

# CORPS RELAY

## Special Bulletin

Recent Civil Unrest in the UK

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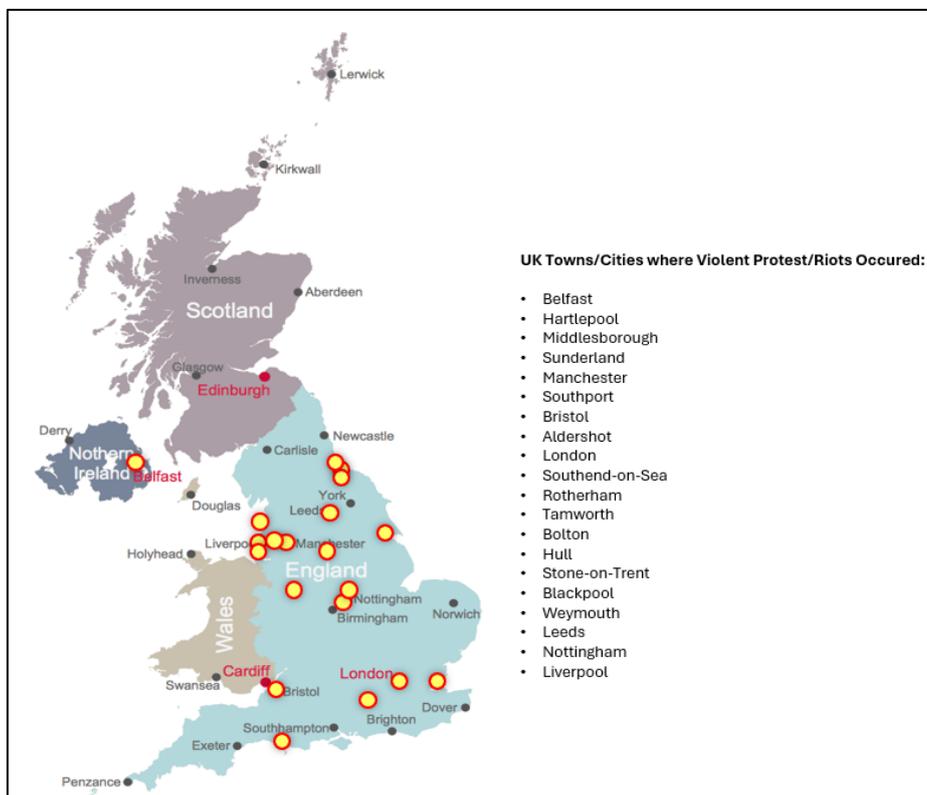
**CORPS**  
— Est. 1859 —  
**SECURITY**

## Recent Civil Unrest in the UK

In the seven days since the dreadful attack at a Taylor Swift themed dance class in Southport, the UK has been subjected to multiple violent protests and riots. These riots have resulted in over 250 arrests, with over 110 arrests in London alone. It is likely we will see significantly more arrests once those inciting violence online have been identified, as well additional perpetrators that are identifiable once CCTV, body worn camera, and social media video footage have been analysed.

These mark the greatest period of civil unrest experienced in the UK in recent history, with the sheer volume, nature, and dispersal of violent events within a condensed period of time making management by the authorities incredibly difficult. Furthermore, there is no sign to indicate an end the hostilities, just as there is no indication to show when the next events will occur. This is largely due to the decentralised and independent nature of these events, each event occurring through local groups rather than having any consistent national direction or association with a specific organisation/entity. Whilst there are a number of organisations that are linked to the events that are occurring, the organic nature of the demonstrations over the past week have been a defining factor.

Following on from demonstrations and riots in Aldershot, Hartlepool, London, Manchester, Southend, and Southport, this weekend saw a further 56 gatherings (either violent or peaceful), including violent incidents in Belfast, Blackpool, Bolton, Bristol, Hull, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Rotherham, Stoke-on-Trent, Tamworth, and Weymouth. These incidents resulted in assaults on both police officers and bystanders, missiles thrown, shops being ransacked, flaming bins being rolled/thrown at police, and arson attacks on hotels believed to be housing asylum seekers. The locations affected over the last week are depicted in Fig 1. below.



**Fig 1. UK locations of reported violent disorder since 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

The majority of incidents have been contained to city and town centres, although there have been some instances where these have proceeded into residential areas. The residential areas more affected by these incidents have generally been those with a higher concentration of ethnic minority residences or businesses owned or operated by ethnic minorities.

Whilst there are undoubtedly people demonstrating to show their disgust for the horrific attack in Southport, these riots demonstrate a hijacking of this tragic event by others, largely the far-right, and the disorder has been perpetuated through misinformation by individuals seeking to further their own political and social beliefs. Whilst there are some claims of state sponsored misinformation, it is undeniable that far-right figures and sympathisers, such as Tommy Robinson (real name Stephen Christopher Yaxley-Lennon) and Andrew Tate, have perpetuated false claims about the perpetrator of the Southport attacks, eliciting an angry response from their followers. This has resulted in a series of demonstrations and riots that have been largely anti-Muslim, anti-immigration, and in some cases, anti-Government.

The rhetoric of many of these gatherings has been one of “taking back” the country, often depicting Muslims and immigrants as those threatening to, or being responsible for, the perceived threats to British and Northern Irish nationals. Given that the perpetrator of the Southport attack, Axel Rudakubana, is British born to Christian parents, there is no connection between him and the Muslims and Muslim places of worship, nor the hotels housing asylum seekers in Rotherham and Tamworth, that have been targeted. Whilst the behaviour of the rioters is always unacceptable, the argument that it was initially believed by many that the perpetrator an illegal Muslim immigrant is also void as it was quickly confirmed to be false when Radakubana’s identity was publicly revealed by Andrew Menary KC, removing any speculation.

## Counter-Protests

There have been a number of instances of violence where demonstrators have encountered counter-protestors. This includes examples of anti-racist protestors in Middlesborough chasing protestors away from the Mosque, with some counter-protestors being shown holding potential weapons. The clashes between protest groups have been equally problematic for security purposes, as there have been a number of instances where both protestors and counter-protestors have been seen to use or hold weapons. This has resulted in reports of battles and clashes between the groups in a number of locations, with the clashes in Bristol being described as a “running battle”.

## The English Defence League, Hooliganism, and Far-right Groups

The events of the past week have almost become synonymous with the English Defence League (EDL) and the Far-Right. The EDL officially operated between 2009-2011 as a far-right party in response to the presence of an Islamist group that was founded in Luton around the same period. The EDL was founded by Tommy Robinson, in connection to a number of Football Hooligan Firms, as a social movement and pressure group. The EDL employed street demonstrations as its main tactic in its opposition to Islamism and Islamic extremism.

Tommy Robinson claims that the EDL closed down over a decade ago, however, there is significant evidence that elements of it continued to operate quite openly through social media until recently. The EDL had Facebook pages for

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each of its 17 regional chapters which were maintained until Facebook suspended their accounts in April 2019. The EDL also maintained a radio program through BigTalkRadio until April 2021, with over 1000 episodes available.

Whilst the EDL doesn't officially exist any longer, there have been signs that the EDL and EDL affiliates participating in the recent riots. A "North East Infidels" flag, and offshoot of the EDL, was identified at one of the events in Sunderland. Furthermore, Merseyside Police reported that EDL supporters were prominent when rioters clashed with police outside Southport Mosque on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024. As a result of the apparent recent resurgence of the EDL in association with these riots, Home Secretary the Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP is considering making the EDL a proscribed group, therefore stating the EDL to be a terrorist organisation banned under UK law. Other splinter groups include the North West Infidels, South East Alliance, and Combined Ex-Forces



*Fig 2. English Defence League Flag*



*Fig 3. North East Infidels Flag Stock Image*

The EDL had connections to a number of individuals that received conviction for terror related offences, including two EDL supporters that were convicted in 2011 of plotting to bomb a mosque in Stoke-on-Trent, and even a link identified to Anders Behring Breivik, the Norwegian neo-Nazi responsible for the 2011 Norway Attacks (killing 77 people).

It should also be noted that there have been private posts being shared on messaging services, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, from individuals associated with far-right groups and Football Hooligan Firms, calling for the Firms to come together to march against the perceived threat from Muslims in the UK.

Patriotic Alternative, a separate far-right group, are also likely to be highly involved in the recent troubles. Patriotic Alternative, a splinter group of the British National Party (BNP) are known to have been involved in similar activities last year, including a violent protest outside a hotel in Knowsley (Liverpool) housing asylum seekers, and a protest against a drag queen storytelling event outside Tate Britain (London) which deteriorated into clashes with counter-protestors.



*Fig 4. Patriotic Alternative Flag*



*Fig 5. British Movement Flag*



*Fig 6. Football Lads Alliance Flag*

There is also evidence that suggests other far-right groups, such as the Football Lads Alliance and British Movement (also known as British National Socialist Movement), may be involved. Please note the flags for the various groups shared above as these can be used to identify the allegiances of those participating in the protests.

## Response to the Threat

Whilst the Government and Police are responding to the threat, including the use of dispersal orders and calling a COBRA meeting, individuals, communities, and businesses need to ensure they take reasonable precautions to protect themselves.

In addition to the Guidance and Advice shown overleaf, Corps Consult would also advise businesses ask the following questions:

- Is your premises potentially at risk?
  - Is your premises near a location at elevated risk linked directly to this even e.g a Mosque or Muslim owned premises, an asylum centre or housing facility, a police station, a Government office/building, a major transport hub, or within an area associated with high protest activity.
  - Is your business, or the area around you at potential risk of being targeted directly?
  - Is it possible that your premises could become involved indirectly e.g. as an alternative route for protestors?
  - Do you have any items that may be targeted by protesters e.g. items that can be easily at the front of your premises?
  - Do you have multiple, freely accessible points of access around your premises?
- Are your staff or customer potentially at risk?
  - Is there a risk associated with coming to or from your premises or the surrounding location?
  - Is there a risk if an individual is associated with your business by protest groups?
  - Do you have a means of communicating to people in the event of an emergency?

If the answer to any of these is yes, or you are unsure of how to proceed, you should consider:

- Monitor local activity – If there is no risk activity within your area there is no need to adjust your operations, however, you should be prepared to take reasonable steps should the situation develop/change.
- Monitor National Activity. If there is an escalation, revisit your contingency planning.
- How will you communicate to your staff and customers if you need to advise people to stay away e.g. use of a mass notification system, or via email.
- Revisit your evacuation plans and ensure that an emergency evacuation will not place those leaving the building in a hazardous position – it may be better to use a dispersal and remote check in practice than to use a muster point close to an area where a protest is occurring.
- Consider what will happen in the event that hostile activists enter your premises? Would this result in implementing your dynamic lockdown/invacuation plan, or would the premises be evacuated? Who will make this decision and how will the people in the building be notified of what action to take?
- If there is an increased risk, operate on reduced number in the office where possible, utilising remote working as an alternative to reduce the number of people traveling to the office.

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- Consider partial and fully lockdown procedures for the premises. It may be sensible to consider reducing the number of authorised ingress/egress points for your standard operations during this time, with the points in use under supervision from your security team.
- If you must remain operational in areas where there is a risk of civil unrest, ensure there is a safe area(s) inside the building you can move people to in the event there is an incident. As it is unknown how long such an instance could last, you should also consider basic things are accounted for, including access to toilet facilities, sufficient provisions of food and water, sufficient space for people rest, communication channels, and a means to monitor developments, either directly or via a third party.
- Where buildings are left unoccupied, where possible, engage in remote monitoring, ideally through an Alarm Receiving Centre such as the Corps Monitoring Centre.
- Where staff are operating in a building on reduced numbers or lone working, utilise check calls, lone worker devices, and panic alarm buttons

Corps Consult will continue to monitor these events and share information on activism and demonstrations through the usual channels. Given the ever evolving nature of the current situation in the UK, it is likely there will be additional activism briefings shared at this time.

## Special Bulletin Guidance & Advice

Due to the high level of planned protest activity across London & the UK, there is a high potential for significant unrest and disruption. Corps Security teams should be fully briefed in advance and be prepared to react as per contract specific emergency plans.

### 1 - Be a Hard Target, not a Soft Target

- Restrict both pedestrian and vehicular access to authorised persons and vehicles only – Stop Tailgating, check identification and record all visitors and contractors.
- Be able to physically secure and “lockdown” your premises in an emergency.
- Prepare and practice your “invacuation” procedure to secure people within the building, the same way you practice your evacuation plan for getting people out the building.
- Have the right calibre of trained people in place, including well trained Security teams.

### 2 - Keep Informed, Keep Communicating

- Maintain a good flow of intelligence and information, including close liaison with local police.
- Always ensure that Security teams are alert to suspicious behaviour, record it and report it (internally or to the authorities if deemed necessary). Remember, if in doubt, **Report It**.

### 3 - Get Ready, Stay Ready

- Ensure that Contingency and Emergency plans are in place, up to date and are easily accessible for all relevant personnel.
- Carry out regular tests (including Penetration Tests) and drills of all security and safety systems, taking remedial action for any weaknesses that are identified.
- Implement both internal and external security audits to identify and remove vulnerabilities.

## Useful Numbers

| Event  | Agency                         | Number        |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>If an attack is happening</b>                                       | <b>Police</b>                  | <b>999</b>    |
| If you see something suspicious  | Anti-Terrorist Hotline         | 0800 789 321  |
|  |                                | <i>or</i>     |
|  | Police                         | 999           |
| If you would like any guidance or support with your security operation | Corps Security Central Support | 0141 378 7000 |