

CORPS RELAY

Prepared by: Mike Bluestone & Neil Shanks

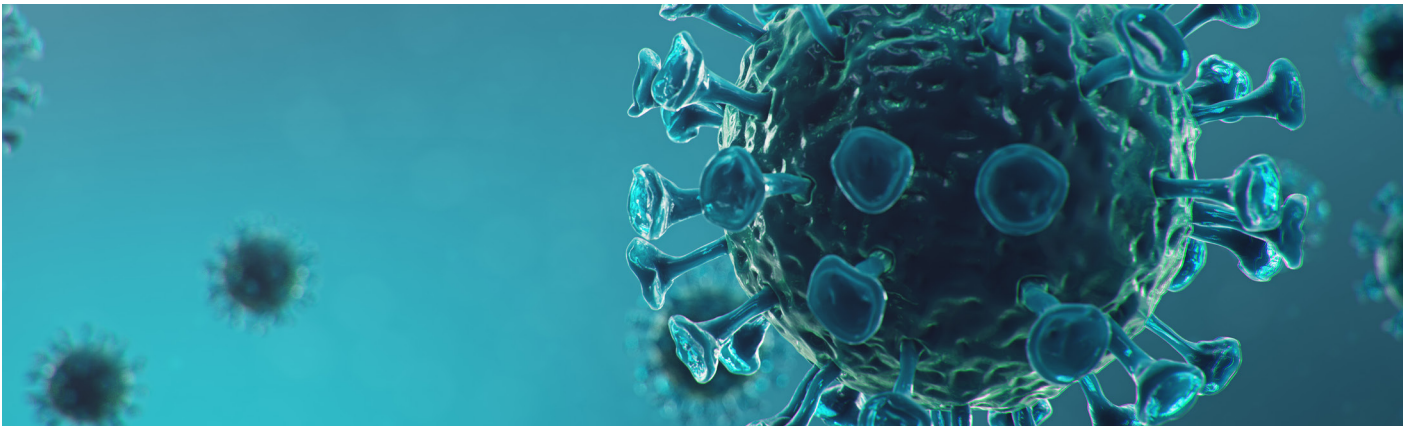
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CORPS
SECURITY

COVID-19: UK COVID response

The UK continues to operate at different levels of COVID response with some areas having reduced their restrictions significantly. Local regulations/rules are still being applied by some businesses and organisations, such as Transport for London, although these are not necessarily supported by legislation or government directives.

Details of the current COVID restrictions for each area are available from the associated .GOV website.



Travel Safely

The public outcry after the murder of Sarah Everard in 2021 has resulted in a spotlight being shined on the topic of personal safety whilst commuting. Whilst there has been a particular focus on the safety of women, the tools that have been developed are open to everyone. The Police are currently piloting a service named [StreetSafe](#) which allows members of the public to inform the Police of areas they “...felt or feel unsafe, because of environmental issues, eg street lighting, abandoned buildings or vandalism and/or because of some behaviours, eg being followed or verbally abused.”. It should be noted this service should not be used for reporting crimes or incidents as these should always be reported via 999 or 101 (depending on the severity).

A number of other services have been reported on in the media, including the existence of telephone lines people can [call and speak live to an operator if they feel unsafe whilst travelling](#). There has been an increase in personal safety apps being made available to consumers, many of which replicate some of the functions of the internationally tried and tested [Corps Guard app](#), turning a smartphone into a personal safety device.



MI5 Warning – Chinese Agent Infiltrated Parliament

In January MI5 issued a warning that [Parliament had been allegedly infiltrated by a Chinese agent](#). This alert is an unusual step and followed a long-running investigation into Ms Christine Lee. Ms Lee, who runs a law firm (Christine Lee & Co,) with multiple offices in the UK, is believed to have been acting on behalf of the Chinese Communist

Party when she has made donations to a number of politicians since 2014. It is believed that the intention was to interfere in UK politics rather than to attempt to steal UK secrets, and as such, does not directly contravene any specific law. This incident shows that the insider threat is very real at all levels of society, not only in the corporate world.

Photography is not a crime (PINAC)

The [Metropolitan Police](#) have published a helpful [guidance page on detailing people right in relation to photography/PINAC](#). This is not only important in ensuring that people's rights with regards to photography are protected, in terms of both knowing what individuals are and are not allowed to do, but also as a reminder that photography is a powerful tool that can and is used by terrorists in the preparation stage prior to an attack taking place.



Anti-Vaxxers

An investigation by Bloomberg News is reporting they have found evidence Anti-vaccine protestors have been prevalent throughout much of the pandemic however there has been a change in approach recently. One of the more concerning groups to arise, Alpha Men Assemble (AMA), were addressed in the [January Corps Relay](#). The language used by AMA suggests groups should go even further than the group actually responsible for the [storming of a COVID-19 testing centre](#) in late December resulting in one [staff member being attacked](#).

A great amount of scrutiny has been placed on the Anti-Vaxxer movement. The Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) have found that not only was

the [majority of Anti-vaccination propaganda on the internet created within a 12-month period](#), but also that the majority of individuals claiming to be medical/political leaders were based in America. The CCDH have also reported that [Anti-vaxxers have been specifically targeting minorities and parents](#) in an attempt to dissuade them and their families from getting vaccinated. The rhetoric being used by some Anti-vaxxers has caused great offence, not least for the [likening of the approach towards Anti-vaxxers to the plight of the Jewish people during the Holocaust](#). This approach has drawn criticism from the Israeli government as actively helping to stoke anti-Semitism worldwide at a time when anti-Semitism is already on the rise.

Current National Threat Level

On Wednesday 9th February the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) and the Security Service (MI5) reduced the UK National Threat Level from Terrorism from 'Severe' to 'Substantial'. This is the first decrease in the threat level since it was raised to 'Severe' on 15th November 2021. The Threat from Northern Ireland-Related Terrorism remains at 'Severe'.

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**

Substantial is lower than the previous grading of 'Severe', with 'Substantial' meaning an attack is likely, as opposed to 'Severe' which means an attack is highly likely.



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

Notable Dates/Events

Key Religious or National Celebrations

There are significant days for several religions and nations throughout February. 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 February include:

- 1st February – Chinese New Year – an international event
- 2nd February – 2nd Anniversary of the Streatham Stabbing – key event anniversary
- 4th February – Vasant Panchami – a Hindu celebration
- 14th February – St Valentine's Day – a Christian celebration
- 3rd February – Anniversary of the World Trade Centre Bombing – key event anniversary
- 28th February-1st March – Great Shiva Nigh – a Hindu celebration



2nd Anniversary of Streatham Stabbing

At approximately 14:00 on Tuesday 2nd February 2020 Sudesh Amman attacked a man and a woman on Streatham High Road. The attack involved Amman stabbing the man and woman with a knife he had just stolen from a nearby store, before being shot dead by Police responders. A second woman was injured at the scene of the shooting, however, the only fatality in this incident was the attacker, Amman. In addition to the stolen knife, Amman also had a fake suicide vest on.

29th Anniversary of the World Trade Centre Bombing

This year marks the 29th anniversary of the World Trade Centre bombing. Attackers detonated a urea nitrate–hydrogen gas enhanced device concealed within a truck at the base of the North Tower. The attack failed to topple the building as intended but did result in 6 fatalities and injured 1042. Six people were arrested and charged for their involvement in the attack.

Demonstrations

Insulate Britain

Insulate Britain were very active prior to the COP26 summit that took place in October 2021. The tactics used garnered a large amount of public criticism as blockading major roads and motorways caused severe disruptions to thousands of people. The use of super glue to “lock-on” during protests was a key feature of Insulate Britain protests and attempts were made to create an [offences of both locking-on and going equipped to lock-on](#) (whereby it causes or is likely to cause serious disruption) as part of an amendment to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill however the Bill is yet to be passed. Recently a spokesperson for the Insulate Britain group has admitted that their [road-block protests failed, but insists that they are “...just getting started”](#). The group have indicated they intend to restart their reinvigorated campaign in Spring.

Extinction Rebellion (XR)

XR published the [XRUK Strategy 2022 document](#) at the end of January, as well as an [overview of its contents](#) for those that do not want to read the full 46-page document. Their stated mission and goals do not appear to have changed, although the document contains rhetoric of increased activity and pressure in 2022. They make a clear commitment of continuing to conduct activities that are likely to result in their members being arrested and ask for further support from people in supporting those that are. They have gone as far setting a goal of a minimum of 3000 XR members at risk of arrest in 2022.

The next official “Rebellion” is set for 10:00 Saturday 9th April (Hyde Park, London). XR have also asked for a pledge from their members to:

1. Making a commitment to recruit five new rebels or more to come to a Heading for Extinction talk in the run-up to Rebellions, and/or
2. Making a commitment to host or organise three Heading for Extinction talks in the run-up to Rebellions, and/or
3. Making a commitment to mobilise three new rebels or more to come to ‘the April Rebellion’.

XR have a sub-group called “[Informal Dissent](#)” supporting them with advice and guidance on potential legal challenges that protestors can face. The section on “Going to a Protest” includes an interesting insight into their views on the legality of protest and it is worth any businesses/security teams that feel XR may be a challenge they face to familiarise themselves with this. The “[Frequently Used Laws at a Protest](#)” section is of particular interest as it may give an indication of their tactics and it suggests what they believe they can and cannot do legally (please keep in mind that in some instances it is their intention to get arrested).



Ukraine

Corps Focus: Security Issue of the Month

The situation in Ukraine continues to develop daily. Ukraine and Russia have a long history together, with Ukraine gaining independence from the Soviet Union on its dissolution in 1991. In 2014 Russia successfully annexed Crimea from Ukraine although many in Ukraine and elsewhere believed this constituted an invasion of Ukraine at that time.

The West are currently warning that a Russian invasion of Ukraine is imminent, whilst Russia deny any intention to do so. President Joe Biden has stated that a Russian invasion is a [distinct possibility](#) and the US intends to [move approximately 3000 troops](#) to the Ukrainian boarder with Russia. Reports have stated that up to [5m people could flee Ukraine](#) if a Russian invasion does occur. The UK has sent Special Forces troops to assist with training to Ukraine, and has promised to [send 350 troops to Poland](#).

Whilst many Western leaders share a similar perspective on the current crisis, there are concerns that Europe/NATO may not be united on any actions/sanctions to be taken if required, with Germany being highlighted as a potential outlier. [France, Germany, and Turkey have reached out to President Putin](#) in an attempt to avoid any conflict, however, it was [President Emmanuel Macron who met with President Vladimir Putin](#) on 7th February to mediate a resolution.

The large amount of uncertainty regarding what will happen and any consequences that may follow require continued monitoring.



Market House
85 Cowcross St
London
EC1M 6PF



07890 590352
Neil Shanks



intel@corpssecurity.co.uk
www.corpssecurity.co.uk