before being sold.

All three crew members were arrested, including a 29-year-old man from Stornoway, on the Isle of Lewis, and taken to Martinique to face charges.

<https://www.standard.co.uk>

Cops are 'doing shifts' in Asda and Sports Direct

Police officers in Stockport have been donning uniforms and 'doing shifts' as shopworkers in a bid to crack down on shoplifting in the town.

Shop theft is the fastest-growing crime in the country and increased by 10 percent in Greater Manchester last year. Tackling the issue in and around the town centre, where particular problems have been reported, is a key priority for officers in Stockport. And as part of their response to the issue, they have been 'blending in' as workers whilst patrolling some supermarkets and high street stores.

Stores such as Sports Direct and Asda are just two examples of stores where they've used the tactic, and both have joined others in supporting the operation by buying extra uniforms for the officers to wear.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk>

Blackpool unveils plans to reduce terrorism risk at large events

Blackpool has unveiled plans to reduce the terrorism risk for groups of people attending large events at the resort. It's due to council chiefs facing tougher national legislation to ensure people are kept safe.

Counter-terrorism infrastructure is now in place on the Promenade, such as large barriers designed to stop unauthorised vehicles entering busy areas. A town-wide exercise, involving the emergency services, has been held to test procedures should there be a major incident.

The council's tourism arm VisitBlackpool is also seeking to recruit event-specific safety stewards. Blackpool regularly attracts large crowds to outdoor events – with 350,000 people attending the Air Show over two days this year, and more than 50,000 estimated to have been at the Illuminations Switch-on. A meeting of the council's audit committee heard the council is working towards meeting the requirements of new national Protect Duty legislation which is due to come into force. The Bill requires steps to be taken to reduce the risk – including from possible terrorist attacks – at all publicly accessible events and venues.

Minutes from the audit committee say councillors were informed that “the council had been undertaking work to prepare for the introduction of the legislation, including the installation of counter-terrorism infrastructure on the promenade”.

<https://www.lancs.live>

Amanda Duffy bail variation application refused by Judge

A senior Judge refused an application to vary bail conditions imposed on a Co Armagh grandmother facing dissident terrorist charges.

An application to vary Amanda Duffy's conditions to allow her to spend the Christmas period in the marital home was heard, and refused, by Mr Justice Fowler at Belfast Crown Court. Duffy is one of ten defendants facing trial following a covert surveillance operation conducted by the PSNI and MI5.

The investigation centred on two meetings allegedly held by the New IRA in February and July 2020 which were bugged as part of 'Operation Arbacia.'

Duffy, 53, from Ailsbury Gardens in Lurgan has been charged with a number of offences including directing a terrorist organisation, possessing articles for use in terrorism and belonging to a proscribed organisation.

After spending over three years in custody, she was granted full bail in October when a number of conditions - such as residing at a suitable bail address and observing a curfew - were imposed.

<https://www.belfastlive.co.uk>

Former British soldier, 27, jailed for terror attack plot in Nottingham

A former soldier, who was previously found guilty of preparing to commit a terrorist attack has been jailed for four years and ten months. William Howitt wrote a comprehensive and detailed plan to commit an arson attack at an independent bookstore in Nottingham.

Howitt denied the offence but was found guilty after a three-week trial at Birmingham Crown Court in November 2023.

He was stopped by Counter-Terrorism officers at East Midlands Airport on 5 January 2023 and his phone was seized. On the phone, officers found 'Plan A', which detailed an attack on the city centre bookshop.

There were also a number of anti-Semitic, anti-Marxist and pro-Nazi messages, pictures and videos, which Howitt had started sending to friends from 2020.

Howitt claimed he was drunk and under the influence of drugs when he wrote it, and that the messages he sent were to create a persona and for bravado, and not a true representation of his views.

Howitt was arrested on Tuesday 14 March 2023, and charged with preparing an act of terrorism.

The 27-year-old identified the bookstore as a target, as a reflection of his strongly opposing views – namely left-of-centre political and social issues, such as the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. The plan used his former military knowledge and training and set out steps he would take to set fire to the location and then escape.

He also went online and purchased the tools he would need. A glass hammer and tarpaulin sheet were found at his address when officers from Counter Terrorism Policing East Midlands (CTPEM) searched the property. Howitt also pleaded guilty to a series of acts to pervert the course of justice, having convinced a friend to take driving licence points for a speeding offence.

<https://counterterrorbusiness.com>

Terror scout gives ludicrous three-word excuse for spying in London

A terror scout has given a ludicrous three-word excuse for spying in London. Magomed-Husejn Doytaey, 31, was found guilty of attempting to collect information for terrorist purposes by trial at a court in London.

The Old Bailey heard how Doytaey carried out hostile reconnaissance at Iran International, a Persian language television channel in Chiswick in February. Doytaey claimed he was in the area of the building and his surroundings "for the architecture".

He was later found guilty of "hostile reconnaissance" by a group of jurors after around seven hours of deliberations. Head of the Metropolitan Police's counter terrorism command, Commander Dominic Murphy, issued a statement after the verdict.

He said: "For a considerable amount of time, we've been worried about threats projected into the UK from Iran. At this time, we don't know why Doytaev was conducting this activity except to say that we believe very strongly that it was for terrorism.

"We don't know who did it but we have always been concerned about threats projected into the UK, and in this case particularly against Persian language media.

"I'm pleased to say the company is still broadcasting from London, but just in a different location." The court heard how Iranian had long been a critic of the his country's government and even publicly criticised it for violations of human rights.

<https://www.express.co.uk>

Man sentenced for preparation of terrorist acts

A man from Brighton has been sentenced at the Old Bailey after admitting to planning a terrorist attack. Edward Little pleaded guilty to preparation of terrorist acts, contrary to Section 5 of the Terrorism Act 2006, at a previous hearing on 19 May this year.

He was handed a life sentence and ordered to serve a minimum of 16 years before he's considered for release. He will also serve a total of four years' imprisonment to run concurrently for a charge of assault occasioning grievous bodily harm with intent.

The court was told how he was just minutes away from purchasing a firearm when he was arrested on 23 September 2022 by officers from Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE).

Little was planning to use the gun to carry out an attack at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park.

The 22-year-old had already identified a named target for the attack and planned to shoot any police officers or soldiers who were present in the area at the time.

<https://counterterrorbusiness.com>

UK uncovers attempted Russian cyber interference and sanctions two individuals

The government has announced that the UK and its allies have uncovered of attempts by the Russian Intelligence Services to target high-profile individuals and entities through cyber operations.

The UK government believes that this was done with the intent to use information obtained to interfere in UK politics and democratic processes.

A unit within the FSB, Centre 18, has been identified as being accountable for a range of cyber espionage operations targeting the UK. It is believed that activity was carried out by Star Blizzard; a group that the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) assesses is almost certainly subordinate to FSB Centre 18.

It was reported that while some attacks resulted in leaked documents, attempts to interfere with UK politics and democracy have not been successful.

Star Blizzard has been identified as targeting, including spear-phishing, parliamentarians from multiple political parties, from at least 2015 through to this year.

It also believed the group is behind the hack of UK-US trade documents that were leaked ahead of the 2019 General Election and the 2018 hack of the Institute for Statecraft, a UK thinktank whose work included initiatives to defend democracy against disinformation, and the more recent hack of its founder Christopher Donnelly, whose account was compromised from December 2021; in both instances documents were subsequently leaked.

Following an investigation by the National Crime Agency, the UK has sanctioned two members of Star Blizzard for their involvement in the preparation of spear-phishing campaigns and associated activity that resulted in unauthorised access and exfiltration of sensitive data, which was intended to undermine UK organisations and the UK government.

<https://counterterrorbusiness.com>

Unlicensed security operative prosecuted for working illegally

Joel Williamson pleaded guilty at the first hearing and was sentenced to a total fine of £212, including £100 contribution towards prosecution costs and a victim surcharge of £32. The fine itself was reduced from £100 to £80 because of the early guilty plea.

The case began in October 2022, when Williamson approached a security provider to enquire about employment as a security operative. Williamson told his would-be employer that he had completed all his relevant security training courses and that he had a valid SIA (Security Industry Authority) door supervision licence.

Williamson was asked by the employer to provide a copy of his SIA licence; however, he told the security company that his actual licence was still in the post.

Williamson started work at a North Wales holiday park in October 2022, carrying out the following duties in the capacity of a door supervisor: patrolling the park and attending any incidents of disorder.

His employer made multiple requests to Williamson to provide his physical SIA licence card as proof of being licensed. Williamson continued to provide various reasons as to why he was unable to do so.

He was subsequently dismissed by his employer in March 2023, for failing to provide adequate proof of having a valid SIA licence.

In March 2023, the SIA received information from North Wales Police that Joel Williamson had been working illegally for four and a half months as a security operative at a holiday park. The SIA began a criminal investigation into Williamson's activities and wrote to Williamson on 5 June 2023.

Williamson was interviewed in Mold, North Wales on 7 June by SIA criminal investigation officers and admitted to engaging in licensable conduct without a licence. It was established that Williamson did not have an active SIA licence and had never made an application for one.

Williamson claimed to have completed a security industry training course and believed that by doing so, this would make him SIA licensed.

<https://www.gov.uk>

Former Liverpool director prosecuted for working illegally

Stephen Higham appeared before Liverpool and Knowsley Magistrates' Court and he was sentenced to a £300 fine, £200 prosecution costs and a victim surcharge of £120.

The case started when Security Industry Authority (SIA) investigators identified that Stephen Higham, the director of a new security company (Raptor Security Solutions) was unlicensed.

Merseyside Police's licensing team carried out licensing inspections of venues in the Woolerton area. The SIA's investigators and police officers checked two venues in Woolerton on 3 February 2023 and the SIA analysed the venues' signing-in sheets.

Following further checks, it was revealed that Higham's door supervisor licence expired on 19 August 2022, and he did not renew it, yet he continued to supply security. Investigators discovered that Stephen Higham had worked as illegal security 28 times between 19 September 2022 and 21 January 2023 at a Woolerton venue.

The SIA's investigators attempted to contact Stephen Higham but there was no response from him.

The SIA's Criminal Investigation Team sent a request for information to Stephen Higham on 14 April 2023, but Higham failed to respond to them. After repeated attempts by the SIA's investigators to reach Higham as well as an offer of an interview under caution on 2 June 2023 which he failed to attend, the matter was referred to the SIA's legal department.

<https://www.gov.uk>

Man from Bolton accused of distributing terrorist videos

A man from Bolton accused of distributing terrorist videos is to stand trial next year. Mohammed Hamasaleh, 24, is charged with seven counts of disseminating terrorist publications between March 2022 and January 2023.

These include using the messaging platform Telegram to distribute videos, an audio recording of a speech by a leader of the so-called Islamic State, and a website address to encourage terrorist acts.

Among the videos alleged to have been distributed by Hamasaleh include one titled "Trial and execution of x4 males for Mischief on Land" on June 19, 2022, and another called "Lions of the Battlefield 4" on September 16, 2022.

Hamasaleh, of Windemere Avenue, Little Lever, appeared at the Old Bailey video link from HMP Wormwood Scrubs. At the preliminary hearing he spoke via an interpreter to confirm his name.

Judge Jeremy Baker KC set a trial date at Manchester Crown Court for May 13, 2024. There will be a pre-trial preparation hearing on April 19. The judge said Hamasaleh would remain in custody.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk>

Police staff jailed for deleting speeding offences

Two former members of police staff have been jailed after they worked together to delete speeding offences.

Samantha Halden-Evans and Jonathan Hill were both employed by the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership. The pair deleted information which meant drivers avoided penalties for speeding, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) said.

The conspiracy came to light after a burglary when messages on a mobile phone were traced back to Halden-Evans.

Detectives found evidence she was deleting details so people, many of whom were known to her or Hill, avoided fines or prosecutions for speeding.

They also discovered Hill asked Halden-Evans to check number-plates to see if the motorists were caught speeding on certain roads. Knowledge on whether particular speed cameras were active or not in Staffordshire was also passed on to others by Halden-Evans, the IOPC said.

She was also accused of accessing and passing on information from the police computer systems, including over a murder investigation, without authorisation.

Halden-Evans, 36, from Cheadle, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit misconduct in public office and two counts of conspiring to pervert the course of justice.

She was jailed for four years and two months at Stafford Crown Court on Thursday.

Hill, 47, from Newcastle-under-Lyme, was jailed for 18 months after he pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit misconduct in public office.

Two members of the public, Wayne Riley and Nikki Baker, one of whom the IOPC said was in a relationship with Halden-Evans, both pleaded guilty to one count each of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Riley, 41, from Cheadle, was jailed for two years and eight months while Baker, 35, from Werrington, was sentenced to 10 months in prison.

Halden-Evans resigned from Staffordshire Police in August 2021 before a disciplinary hearing while Hill was sacked from the force after a disciplinary hearing in December of the same year.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk>

£26m celebrity burglaries suspect arrested in Serbia

A man accused of being involved in one of the biggest burglaries in English history has been arrested in Serbia.

He and five others were arrested in Belgrade for alleged money laundering offences, the Metropolitan Police said.

The man is alleged to have been part of raids on the London homes of three celebrities in December 2019 where £26m of valuables were taken.

The biggest came at the home of Tamara Ecclestone where £25m of jewellery, cash and other items were stolen.

The other burglaries targeted homes belonging to the former Chelsea and England footballer Frank Lampard, and the now-deceased former owner of Leicester City, Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha. Most of the stolen jewellery and valuable watches have never been recovered.

Last year, three Italians - Yugoslav Jovanovic, Alessandro Maltese and Alessandro Donati - were jailed for 28 years in total after pleading guilty to conspiracy to burgle.

Isleworth Crown Court heard the gang targeted Ms Ecclestone's palatial home on one of the most expensive streets in the world opposite Kensington Palace, which the Formula 1 heiress shares with her husband Jay Rutland.

The couple had left for a Christmas holiday in Lapland hours earlier.

Many of the rooms inside the mansion were cleared of valuables. In just over an hour, the burglars made off with 400 items of jewellery and large sums of cash.

Most of the stolen jewellery and valuable watches have never been recovered.

An international hunt was launched by the Metropolitan Police for a fourth suspect known to the force as Daniel Vukovic.

A BBC investigation found authorities have linked Mr Vukovic to other alleged burglaries across Europe. He is believed to have used at least 19 identities.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk>

Police to be able to run face recognition searches on 50m driving licence holders

The police will be able to run facial recognition searches on a database containing images of Britain's 50 million driving licence holders under a law change being quietly introduced by the government.

Should the police wish to put a name to an image collected on CCTV, or shared on social media, the legislation would provide them with the powers to search driving licence records for a match.

The move, contained in a single clause in a new criminal justice bill, could put every driver in the country in a permanent police lineup, according to privacy campaigners.

Facial recognition searches match the biometric measurements of an identified photograph, such as that contained on driving licences, to those of an image picked up elsewhere.

The intention to allow the police or the National Crime Agency (NCA) to exploit the UK's driving licence records is not explicitly referenced in the bill or in its explanatory notes, raising criticism from leading academics that the government is "sneaking it under the radar".

Once the criminal justice bill is enacted, the home secretary, James Cleverly, must establish "driver information regulations" to enable the searches, but he will need only to consult police bodies, according to the bill.

<https://amp-theguardian-com>

MI6 security alert at Russian-owned flat that overlooks Britain's spy HQ

UK intelligence officers have raised security concerns about a Moscow-owned flat that overlooks MI6's headquarters, i can reveal.

The luxury £1.2m penthouse on the top floor of the St George Wharf development in Vauxhall, London, has unimpeded views of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) headquarters.

i can reveal that security concerns have been raised about the apartment block, as well as Chinese-linked owners purchasing properties there.

The investigation can now reveal that the Russian owners of the property can be traced back to a Soviet-era £40,000 apartment roughly 300 metres away from the Russian intelligence chemical site that developed Novichok.

There is no evidence that the Russian owners have direct links to the sanctioned Russian facility. But three senior UK intelligence sources told i the proximity between the factory and the company's Moscow address was "not a coincidence".

<https://inews.co.uk>

Liverpool 'utterly condemn' bottle attack on Manchester United team bus

Liverpool have condemned the actions of a fan who threw a bottle at Manchester United's team bus before Sunday's Premier League match.

A video circulated on social media appearing to show a Liverpool supporter filming themselves next to the team bus before aiming the bottle of cider at the vehicle.

The fan, wearing a grey jacket, filmed themselves throwing a bottle of Kopparberg cider at the vehicle while saying "f*** off".

A club spokesman said: "Liverpool Football Club utterly condemns the actions that led to damage being caused to the Manchester United team bus during its arrival at Anfield.

<https://news.sky.com>

Armed robbers jailed for 22 years after crime spree holding up London hotels at gunpoint

Two armed robbers who held up three separate London hotels at gunpoint, stealing thousands of pounds, have been jailed for more than 20 years.

Dymtro Shcherbinskyy, 42 of Blossom Close, Romford who played a leading role was sentenced to 12 years in prison, and Ghislain Kiamuangana, 34, of no fixed address was sentenced to 10 years' prison time in total. This included a sentence for theft, after stealing £12,000 from a safe, while working at a hotel in 2021.

The two were jailed for a total of 22 years for robberies committed at three London hotels, following a trial at Snaresbrook Crown Court.

<https://www-my-london-news>

Drink spiking in London has quadrupled over last five years

Drink spiking offences in London have roughly quadrupled over the last five years, new figures reveal.

Met Police data shows that while there were 497 offences related to drink spiking in the capital in 2018, the number had risen more than 300 per cent, to 2,066 offences, by 2022.

Data for 2023, which runs up to the end of October, states that there have been 1,788 offences so far – meaning that this year's total could be even higher than last once November and December have been accounted for.

Only 57 such offences were met with criminal charges this year, though this is up from 33 last year and 15 in 2018.

The Met said it has created a “bespoke London policing response” to tackle the problem, and that an increased public awareness of the issue could mean that more offences are being reported to them than in previous years.

<https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk>

Armed gang 'break into West Ham star's £3m home

West Ham star Kurt Zouma and his family have been left 'traumatised' after an armed gang raided their £3million home and stole £100,000 in cash and jewellery.

The gang of thugs ransacked The Hammers' captain's Essex mansion while he was relaxing with his wife Sandra and their children.

Frenchman Zouma, 29, was missing from West Ham's squad when they drew 1-1 with Crystal Palace following the raid - which prompted a warning from cops to neighbours amid fears an organised crime group could strike again.

Zouma and his loved ones have been left 'too scared to stay at home', with a source telling The Sun: 'Kurt and the family were put through an horrific ordeal and are still struggling to speak about what happened... Kurt is a family man and in shock. He is worried about protecting his family.'

News of the ordeal left West Ham fans stunned - with the club today offering a £25,000 reward for information leading to the gang's capture.

<https://www-dailymail-co-uk>

Sellafield nuclear site hacked by groups linked to Russia and China

The UK's most hazardous nuclear site, Sellafield, has been hacked into by cyber groups closely linked to Russia and China, the Guardian can reveal.

The astonishing disclosure and its potential effects have been consistently covered up by senior staff at the vast nuclear waste and decommissioning site, the investigation has found.

The Guardian has discovered that the authorities do not know exactly when the IT systems were first compromised. But sources said breaches were first detected as far back as 2015, when experts realised sleeper malware – software that can lurk and be used to spy or attack systems – had been embedded in Sellafield's computer networks.

It is still not known if the malware has been eradicated. It may mean some of Sellafield's most sensitive activities, such as moving radioactive waste, monitoring for leaks of dangerous material and checking for fires, have been compromised.

Sources suggest it is likely foreign hackers have accessed the highest echelons of confidential material at the site, which sprawls across 6 sq km (2 sq miles) on the Cumbrian coast and is one of the most hazardous in the world.

<https://amp-theguardian-com>

Mansfield man spat in doorman's face

Malcolm Pleskauskas demanded to enter the Industria bar, on Leeming Street, Mansfield, on October 21, but was turned away because he was "clearly too intoxicated," said prosecutor Adeel Zafar.



He was advised to go home, but Pleskauskas, aged 44, became aggressive and hurled threats before spitting at the doorman. He managed to dodge most of it but some of the spit landed on his cheek and Pleskauskas was restrained until police arrived.

In his first interview he accepted being intoxicated and denied spitting but later admitted the offence after he was shown CCTV footage of the incident. The court heard he has 16 previous convictions for 27 offences but has stayed out of trouble since June 2011.

Pleskauskas, who represented himself, said: "I was refused entry. I tried talking my way into the club but then I fell asleep and the next thing I knew I was being dragged across the town.

Pleskauskas, of Langford Road, Mansfield, admitted assault by beating when he appeared at Mansfield Magistrates Court. He was fined £200 and ordered to pay an £80 surcharge, £85 costs and £100 compensation to the doorman.

<https://www.chad.co.uk>

Raid on Jack Grealish's mansion as family hear thieves stealing '£1m of jewellery'

Jack Grealish's terrified family hit panic buttons as a gang of burglars looted his new home.

Around ten relatives were cheering on the Manchester City star in his televised match at Everton when they heard noises upstairs and dogs barking frantically. The shaken group – including fiancée Sasha Attwood, his parents, gran, two sisters and brother – dashed for cover at the unfamiliar mansion which Jack moved into just before Christmas.

Police fearing a hostage situation raced to the scene and a helicopter scoured the estate. Neighbours were told to lock doors and stay inside.

Despite extensive security and perimeter fencing around Jack's lavish home, the crooks got in and fled with £1million of watches and jewellery.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk>

Violence against NHS hospital staff on the rise in London

Violence against doctors, nurses and other hospital workers appears to be rising in London, new data suggests.

Met Police figures show that staff in the capital's hospitals have endured almost 1,000 violent offences since the start of April 2022.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, 578 such offences took place.

The frequency of offences has increased since April 2023, with 406 offences recorded in the eight months up to the end of November this year.

The figures do not include violence against security guards, but do include cleaners, porters and receptionists.

The highest number of offences in the first year of the data were committed in Lambeth, where 59 incidents were reported. The borough is home to St Thomas' Hospital in Waterloo and King's College Hospital in Camberwell.

Since April 2023, the highest number of offences have been committed in Redbridge with 35 reports. Among other medical facilities, the borough includes the King George Hospital in Goodmayes.

A small number of offences included in the data do not necessarily include physical violence, for example sending letters or other written communications "with intent to cause distress or anxiety".

The most frequent offence recorded was common assault and battery, comprising 234 of the 984 (23%) incidents recorded since April 2022.

<https://www-bbc-com>

Man arrested after police raid suspected 'bomb factory' in south London

A man has been arrested after a "quantity of chemicals" was found at a suspected bomb factory in Catford.

The Metropolitan Police were called at around 1.20pm to concerns about potentially explosive chemicals being stored at an address in Daneby Road on Friday. Officers put a cordon in place while searches were carried out and chemicals were found and recovered.

Two fire engines and two fire and rescue units were sent to the residential street. The police confirmed the incident is not being treated as terror related. A 26-year-old man was arrested outside the address and was taken into police custody. The Met has said enquiries are ongoing and investigations continue.

<https://www.standard.co.uk>



Security industry news

Home Office launches new strategy to tackle organised crime

The Home Secretary has launched a new strategy aimed at tackling serious and organised crime.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has estimated that there are at least 59,000 people in the UK involved in serious and organised crime and that it costs the UK at least £47 billion each year. The new strategy sets out action to eradicate complex criminal networks, including through the NCA. It will also empower local forces to tackle these illicit crimes in their communities and set out work overseas to prevent exploitation, such as modern slavery and human trafficking.

It is hoped the strategy will strengthen local communities' resilience to serious and organised crime and ensure that once one gang has been dismantled, another does not take its place.

The 'Clear, Hold, Build' policing tactic will be rolled out to every police force in England and Wales by next spring, which it is hoped will empower police and local partners to clear communities of gangs and prevent criminals from exploiting the vacuum.

The tactic is already in operation in 18 forces across 31 sites. Since January 2022, there has been a 45 per cent reduction in anti-social behaviour in Easington Lane, on the outskirts of Sunderland and in Barnet, the Metropolitan Police Service arrested 160 individuals for 272 offences, including murder, aggravated burglary and kidnap, in the first 2 months of the programme.

Home secretary James Cleverly said: "Serious and organised crime threatens our national security and prosperity, degrades society and causes serious harm to individuals and businesses up and down the country.

"Through investment in innovative and cutting-edge policing capabilities and tactics, collaboration with international partners, as well as creating new criminal offences, we will disrupt and dismantle organised crime groups and those who enable them."

<https://counterterrorbusiness.com>

Public urged to report online extremist content

The public are being urged to report extremist content they find online to the police.

The campaign comes after a Met counter-terrorism investigation led to the jailing of a man who supported Daesh on social media.

Kawsor Miah made several posts on social media where he expressed his extreme Islamist mindset and voiced his support for Daesh and acts of terrorist violence.

An anonymous online report to police by a member of the public about Miah's posts led to an investigation by officers from the Met's Counter Terrorism Command, supported by colleagues in the specialist Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU). He was arrested in March 2022.

Miah was found guilty of one charge of encouraging terrorism, and six counts of showing support for a proscribed organisation following a trial at Kingston Crown Court. He's been sentenced to five years' imprisonment, with an additional three years on licence.

Commander Dominic Murphy, of the Met's Counter Terrorism Command, said: "Our investigation into Miah started as a result of an online report from a member of the public who knew that what Miah was posting online was wrong.

"That person was right to act and contact police. The investigation led to more evidence being gathered, and it was this evidence that resulted in his conviction and jailing.

"This is another example of how information from the public is vital to our efforts to tackle terrorism."

<https://counterterrorbusiness.com>

National Security Act measures come into force

Measures put in place by the National Security Act in July have come into force. Law enforcement agencies will now be able to use the new tools and modernised powers to deter, detect and disrupt threats from those acting on behalf of foreign states against the UK and its interests.

It is now an offence to be an undeclared foreign spy materially assisting the activities of a foreign intelligence service in the UK.

Other new offences include updated espionage offences, including the theft of trade secrets, foreign interference, including in the UK's political system, sabotage, and modern ways of attempting to access the UK's most sensitive sites.

Home secretary, James Cleverly, said: "There are foreign powers who have shown their willingness to make threats to the UK and our freedoms. The National Security Act will prove critical in helping police and intelligence partners to make it even more difficult for them to do so, and as the core measures come in to force today, the UK becomes a safer country.

<https://counterterrorbusiness.com>

New biometrics and surveillance camera commissioner publishes statement

Tony Eastaugh, the new biometrics and surveillance camera commissioner has published a statement upon his appointment. In the statement, Eastaugh said he was looking forward to building on the work of his predecessors until the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill comes into effect in the spring.

He will also be focusing on ensuring the the biometrics casework, including National Security Determinations, is up to date and in good order to transfer to the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office and reviewing the use of S63G applications within police forces to bring about increased safety and security for our communities.

He said: "Whilst in post, I intend to engage with as many of the key parties operating in this critical arena as possible. I will be listening, learning, and fully contributing to the evolving and growing biometrics and surveillance camera landscape."

<https://counterterrorbusiness.com>

UK workers want their employers to play an active role during terror attacks

New research from the National Emergencies Trust and Business in the Community (BITC) has found that 76 per cent of employees want the company they work for to play an active role during UK disasters such as terror attacks, floods, or another pandemic.

The research found that 32 per cent of UK workers want their employer to provide wellbeing support to any colleagues who may be affected by a national crisis. 32 per cent want their employer to step up for other people affected by donating items and 31 per cent want their employer to raise funds or make a donation. The Opinium survey also revealed that workers also want to play their part during national emergencies. 29 per cent of workers want support from their employer so that they and their colleagues can volunteer their time and 26 per cent would like their employer to help them and colleagues to fundraise for those affected.

The research is being released as the National Emergencies Trust launches its Appeal Partners Programme, which invites networked organisations and UK companies to raise vital awareness and funds during future emergencies to provide as much support as possible to survivors and their loved ones.

The survey revealed that helping during emergencies can have a positive impact for companies. 9% of the 4,000 UK adults polled said it was a way for companies to show they care about the communities they serve, 37% said companies could show that they live their values, while 30% felt it was a way for companies to strengthen their culture.

Patrons of the National Emergencies Trust which include Arnold Clark, Co-op, Christopher Laing Foundation, Clarion Housing Group, M&G plc, NatWest Group, Sky and Tesco, support the charity year-round to ensure that it can activate at speed when domestic disasters arise. They also play an active part during its emergency fundraising appeals.

<https://counterterrorbusiness.com>

ICO fines Ministry of Defence for Afghan evacuation data breach

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has fined the Ministry of Defence (MoD) the sum of £350,000 for disclosing the personal information of individuals seeking relocation to the UK shortly after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan back in 2021.

On 20 September 2021, the MoD sent an e-mail to a distribution list of Afghan nationals eligible for evacuation using the 'To' field, with personal information relating to 245 individuals being inadvertently disclosed.

The e-mail addresses could be seen by all recipients, with 55 of those involved having thumbnail pictures on their e-mail profiles. Two people 'replied all' to the entire list of recipients, with one of them providing their location.

The original e-mail was sent by the team in charge of the UK's Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), which is responsible for assisting the relocation of Afghan citizens who worked for – or with – the UK Government in Afghanistan. Should it have fallen into the hands of the Taliban, the data disclosed could have resulted in a threat to life.

Soon after the data breach, the MoD contacted the individuals affected asking them to delete the e-mail, change their e-mail address and inform the ARAP team of their new contact details via a secure form. The MoD also conducted an internal investigation, made a statement in Parliament about the data breach and updated the ARAP's e-mail policies and processes, including implementing a 'second pair of eyes' policy for the ARAP team when sending e-mails to multiple external recipients.

Such a procedure provides a 'double check' whereby an e-mail instigated by one member of staff is cross-checked by another.

Under data protection law, organisations must have appropriate technical and organisational measures in place to avoid disclosing people's information inappropriately.

ICO guidance makes it clear that organisations should use bulk e-mail services, mail merge or secure data transfer services when sending any sensitive personal information electronically. The ARAP team did not have such measures in place at the time of the incident and relied on 'blind carbon copy', which carries a significant risk of human error.

<https://securitymattersmagazine.com>

Consultant found guilty of defrauding Police Federation

Christopher McEvoy, a consultant who lied about payments he made to four members of the House of Lords on behalf of the Police Federation as part of a larger fraud, has been convicted of defrauding the Federation of part of the £250,000 sum of money it gave to him.

McEvoy, aged 47, claimed that he had paid peers £77,000 for expenses and advice they provided to the Constables' Advisory Panel between 2014 and 2015.

However, an examination of bank statements revealed that McEvoy had only transferred £36,000 to their accounts. He will be sentenced on 2 February.

The Jury at Southwark Crown Court heard that the Advisory Panel was established in January 2014 by the Constables' Central Committee, which is part of the Police Federation. The Advisory Panel's role was to advise its parent Committee on reforms and improvements to policing. Its membership included a cross-party group of peers.

The Constables' Central Committee hired McEvoy's company and gave it £250,000 upfront to support the work of the Advisory Panel. How much of that amount McEvoy put to personal use will be determined at sentencing.

<https://securitymattersmagazine.com>

London Underground: Artificial Intelligence software is being used to detect fare dodgers

Artificial intelligence is to be trialled on the London Underground in a bid to stem soaring rates of fare dodging, it can be revealed.

Computer technology that can identify passengers likely to jump ticket barriers has been tested at Willesden Green station, on the Jubilee line.

Transport for London now plans to expand the trial after successfully linking the AI software with its network of station cameras.

Siwan Hayward, TfL's director of security, policing and enforcement, insisted the technology was not being used as a "facial recognition tool". She said: "The pilot project was able to detect fare evasion attempts through the gate-line and enrich our data and insight on fare evasion levels and methods.

"Following a review by our safety, health and environment team, we will be progressing this to an in-station trial to monitor its effectiveness."

Latest figures estimate that TfL loses more than £130m a year in income due to fare dodging. About 3.9 per cent of journeys are unpaid – about one in 25.

More than 31,000 penalty fares have been issued since April and more than 11,000 cases are being considered for prosecution.

TfL wants to increase the penalty fare for failing to pay the correct fare to be increased from £80 to £100 but says this has yet to be approved by Mayor Sadiq Khan, despite being first proposed a year ago.

<https://www.standard.co.uk>

NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY CENTRE (NCSC)

The NCSC supports the most critical organisations in the UK, the wider public sector, industry, SMEs as well as the general public. When incidents do occur, they provide effective incident response to minimise harm to the UK, help with recovery, and learn lessons for the future. Please see the links to this month's NCSC weekly threat reports.

NCSC launches Cyber Incident Exercising scheme



The NCSC is launching a new Cyber Incident Exercising scheme today, giving organisations access to NCSC assured Exercising providers for the first time.

In August, the NCSC announced CREST and IASME as the Delivery

Partners for the scheme, to manage the assessment on our behalf, and to onboard the assured exercising service providers.

Now, with a number of Assured Service Providers in place, the scheme is open for business. You can find a list of service providers on the Cyber Incident Exercising scheme page. The new CIE Scheme provides organisations with access to NCSC assured CIE service providers able to create bespoke, structured table-top or live-play cyber incident exercises. It sits alongside the NCSC's free and easy-to-use Exercise in A Box tool that allows you to test your incident response against a host of generic cyber incident scenarios. Assured Cyber Incident Exercising companies will work alongside, challenge and help organisations to robustly practise their responses in a safe environment.

The scheme assures companies to deliver two types of cyber exercises:

Table-Top – discussion-based sessions where participants talk about their roles and responsibilities, activities and key decision points (in line with their organisation's incident response plan) for a pre-agreed scenario.

Live-Play – sessions where participants carry out their roles and responsibilities in close to real time, in response to a controlled feed of information, representing a pre-agreed scenario. Live play exercises are best suited to mature organisations looking for in-depth validation of plans.

The exercises are designed to simulate incidents which have a significant impact on a single client organisation. The scheme does not cover category 1 and category 2 incidents, as defined by the UK cyber incident categorisation system.

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk>

Russian FSB cyber actor Star Blizzard continues worldwide spear-phishing campaigns

The Russia-based actor Star Blizzard (formerly known as SEABORGIUM, also known as Callisto Group/TA446/COLDRIVER/TAG-53/BlueCharlie) continues to successfully use spear-phishing attacks against targeted organisations and individuals in the UK, and other geographical areas of interest, for information-gathering activity.

The UK National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the US National Security Agency (NSA), the US Cyber National Mission Force (CNMF), the Australian Signals Directorate's Australian Cyber Security Centre (ASD's ACSC), the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (CCCS), and the New Zealand National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC-NZ) assess that Star Blizzard is almost certainly subordinate to the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) Centre 18.

Industry has previously published details of Star Blizzard. This advisory draws on that body of information.

This advisory raises awareness of the spear-phishing techniques Star Blizzard uses to target individuals and organisations. This activity is continuing through 2023.

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/news/star-blizzard-continues-spear-phishing-campaigns>

UK's cultural institutions gather for summit on the cyber threat

Earlier this month, the National Cyber Security Centre – which is a part of GCHQ – and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) met with representatives from the UK cultural sector to discuss what can be done to protect institutions' digital collections.

Online collections, which pool millions of digital records, enable cultural institutions to increase accessibility of their materials and hold unique social and cultural value to the wider public. In 2020 alone, the creative industries brought £103.8 billion to the UK economy.

This makes the cultural sector an attractive target to opportunistic threat actors who may seek to capitalise on and disrupt these institutions' economic and societal value through ransomware, causing a loss of income not only to the organisations affected but also the nation at large.

Ransomware remains one of the most acute cyber threats for most UK businesses and organisations. The government is committed to making the UK an extremely unattractive target for ransomware attacks.

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk>



Demonstrations / Protests

Rise in climate activists referred to anti-terror scheme

The number of climate activists referred to the Prevent anti-terrorism programme has increased following the emergence of disruptive environmental protests, the BBC has learned. The UK government's Prevent scheme aims to stop people becoming terrorists.

Critics say Prevent curbs human rights by stifling non-violent political beliefs and should be reformed. The government says it has never advised referring people to Prevent for lawful climate activism or protest.

Anyone can contact the police or a local authority to make a Prevent referral, which usually involves filling out a form to explain a concern about someone deemed to be at risk of radicalisation.

Since 2015, institutions including schools, universities, hospitals, local authorities, police, and prisons have had a legal duty to consider the risk of radicalisation.

The Home Office told the BBC Prevent interventions were legitimate for those who could be radicalised into terrorism in the name of environmental causes.

But climate activists say the government's definition of extremism is too broad and authorities are confusing extremism with non-violent civil disobedience in too many cases.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk>

Protesters storm Salford government building demanding end to Gaza conflict

Protesters stormed a government building in Greater Manchester demanding an end to 'British complicity' in the fighting in Gaza. Around 20 people holding banners and flags entered the lobby of Three New Bailey in Salford where HMRC is based.

After entering the tax office, the demonstrators displayed a sign saying 'British government is complicit in Gaza genocide and chanted 'ceasefire now'. Police were called to the protest, but no arrests were made as people left soon after being asked.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk>

Primary school forced to close as parents stage protest

An East London primary school has been forced to close as parents staged a protest after an eight-year-old boy was allegedly reprimanded for wearing a Palestine flag on his coat.

Parents gathered outside the gates of Barclay Primary School in Leyton on Thursday morning to protest. Crowds chanted “education is under attack” as they stood with pro-Palestine placards and banners.

The Lion Academy Trust - which runs several schools including Barclay Primary School - has denied all allegations and said they have closed the school early for Christmas break in light of “escalating threats against staff and the school”. The row was initially sparked after parents said they received a letter from the school reprimanding them for allowing their children to wear the colours of the Palestinian flag to Children in Need day on 15 November.

<https://www.independent.co.uk>

CT police make arrests over ULEZ camera explosion

Detectives from the Met's Counter Terrorism Command have made two arrests in an investigation into an explosion in Sidcup where a ULEZ camera and surrounding property.

The Met's Counter Terrorism Command is leading the investigation due to its expertise in incidents involving explosives and made the two arrests on Monday 18 December.

A 60-year-old man in Sidcup was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to cause an explosion likely to endanger life or property, contrary to section two of the Explosive Substances Act 1883 and 61-year-old man was arrested in Horsham on suspicion of conspiracy to cause an explosion likely to endanger life or property, and criminal damage, contrary to section one of the Criminal Damage Act 1971. Searches are taking place at two addresses in Sidcup and Horsham.

<https://counterterrorbusiness.com>

Climate groups begin legal actions against Rosebank North Sea oil project

Climate campaigners have launched two separate legal challenges to government plans to open a massive new oilfield in the North Sea.

Greenpeace and the campaign group Uplift argue that the decision to press ahead with the Rosebank development – the UK's biggest untapped oilfield is incompatible with the UK's legally binding climate commitments and say ministers' original analysis ignored the devastating impact of burning oil from the site.

Tessa Khan, executive director of Uplift, said: “If Rosebank goes ahead, the UK will blow its own plans to stay within safe climate limits. It's that simple. If the government disagrees, it needs to provide evidence and prove it in court.”

The field was given the green light in September and has the potential to produce 500m barrels of oil in its lifetime, which when burned would emit as much carbon dioxide as running 56 coal-fired power stations for a year.

The project has faced stiff resistance, with hundreds of climate scientists and academics and more than 200 organisations, from the Women's Institute to Oxfam, joining tens of thousands of people across the UK in opposing it.

It also flies in the face of warnings from scientists about the impact of the development on the climate, and repeated statements from the International Energy Agency that no new oil and gas exploration should take place if the world is to limit global heating to 1.5C above pre-industrial temperatures.

<https://www.theguardian.com>

Pro-Palestine protesters demonstrate outside home of Israeli ambassador to the UK

Around 100 protesters gathered in North London, Camden to call for a ceasefire, while vocalising the controversial chant: "From the river to the sea".

Organisers Stop the War Coalition listed 57 separate pro-Palestinian events across the UK on Saturday, including assemblies and candlelit vigils. People gathered outside Tzipi Hotovely's Camden house and chanted "de-decolonise" and "ceasefire now", with passing cars honking their horns in support.

<https://www.lbc.co.uk>

Tens of thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters march through London

Tens of thousands of pro-Palestine protesters have marched through London calling for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

Organisers claimed as many as 100,000 people braved the cold December conditions to join the demonstration - the first such protest since a week-long pause in the fighting broke down last week.

However, the Metropolitan Police said an estimated 40,000 people attended the march and 13 people have been arrested. Protesters carried signs bearing the words "free Palestine" and "end the siege".

<https://news.sky.com>

Met calls on Just Stop Oil to engage with them as policing the activists has cost nearly £20m

The Metropolitan Police has called on the Just Stop Oil group to engage with them as the force revealed that policing the eco activists has cost nearly £20m.

Commander Kyle Gordon, who was the senior officer responsible for planning the Met's policing response to the latest round of Just Stop Oil's protests, has told Sky News the force asked the group to engage with them during their protests in the autumn but said the activists chose not to do so.

It comes as Scotland Yard said time spent on the group equated to about 300 officers per day being taken out of frontline policing across London.

Some £19.9 million has been spent on the group to date, with £3.5 million spent since October this year, the Met said.

The force added that 10,500 officers' shifts have been used this autumn.

<https://news.sky.com>

Nine arrests as police remove banner calling for 'global intifada' from London building

Nine people have been arrested after a banner calling for a “global intifada” was draped over a building in central London. The Met said that it had removed the banner, which said “globalise the intifada”, after it was hung from the window of a building in Park Square near Regent’s Park.

Pictures of the banner were posted on social media alongside calls for the police to take action.

In a statement, the Met said that nine people had been arrested under Section 18 of the Public Order Act.

They added: “Officers have now secured the property which was being used by squatters.

“We will continue to have a presence in the area to respond to any further incidents.”

The use of “intifada” has caused controversy in recent weeks during protests against Israel’s bombardment of Gaza in response to the Hamas terror attacks of October 7.

<https://www.standard.co.uk>

Police arrest almost 650 Just Stop Oil protesters in a month as they make use of new law

Nearly 650 Just Stop Oil activists have been arrested in a month as campaigners hit out at the police’s “staggering and shocking” use of new anti-protest legislation.

A demonstration was held outside the Metropolitan Police’s New Scotland Yard headquarters. JSO, which has carried out a string of recent “slow marches” in central London, billed it as a “mass march in solidarity with the innocent climate prisoners”.

The force revealed it arrested eco-warriors on 649 occasions, with 338 charged, since the “start of their latest campaign of disruption” on October 30. Police are using section 7 of the Public Order Act 2023 to target any action that “interferes with the use or operation of any key national infrastructure”.

<https://www.standard.co.uk>

Two arrested as red paint thrown at Downing Street gates

Two people have been arrested on suspicion of criminal damage after red paint was thrown over the front gates outside Downing Street.

The arrests are understood to have followed a protest in London calling for a ceasefire in the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

<https://www.independent.co.uk>

Four police officers injured in clashes with protesters armed with sticks in Camberwell

Four police officers were injured after disorder involving protesters in Camberwell. Footage appeared to show protesters surrounding police vans while carrying sticks during a protest on Camberwell Road. Some appear to hit the vans with objects in their hands. A Metropolitan Police

spokesperson said the disturbance was related to “tensions amongst the Eritrean community” but did not give further details.

Officers estimated around 60 protesters were present at the demonstration.

Eight people were arrested, all of whom were in a group outside a venue which had been hosting a private event understood to have been taking place near the Lighthouse Theatre.

Four officers were injured, one of whom was taken to hospital. The officer was later discharged.

<https://www.standard.co.uk>

Pro-Palestinian protesters gather at Trafford Centre

Pro-Palestinian protesters gathered at the Trafford Centre demanding a ceasefire in Gaza. Crowds of demonstrators flooded the shopping destination waving flags and clutching banners.

Stores including Zara and Marks & Spencer were closed, with staffing putting the front shutters down on Saturday (December 30). A spokesperson for the Trafford Centre said: "There was a small demonstration targeting several retailers within our centre, which was managed peacefully by the relevant authorities and centre security teams.

"We are working closely with our brand partners to ensure the safety of our visitors and those who work at the centre."

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk>

