

CORPS RELAY

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Date: September 2021

CORPS
SECURITY

COVID-19: Cases rise as immunity wanes

Post lockdown Britain has seen a predictable rise in COVID-19 cases, however, the extent of the rise may have been faster and greater than some expected. The latest figures for [England](#) show daily new cases reaching nearly 40,000 again, with death rates once again over 100. [The infection rate is 26 times higher](#) than the infection rates in England at the same time in 2020. [Scotland](#) is seeing their highest ever COVID-19 infection rates, whilst [Northern Ireland](#) is the worst hit part of the UK with 1 in every 40 people estimated to be infected.

The public are enjoying events that they have missed out on attending for nearly two years, including [live music gigs/festivals](#) and sporting events such as football. This high level of mixing will invariably transmit more COVID-19, and coupled with the reports around the [greater virility of the Delta variation](#), the increase in cases, hospitalisations and fatalities is partially explained. The new information about the long term [waning of immunity from vaccinations](#), which see immunity decrease to as low as 67% within 4 months, also has a likely effect on this. It should be noted that being vaccinated reduces the chances of the

individual suffering serious effects from catching COVID-19 but does not prevent that individual acting as a carrier of the virus. In response to this, the Government has authorised a programme of booster jabs for the over-50s as well as vaccinations for the 12-15 age group.

The [increase in UK travel corresponds with the increase in COVID-19 cases](#) around the UK and there have been [calls in Wales for a ban on travel for unvaccinated individuals](#) if the infection rates continue to rise. Wales has been a very popular holiday destination for Britons taking “staycations”. Despite the boost to the economy the influx of people holidaying in the UK has brought, the [UK economy is beginning to stall](#) due to a shortage of some workers and supplies. These shortages can be seen with the temporary closures of some of our [supermarkets](#) and [restaurants](#). National shortages have strong historic ties with the growth of ‘black market’ goods. This means that the longer these shortages go on, the greater the likelihood of a resurgence of a black market in certain goods becomes.

Quarantine Hotel Harassment



The controversy over COVID-19 Quarantine Hotels has continued with more claims of [women being harassed by the Security Guards](#) working there. There have been 18 incidents of lone females in Quarantine Hotels being harassed by male Security Guards reported to the BBC alone, with the total figures of incidents reported being unknown. The rules in Quarantine Hotels require that residents remain in their rooms at all times unless they are being escorted outside by a Security Guard. Nearly 124,000 people had been through the Quarantine Hotel system by mid-July 2021, by which point the [Department of Health and Social Care made changes to the rules](#) requiring that all lone females be escorted by either one female Security Guard or two male Security Guards.

Gender Gap in Front-Line Security

Continuing from the Quarantine Hotels section, the necessity to provide an alternative option to same sex escorts for lone females highlights one of the biggest challenges within the front-line security sector. The change requiring two male Security Officers to escort a lone female, whilst not welcomed by all, is necessary due to the gender gap within the front-line security sector. Figures show a gender gap in sectors with traditional links to security, such as females representing

only [26.9% of Police Officers](#) (all levels) and approximately [10.7% of intake into the Regular Forces](#). The fact that [females account for only 11% of front-line Security Officers in the UK](#) (rising to [25% in the US](#)) continues this trend and challenges security providers to find ways to attract more women into the sector.

Hikvision Controversy

Hikvision has been placed in the international spotlight again following claims that their cameras are being used in Uyghur internment camps in China. The claim was made in a [parliamentary report](#) published on 8th July 2021 and Fraser Sampson, Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner England & Wales, wrote an [open letter](#) to Justin Hollis, Marketing Director, Hikvision UK & Ireland, regarding the claims in the report. Hikvision have refused to deny their involvement, preferring to state that the company respected human rights and “It is beyond our capability to make a judgement on this matter, particularly against a backdrop where the debate surrounding the Xinjiang issue comes with clashing geopolitical views.” (Justin Hollis). This resulted in [criticism from Professor Fraser Sampson](#), who said: “If your company wasn’t involved in these awful places wouldn’t you be very keen to say so?”.

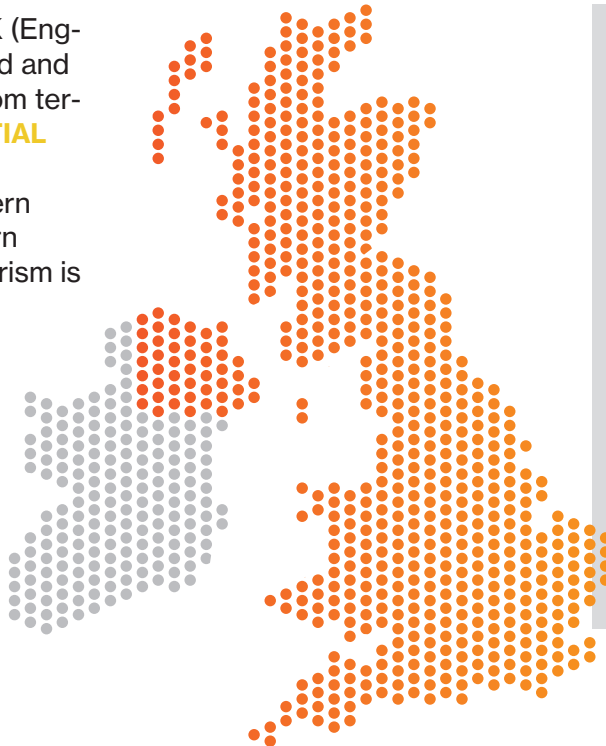
Hikvision (along with Huawei, Dahua, ZTE Corps and Hytera Communications Corp) came under scrutiny in 2018 when the United States [Federal Communications Commission \(FCC\)](#) adopted a [rulemaking measure to ban their products](#) on the grounds of national security. The ban came into effect in 2019. The cameras were [widely used across the US](#) and despite the ban, it is likely that they remain in use following the ban. The ban was put in place due to the belief they could be used by the Chinese Government for espionage purposes and the revelation that the [banned systems/devices are highly vulnerable to being “hacked”](#).



Current National Threat Level

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**



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 September. 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.

For a full list of key dates, events and demonstrations, please view the "Corps Events Calendar" in CorpsSecure, our online customer portal or app.

Notable dates in September include:

- 5th-6th September – Rosh Hashanah/Jewish New Year (5781) – a Jewish celebration
- 10th September – Suicide Prevention Day– an international event
- 11th September – 20th Anniversary of the 9/11 attacks – key event anniversary
- 16th September – Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement – a Jewish celebration
- 21st September – First Day of Tabernacles – a Jewish celebration
- 27th September – Hashana Rabbaj – a Jewish

celebration

- 28th September – Shemini Atzeret – a Jewish celebration
- 29th September – Simchat Torah – a Jewish celebration
- 29th September – Michaelmas Day – a Christian celebration

20th Anniversary of 9/11

The events on 11th September 2001 were marked in the collective memory of the majority of adults in the Western World. [The terror attacks](#) of 11th September 2001 are arguably the most publicised and well known of recent history and the events on that day directly influenced the decision of the United States and the United Kingdom to invade Afghanistan in October 2001. The decision of the US and NATO forces to withdraw from Afghanistan at this time, weeks ahead of the 20th anniversary of the iconic terrorist attack that led to the occupation of Afghanistan by foreign forces, is certainly noteworthy. Given the current situation within Afghanistan and fears internationally about the potential for al Qaeda/Taliban sympathisers or sleeper cells within Western countries, it is definitely worth ensuring there is an additional awareness on security around this anniversary.

Demonstrations

Many protests were planned for September by various protest groups such as XR (multiple targets throughout September), animal rights protests groups, anti-vivisection protest groups, anti-child grooming groups, and anti-substandard homes constructors, at various locations throughout the country.)

Insulate Britain

During the past few weeks. Demonstrations by the 'Insulate Britain' protest group have taken place at various junctions of the M25. On 20 September, 41 people were arrested.

The protest blocked the anti-clockwise exit slip road at junction 18, Chorleywood, Herts, on Monday 20 September. A separate protest took place near junction four (Stanborough Interchange) of the A1(M), near Hatfield. A third incident saw Kent Police prevent protesters from gaining access to the M25 carriageway at junction 1a, the Dartford River Crossing. The force said officers attended at 08:30 BST and arrested 12 people on suspicion of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance.

Hertfordshire Police said 13 people were arrested at the M25, where the road had been partially reopened, and 16 at the A1(M). The force said officers had been called to the M25 at 08:12 BST and to the A1(M) protest just minutes later.

Further disruptive activity by this group cannot be ruled out.

Extinction Rebellion (XR)

XR were very busy during the beginning of September with the "Impossible Rebellion" and

whilst they shared a number of key dates around this time, they did not publicise the locations of events planned during September. Instead listed the events as:

- 1st-3rd September Rebellion Continues – Occupations continue, High Impact Actions building pressure across the week to a finale, Digital Rebellion, and Hubs continue.
- 4th September – Nature Rebellion March – organised by our sister movements and After Party.

They signed off their events details by stating "Expect more details and actions to be added very soon and others to be a surprise!".

Following the "Impossible Rebellion", XR intended to protest and blockade the Defence and Security Equipment International Event at the ExCel Centre (E16 1DR). Whilst the event was open between the 14th-17th September, XR were proposing to set up a camp to inhibit those hosting stalls at the event. The camp was to be set up between the 6th-13th at the East Entrance (what3words location likes. funny.pokes). They also indicated they would try to infiltrate and disrupt the event as and when it is open.

While about 60 people gathered in Royal Albert Way, which leads to the ExCeL London centre prior to the four-day Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) event started Tuesday, September 14, the event appears to have passed without incident.

XR have also expressed their support for Insulate Britain during September.





The Impact of Recent Events in Afghanistan

Corps Focus: Security Issue of the Month

The recent events in Afghanistan have been all over both the traditional media and social media. The occupation of the country by NATO forces is due to end after all the NATO nations followed the US in their decision to [withdraw their troops by 11th September 2021](#), the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attack, which was later moved to 31st August 2021. The [UK completed its last evacuation flight](#) on August 29th.

The Taliban has taken control of the country once again and has issued a [warning to the US of "consequences"](#) if they do not meet the promised deadline of withdrawal by the 31st August. This message was followed a few hours later by reports of a [bomb blast at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul](#), the airport the UK and US were using to evacuate people from. As the details of the incident became clear it was identified that there was a single, powerful explosion at approximately 18:00 local time, outside the Abbey Gate to the airport.

The explosion was caused by a single suicide bomber who had walked into the middle of the families at the gate hoping to be evacuated before the device was detonated. The attack resulted in at least 95 fatalities and approximately 150 other people injured. The victims included 13 US military personnel being killed and a further 15 being injured.

The terrorist attack in Kabul directly impacted the evacuation plans of many countries including Turkey withdrawing their troops after providing security at the airport for 6 years, and many other nations including Germany, Canada, and the Netherlands announcing they would no longer be able to conduct flights.

There was relatively little awareness in the West of the group responsible for the attack, the [Islamic State Khorasan Province or ISIS-K](#), prior to this attack as they were believed by many to have been defeated in 2019/20. ISIS-K were founded by former members of the Pakistani Taliban, Afghan



The Impact of Recent Events in Afghanistan

Taliban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and are strategic rivals to the Afghan Taliban. ISIS-K are affiliated with, and acting on behalf of, the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) within the Afghanistan region. Therefore, ISIS-K share the same goals as ISIS and seek to create a unified Islamic state in the region, rather than individual states.

The group's recent actions have seen awareness of them reach the World stage with [President Biden stating there will be consequences for their actions](#). On 29th August, the [US launched a missile attack](#) on a vehicle that was said to hold a suicide bomber planning to attack Kabul Airport. The vehicle was carrying explosives which are believed to have [triggered a secondary explosion](#), meaning the attack resulted in a number of fatalities including the alleged suicide bomber and three children.

However, it transpired that the missile attack was a tragic mistake. The drone strike targeting terrorists in Afghanistan mistakenly killed innocent civilians, including children, Pentagon officials have now admitted, in a very rare public apology.

The Taliban, as well as potentially other groups in the region, are believed to have [accessed a large number of weapons and vehicles following the withdrawal of US forces](#), although the greater worry for many nations will be the threat that the change of Regime may pose domestically rather than with weapons held within Afghanistan. Whilst there is no publicly available evidence to suggest any specific threats domestically, the attack that occurred in [New Zealand](#) is an example of an already radicalised individual responding to this development by committing an act of terrorism. Therefore, it is possible that the threat level in the UK could soon be raised to severe once more based on threats posed by Taliban/al Qaeda sympathisers and sleeper cells in the coming days, weeks, and months. However, despite the threat level remaining at 'Substantial' for the present, it is imperative that a high level of security awareness regarding areas such as hostile recognisance, suspicious behaviour, and unidentified bags/packages/vehicles be maintained within the UK.



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