CORPS RELAY

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CORPS
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SECURITY

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 – Martyn's Law (UK)

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, commonly referred to as Martyn's Law, received Royal Assent on 3rd April. The legislation is named in memory of Martyn Hett, one of the 22 victims of the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017. The Government has also formally recognised the contributions of Figen Murray OBE, Martyn's mother, whose advocacy played a pivotal role in advancing this legislation.

Martyn's Law is designed to enhance public safety by ensuring that premises and events are better prepared to respond to the threat of terrorism.

The Act introduces a tiered framework based on the number of individuals it is reasonable to expect may be present at a given premises or event at the same time:

- Standard Tier (Schedule 1): 200 to 799 individuals (including staff).
- Enhanced Tier (Schedule 2): 800 or more individuals (including staff).

The legislation covers England, Scotland and Wales and applies to a wide range of publicly accessible locations, including concert venues, arenas, shopping centres, public squares, and local authority-managed sites. Schedule 3 extends the Act's applicability to open land without buildings when used for public events.

Qualifying Persons & Enforcement
The responsible person is defined as the individual or organisation in control of the premises or event for a scheduled use. Enforcement will be managed by a newly established regulatory function within the Security Industry Authority (SIA), which will oversee compliance and provide guidance.

Key Requirements
Standard Duty Premises (200–799 individuals):
Responsible persons must:

- Register the premises with the SIA
- Implement, as far as reasonably practicable, appropriate public protection procedures

These procedures should provide practical guidance for staff to follow in the event of a terrorist incident on or near the premises. They should include actions such as:
- Evacuation and invacuation (moving individuals to a place of safety)
- Lockdown protocols
- Communication strategies for informing people on the premises

Standard duty requirements are intended to be low-cost and proportionate, focusing primarily on planning and staff preparedness. There is no requirement for physical security infrastructure.

Enhanced Duty Premises and Qualifying Events (800+ individuals):
In addition to the standard requirements, responsible persons must:
- Implement, as far as reasonably practicable, public protection measures to reduce both the vulnerability of the premises or event to a terrorist attack, and the risk of physical harm to individuals in the event of an incident. This may include enhanced monitoring of the premises and surrounding areas.
- Document all protection procedures and measures in place (or planned), including an assessment of their effectiveness in reducing risk and vulnerability. This documentation must be submitted to the SIA.
- Designate a senior individual (where the responsible person is not an individual) to oversee compliance with the Act's requirements.

New figures highlight increase in Retail Crime UK

According to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), shoplifting across England and Wales has seen a sharp rise. Police recorded 516,971 shoplifting offences in the 12 months to December 2024, representing a 20% increase from the previous year and marking the highest total since the introduction of current data collection methods in 2003. It should also be noted that this has taken the number of recorded shoplifting offences in England and Wales over a 12 month period to over 500k for the first time since records began.

This surge has coincided with a broader uptick in theft-related crimes, prompting concern among retailers about both financial losses and staff welfare. The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) has suggested that the actual scale of the issue may be greater, as a significant number of cases are believed to go unreported.

The growth in shoplifting is part of a wider pattern of escalating retail crime, including a marked rise in violence and verbal abuse directed at retail employees. Data from the British Retail Consortium (BRC) indicates that over 2,000 such incidents occurred daily during 2023/24. Retailers have responded by ramping up investment in security measures, though the financial burden remains considerable. In response, the government is pushing forward the Crime and Policing Bill, which includes the creation of a specific criminal offence for assaults on retail workers, alongside expanded police powers aimed at tackling retail-related offences.

The Protect Strategy

Following last month's discussion on the Prevent strand of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, this article turns to Protect, one of the four key pillars of the UK Government's CONTEST framework.

The Protect Strategy is aimed at strengthening the UK's defences against terrorist threats and reducing the potential impact of an attack. This involves a coordinated effort across multiple sectors, including government agencies, emergency services, local authorities, and the private sector.

Counter Terrorism Policing, supported by Counter Terrorism Security Advisors (CTSAs), plays a pivotal role in delivering the Protect Strategy. These efforts are supported by initiatives such as Project Servator, a national policing tactic designed to deter, detect, and disrupt a range of criminal activity while providing visible reassurance to the public.

For further details on the Protect Strategy and related initiatives, National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) have published these via the ProtectUK website (below). ProtectUK serves as a central hub for guidance, resources, and updates on protective security measures. https://www.protectuk.police.uk/

Social Media Monitoring

Analysis of recent activity by our Security Intelligence Analysts has identified the following trends on social media relating to specific sectors and activist groups:

1 - Industry Monitoring

In the past month, the education and hospitality industries have been the two most significantly referenced sectors in social media conversations about activism (as shown in Image 1 and 2 below).

Hospitality – Within hospitality, the hotel industry had a significant amount of conversation over the last 30 days linked to a specific video posted on X. The caption of the video states "A large group of migrants arrive in Dublin, Ireland, at a nice hotel prepared for them. An Irish woman on the street's shouts, "go back to your own country: we don't want you here." Good for her". The video shows approximately 30 people, stated to be migrants (although their status has not been confirmed), walking to the entrance of a hotel, with a female recording them walking while shouting phrases that are displayed in the caption. This video was retweeted over 12,000 times and viewed over 3.5 million times. The overwhelming sentiment of people viewing and sharing this video had a negative connotation towards it, with the largest audience of people engaging with this also grouped with those that support British Patriotism. The large spike that occurred in this video is the overarching reason for the large volume in conversation, and with this settling itself down after a couple of days with no significant conversation thereafter.

Education – There has been no specific spike that led to a significant surge in conversation in relation to education this month, however within the UK the large volume of conversation appears to be from posts discussing a lack of training in the education sector, leading to gaps in key roles in public services, most notably from dentistry, which has been met with negative sentiment. There also appears to be positive engagement in relation to the chancellor providing additional funding for essential skill gaps within the UK. Of significance from a security perspective, despite not occurring within the UK, there has been a larger than average visibility and conversation in relation to the US, and specifically foreign students at universities within the country that have had their visas revoked. There is overwhelming negative sentiment in relation to this, and there have been large scale demonstration in the US. Given the emotive topic of this, and how Donald Trump seems to polarise opinion, there is a realistic possibility of this demonstration emigrating to the UK, almost certain to be aimed at the US embassy, where previous US policy has caused protest within the UK.
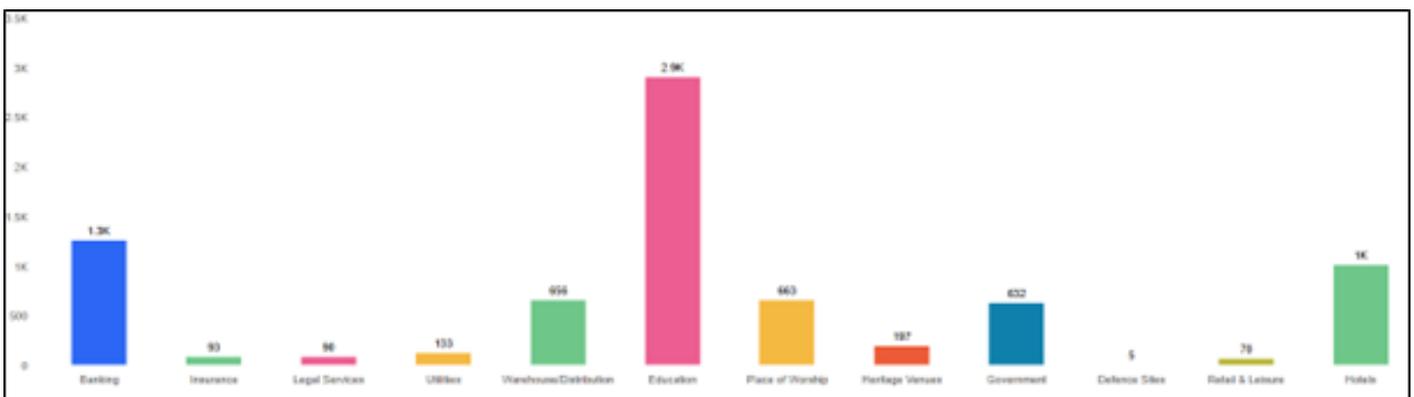

Image 1: This graph shows education in pink and hotels in green. While banking in blue had a higher mention among social media than hotels, these comments were not significant in relation to activism and could be discounted, with no specific topic standing out.
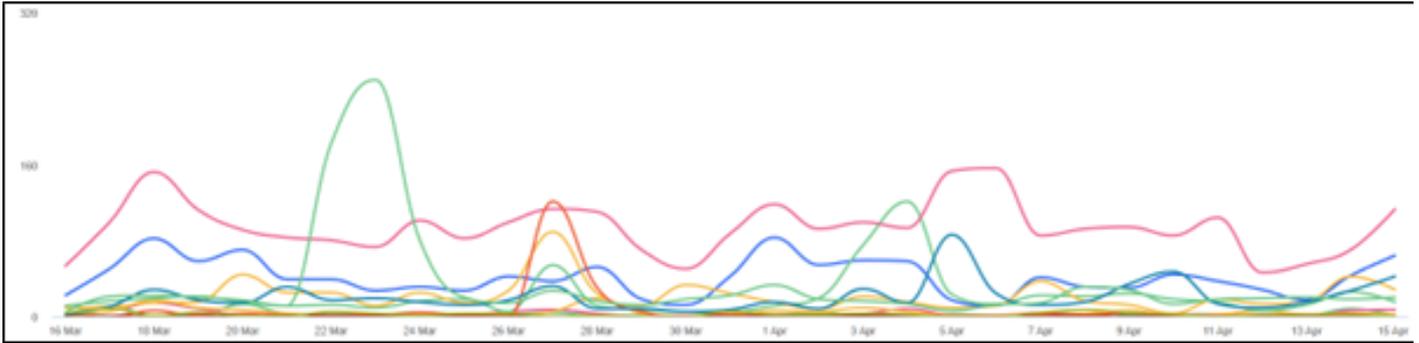
Image 2: The green line displays conversation linked to hotels, which displays a significant spike around 23rd March, due to the video described above.

2 - Activism Monitoring

Youth Demand (YD)

The figures show that Youth Demand have the largest and most significant voice within the current activism groups. This includes their direct output and how much others are speaking about them (see Image 3 below). The overwhelming sentiment on social media towards YD is anger, and this is now causing physical flashpoints while they conduct their month of action around London. There are mainstream news articles reporting on the activity of YD during their disruption, where they are moving around central London causing roadblocks and multiple activists have been arrested. Already, members of the public appear to be tiring of their actions, and there have been images, videos and articles published of members of the public interacting with YD, physically moving and pushing them from the road. While there is some public sympathy for the group on social media, including from some left leaning media outlets, there is very little positivity towards the group. YD have stated they will not stop their protests and have now started to conduct ad-hoc unannounced demonstrations in London. Given the disruption they are causing, there is a realistic possibility of major disruption on the road network in London over the next few weeks, with considerable flashpoints and hostility in these areas as members of the public vent their frustration. At present this appears to be mimicking the actions of Just Stop Oil 18 months ago, along with the public sentiment, where in general the public may agree with the overall messaging of YD, but are already becoming frustrated at the group's actions, and do not agree with the disruption they cause.
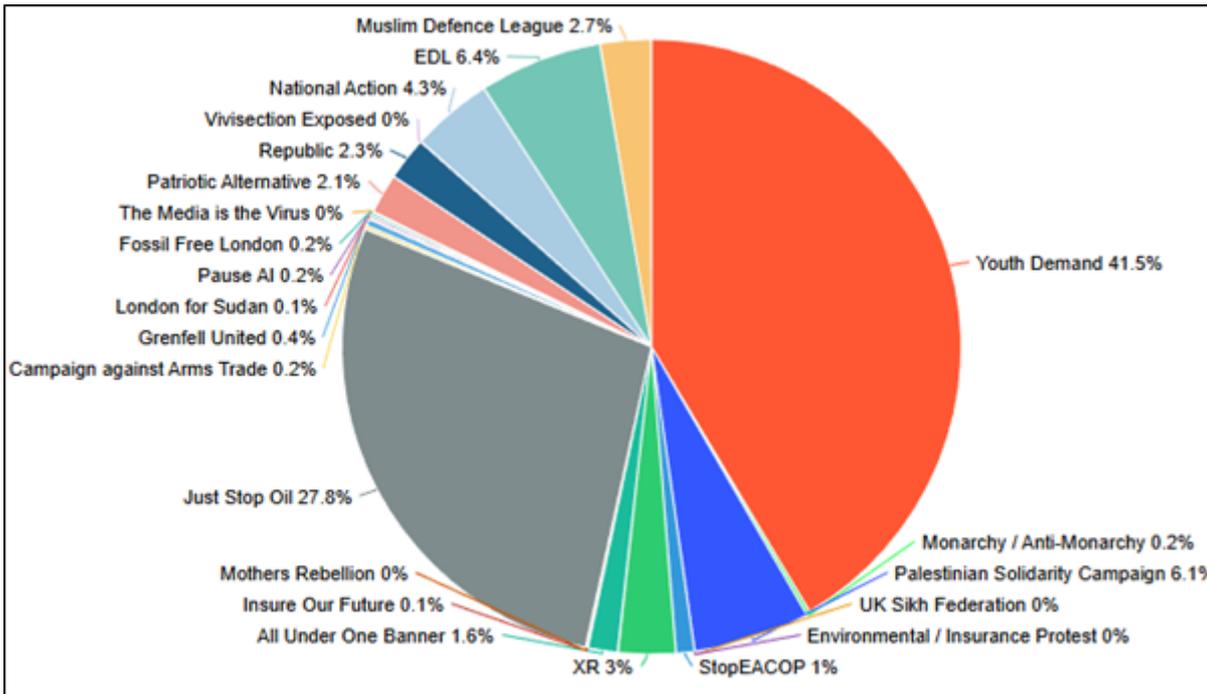

Image 3: This graphic shows which activism group is being spoken about the most, with Youth Demand having the significant share. While Just Stop Oil also had a large proportion, this was mainly due to their announcement that they would cease activity, and not of their activism itself.

Pro-Palestinian Activism

Following the recent actions of the Palestine Action Group, pro-Palestinian protest is the overwhelming share of voice for events, protests and demonstrations being spoken about in the last 30 days (see Image 4 below). While the conversation above regarding YD appears to show a negative sentiment towards that group, the sentiment towards physical pro-Palestine events appears to be more mixed. While anger is the overwhelming sentiment, this appears to be aimed at protesters but also at the policing of these demonstrations. A share of the voices show anger at the disruption protest groups are causing, while others are criticising the police for curtailing the protests, as an infringement on free speech. On social media, the conversation in relation to the arrests of protesters also appear to have mixed support. It is within the pro–Palestinian activism debate there is conversation about the police allegedly treating some groups differently, with claims from some groups that pro–Palestinian activists are being afforded more lenience than other groups. One of the larger audiences engaging with this content is linked with British Patriotism, and the phrase "two tier" is being used to describe the actions of police at some of the demonstrations. A large voice believes the police are not doing enough and should make arrests quicker, with this compared to far right rioting during the summer of 2024. There is certainly nothing to suggest a flare up that was witnessed last summer during the Southport riots, however, there is a realistic possibility of counter demonstrations by those who consider themselves national patriots, if there is still large-scale disruption during YD's month of action.
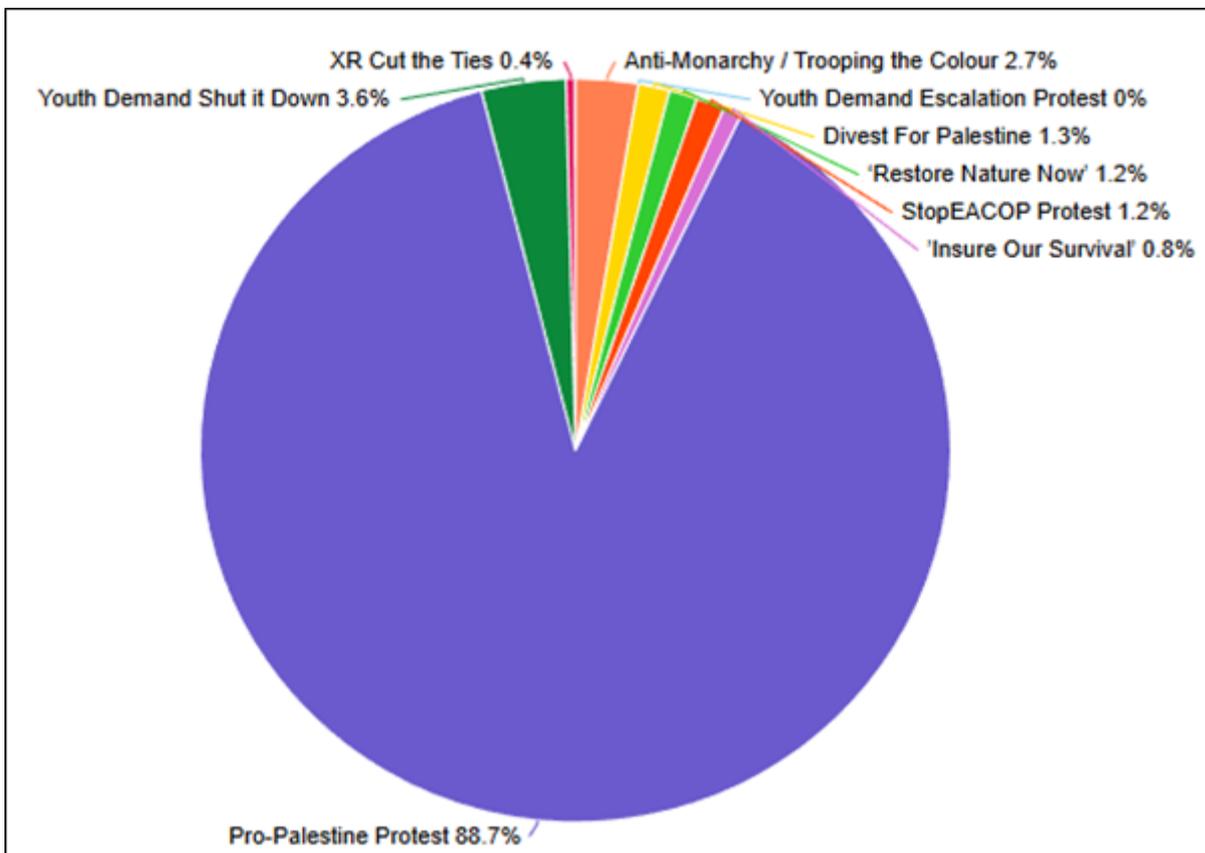

Image 4: This graphic displays the share of voices in relation to events that are occurring, with Pro-Palestine protest by far the significant share of conversation.

Current National Threat Level

The threat to the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) from terrorism is SUB-STANTIAL

The threat to Northern Ireland from Northern Ireland-related terrorism is SUBSTANTIAL

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

Two men arrested in west London for suspected links to Hezbollah

Detectives from the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command arrested two men in west London in connection with Hezbollah. A 39-year-old man was arrested in northwest London on suspicion of being a member of a proscribed organisation, preparing for terrorist acts, and involvement in funding terrorism. A second man, 35-years-old, was also arrested in west London on suspicion of being a member of a proscribed organisation. The investigation is focused on activity overseas and within the UK, and while searches at five addresses have been completed, authorities believe there is no imminent threat to the public. Both men have been released on bail until mid-July.

Kent Man Convicted of Sharing Terrorist Material Online

Leo Walby (19) pleaded guilty to six counts of disseminating terrorist material, in violation of Section 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006 (TACT). He has also admitted to one count of failing to disclose a password following a legal notice, contrary to Section 53 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

Walby was arrested in Swanley, Kent, as part of a proactive investigation conducted by officers from the Counter Terrorism Command. Officers found evidence that Walby had been sharing various posts sharing extreme Islamist-related terrorist material, including Daesh propaganda through various social media accounts he was controlling. He remains in custody and is scheduled to be sentenced in May 2025.

Man Sentenced for Sharing Terrorist Publications and Supporting a Terrorist Organisation

Hakan Barac (29) has been sentenced to three years and nine months' imprisonment after pleading guilty to five counts of disseminating terrorist publications and one count of supporting a proscribed organisation.

Barac admitted his support for the Islamic State, an offence investigated by Counter Terrorism Policing Wales. He was sentenced at Bristol Crown Court following the conclusion of the investigation and legal proceedings.

Understanding the Coded Language of Social Media

Corps Focus: Security Issue of the Month

Following the national impact of Adolescence, the four-episode psychological crime drama series shown on Netflix, the use of coded terms via social media has come to the attention of an audience that previously had no awareness of its use. For anyone that is not familiar with Adolescence, the show, created by Jack Thorne and Stephen Graham, centres around a 13-year-old schoolboy who is arrested following the murder of a girl in his school. The series introduces a number of themes impacting the youth of Britain at the moment, including coded language adopted by younger people today.

Coded language on social media refers to the use of indirect communication methods, such as slang, abbreviations, symbols, and memes to convey meaning. This form of expression is often employed when addressing sensitive topics, circumventing platform moderation, or signalling affiliation with specific communities or subcultures.

Code language is seen most on the following platforms:
- TikTok – Users frequently misspell words to avoid bans (e.g., "s-word" for "suicide")
- Twitter/X – Irony, political memes, and "If you know, you know" culture
- Instagram – Aesthetic-coded posts with veiled captions
- Reddit – Heavy on in-group jargon per subreddit
- Discord/4chan – Even deeper layers of coded language, often edgy or controversial

Types of coded language

Users employ a variety of methods to obscure direct language on social media, often to evade automated content moderation systems (algorithms) that may flag or restrict certain terms, potentially resulting in account penalties or bans. In addition to altered spellings and euphemisms, memes and inside jokes are frequently used, relying on imagery, catchphrases, and irony to convey messages implicitly. Below are several common methods of coded language, along with illustrative examples:

Slang and Abbreviations Examples:
- 'unalive' – which avoids the use of the word suicide or kill
- 'spicy content' – referring to adult content
- 'Emoji' or 'lettuce' – weed (marijuana)
- 'IYKYK' – used to hint at inside jokes or obscure reference

Euphemisms and Misspelling Examples:
- 'seggs' – which is a coded word and would be used to replace the word sex
- 'eating disorder' – 'ED' or 'ee-dee' or using emojis or altered text/spelling
- 'al1ve' or '1ife' – replacing part of the text with a number

Memes and Inside Jokes
- Using a character or clip (e.g Breaking Bad scenes) – subtly reference toxic behaviour or controversial opinions
- 'Dog whistles' – coded political messaging

Emojis as Code

- = violence
- = intelligence, or oral sex (depending on context)
- = butt
- = someone sneaky or deceitful
- = clown behaviour (mocking someone)

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Corps Focus: Security Issue of the Month

Irony and Tone Shifting

Social media users often speak in code and use irony to avoid being taken literally or to critique something/someone.

- 'so real for that' – may refer to when someone does something controversial (used either seriously or sarcastically)
- 'this you? + a screenshot or short film reel' – calling out hypocrisy in a passive aggressive manner

In conclusion, coded language on social media is continuously evolving, what is considered covert, or subversive today may become mainstream or subject to regulation tomorrow. This dynamic has been brought into sharper focus following the airing of the drama series Adolescence, which has highlighted the complexities and implications of this form of communication.

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