

CORPS RELAY

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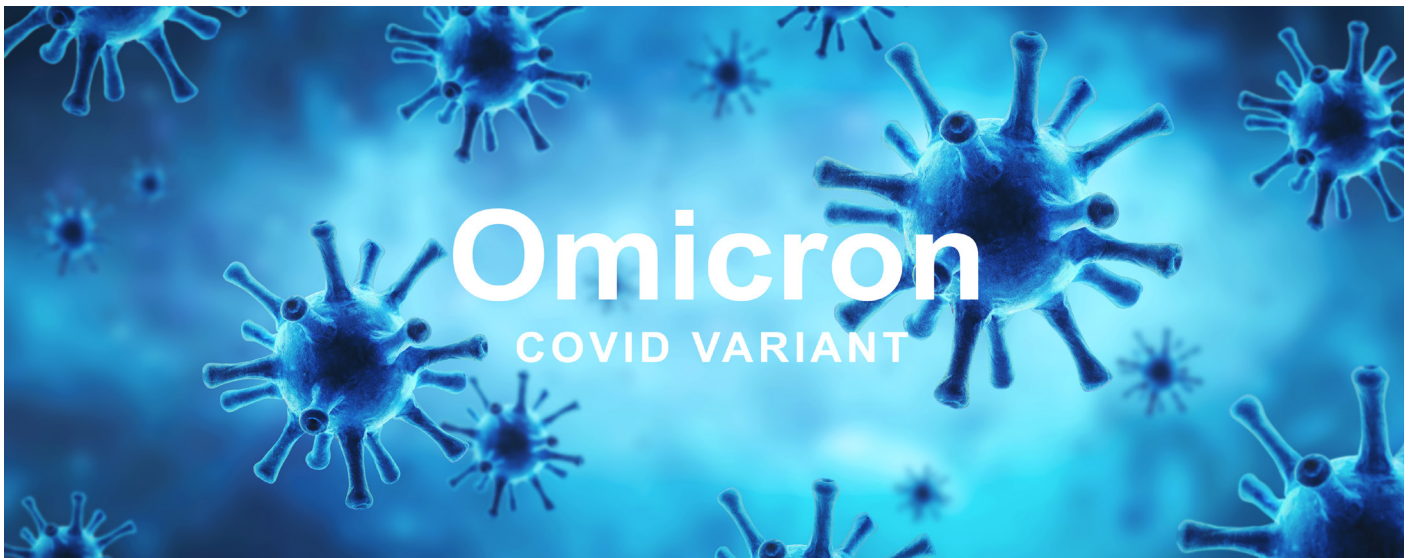
CORPS
SECURITY

COVID-19: Rise of Omicron before Festive Season

The latest variant of concern is the [SARS-CoV-2 variant known as Omicron](#). First discovered by scientists in Botswana and South Africa, but already confirmed in over 20 countries including the UK, Omicron has the world asking a lot of questions about whether their existing precautions remain effective. This variant spreads quickly but, at this time, scientists are unsure of the exact nature of the transmissibility and severity of Omicron. There is an ongoing effort to understand the specific risks that it poses and whether it has any potential to evade vaccines and/or cause reinfections.

Possibly the biggest concern around Omicron is the speed at which it is spreading. The infection rate in South Africa went from 3,402 reported

cases on 24th November 2021 to 8,561 cases on 1st December 2021. The R in South Africa went over 2 in Gauteng in late November, which is a huge increase from the September R value for Gauteng of under 1. This is potentially due to Omicron's ability to spread much faster, and infect more people, than the previous variant of concern, Delta. This is also potentially linked to a suggestion that Omicron has some capacity to evade immunity, either through having already been infected with Covid-19, or having been vaccinated. [Professor Paul Hunter, infectious diseases expert](#), has stated he believes Omicron could become the dominant variant within the UK within weeks, suggesting that infection rates could already be four times higher than official figures suggest.



Red List Countries Increase

The number of countries on the Red List for travel have increased to now include, Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria (as of 0400 on 6th December), South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Only UK citizens and UK Residents are permitted to enter the UK from a Red List Country. Entering the UK from Red List Countries places additional requirements on the traveller, including the necessity to take multiple Covid-19 tests, and to quarantine for a set period of time (generally 10 days if test results are all negative). The rules regarding Red List Countries

vary slightly depending on which Country in the UK is being entered. An up-to-date list of Red List Countries, and the restrictions for each area of the UK, can be found here:

- [England](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)

Protect Duty

The [Protect Duty](#) is currently receiving a lot of attention from security professionals in anticipation of its release in 2022. The need for a Protect Duty, instilling in law a necessity for businesses/venues to take reasonable counter terrorism precautions, is part of the response to the inquiry into the

[Manchester Arena Bombing in 2017](#). Given the importance of this topic Corps Consult will be releasing a Protect Duty Special Bulletin on 16th December 2021.



Tesco Industrial Action

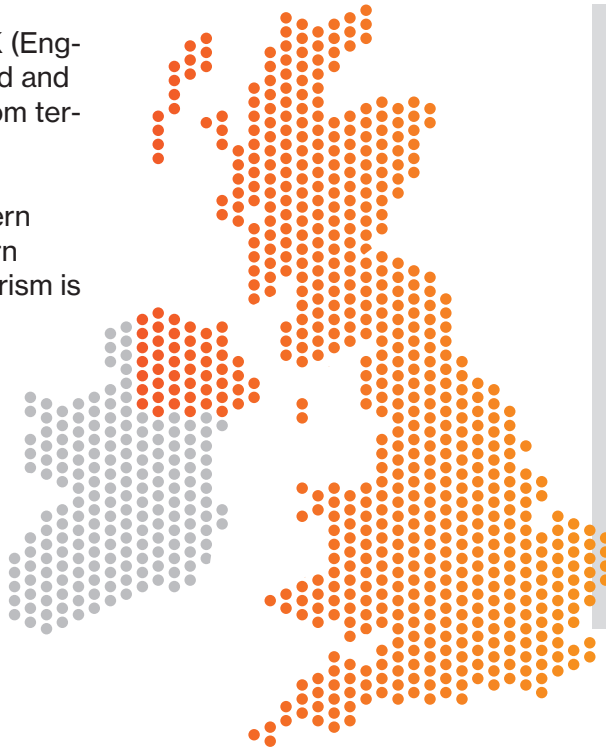
Warehouse Workers and Delivery Drivers [working for Tesco are poised to take industrial action](#). Over 1000 workers represented by the Unite union in Antrim, Belfast, Didcot and Doncaster are threatening a series of strikes related to pay. The timing of the action threatens the stores' preparedness for the

festive season and could result in shortages at stores. There were a number of incidents related to previous store shortages during the first UK lockdown, although in this instance it will only be Tesco that is affected.

Current National Threat Level

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

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



NOTE:

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

LOW means an attack is highly unlikely

MODERATE means an attack is possible, but not likely

SUBSTANTIAL means an attack is likely

SEVERE means an attack is highly likely

CRITICAL means an attack is highly likely in the near future

Ealing Residents Charged Under Terrorism Act 2000

Ealing residents, [19-year-old Ayub Khan](#) and 21-year-old Mohammad Zubair Khan were arrested in an operation by the Met's Counter Terrorism Command on 16th November 2021. A. Khan has been charged with three counts of dissemination of terrorist material and one count of possessing an article (a knife) connected with the commission of an act of terrorism between October and

November 2021. M. Khan was charged with eight counts of dissemination of terrorist material. A. Khan is said to have sent terrorist materials to a WhatsApp group. Both men are to appear at the Old Bailey in early December 2021 for a preliminary hearing.

2 Separate Arrests at Stanstead Airport Under Terrorism Act 2000

A [26-year-old UK national was arrested](#) prior to boarding an outbound flight on Friday 3rd December 2021. The individual was apprehended at Stansted Airport by the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command, who proceeded to arrest him on suspicion of preparation of acts of terrorism, contrary to Section 5 of the Terrorism Act 2006. The individual has been connected to extreme right-wing terrorism and a search of an address in Hastings has been conducted in relation to the individual. The individual has since been released on police bail as it is not believed they pose an immediate risk to the public. He is expected to return to court in December 2021.

A second arrest took place on Sunday 5th December when a [44-year-old man was arrested](#) on suspicion of possession of an article for a purpose connected with terrorism, and collecting information of a kind likely to be useful for terrorism. He was arrested under sections 57 and 58 of the Terrorism Act 2000 respectively. The man was arrested prior to boarding an outbound flight. There is not believed to be any link between the two individuals.



Derby Man Arrested on Suspicion of Making or Possessing an Explosive Substance

An incident in [Derby involving explosives and the evacuation of 50 houses](#) is not, as at the time of writing, said to be related to terrorism. Police attended a premises resident on King Alfred Street, Normanton, Derby, with warrant on Sunday 5th December. The man, who has not been identified,

was arrested at the premises and remains in Police custody. An Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team attended the scene to make the area safe.

Notable Dates/Events

Key Religious or National Celebrations

There are significant days for several religions and nations throughout December. It is not only important to be mindful of these dates to celebrate our diverse society, but also because several terrorist groups have been known to select these days to carry out their actions.

Notable dates in December include:

- 6th December – Last day of Hanukkah – a Jewish celebration
- 24th December – Christmas Eve – an international event
- 25th December – Christmas Day – a Christian celebration and international event
- 26th December – Boxing Day – an international event
- 26th & 27th December – Bank Holidays – a national event
- 31st December – New Year's Eve (Gregorian calendar) – an international event



Demonstrations

- Every Thursday and Sunday – outside Costa Coffee, High Street, Carshalton, London – Anti-Vaccination protests
- 6th December 09:00 – Cannock Magistrates Court, The Court House, Wolverhampton Road, Cannock – Birmingham Palestine Action are organising a protest to show support for two pro-Palestinian activists who are appearing to answer charges arising out of the blockade of the Elbit owned UAV Engines factory in Shenstone, Lichfield in January 2021.
- 6th December 07:00 – Leansdale Backyard Butchers, rear of 350 Stratford Road, Birmingham – Animal rights protest
- 6th December 08:00 – St Merryn Meat/Kepak Ltd, Penygarnddu Industrial Estate, Merthyr Tydfil – A vigil to “bear witness” for animals en route to slaughter
- 7th December 15:30 – Cairo House, Greenacres Road, Oldham – Palestine Action, Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Oldham Peace and Justice are continuing to host protests at Elbit Ferranti
- 7th December 07:00 – H.P. Westwood abattoir, 15 Eastgate Street, Chase Terrace, Burntwood – A vigil to “bear witness” for animals en route to slaughter
- 9th December 10:30 – MBR Acres, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire – Anti-Vivisection Protest
- 11th December 13:00 – Jubilee Square, Woking – Anti-Vivisection Protest

The Increased Terror Threat Level and what it means this Festive Season

Corps Focus: Security Issue of the Month

As highlighted in the [Corps Relay Special Bulletin](#), the murder of Sir David Amess on 15th October 2021 and the explosion outside the Liverpool Women's Hospital on 14th November 2021, were instrumental in the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) raising the UK's Terror Threat Level from "substantial" to "severe". This change is to indicate that it is believed that an attack is no longer just likely, rather it is highly likely, and the public should maintain increased awareness as a result of this.

There will be numerous factors that determined this change was necessary, which will likely include the fact that two successful attacks, conducted so closely to each other, have the potential to encourage other individuals that are contemplating carrying out similar actions. The two recent attacks were both examples of Self-Initiated Terrorist (SIT) and there is a risk that other lone actors that are becoming radicalised could see these as a sign or opportunity to take their own plans to the next level.

Another key factor that is also likely to have been included in the decision to increase the threat level is the upcoming events season. During December/January there are a wide range of festivities, including the celebration of multiple religious holidays and New Year in the Gregorian calendar. This means there are a number of seasonal events that could potentially be targeted, from religious ceremonies and gatherings in both places of worship and in community settings, to public social events including hospitality venues, the German Markets, public ice-rinks, and other community events.

One of the key points noted in the Manchester Arena Inquiry was the failure to reflect the national terrorism threat level in the site's own threat assessment. Indeed, it was noted that despite the national terrorism threat level being "severe" at the time of the Manchester Arena Bombing, the Operator had placed the venue risk assessment for the threat from terrorism at "low". Whilst the Operator have stated this was not linked to "penny pinching", the key point that should be maintained here is that during times of increased risk from terrorism, risk assessments should reflect this and demonstrate the countermeasures that are being used to protect the location and those using the facility.

A new Winter/Christmas Vigilance Campaign has been launched by Counter Terrorism Policing which offers a digital toolkit to help business partners be prepared this year. This is one of many tools available to help businesses and the public identify and help prevent terrorism. This should be used alongside other available resources such as the [ACT Awareness Training](#) (with specific courses for Security Professionals and Non-Security Professionals), the ACT App, and the [See, Check, and Notify \(SCaN\) training](#) from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI).



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