



Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism in the UK

FULL REPORT

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This report aims to provide a qualitative overview of extreme right-wing terrorism (ERWT) and related offending in the UK between 1999 and Summer 2022 based on open-source reporting. You can find all the outputs from this project at: www.crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/timeline-extreme-right-wing-terrorism-in-the-uk/

ABOUT CREST

The Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST) is funded by the UK's Home Office and security and intelligence agencies to identify and produce social science that enhances their understanding of security threats and capacity to counter them. Its funding is administered by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC Award ES/V002775/1).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

- This report aims to provide a qualitative overview of extreme right-wing terrorism (ERWT) and related offending in the UK between 1999 and Summer 2022 based on open-source reporting.
- Current understandings of extreme right-wing terrorism (ERWT) are dominated by internationally high-profile attacks such as Christchurch and Buffalo. The recent history of ERWT in the UK is more mundane and differs from the ‘cultural script’ established by high-profile attacks.
- This report focuses only on right-wing terror attacks, plots, and additional terrorism offending. It does not cover all violence related to right-wing extremism. Nor does it cover non-violent but still serious harms such as harassment and trolling.

DATA & METHODS

- The unit of analysis in this dataset is sentencing decisions as this was the most consistently reported fact about individual cases.
- To be included a case needed to fall into one of three categories, an extreme right-wing terror attack (attackers), an extreme right-wing terrorist plot (plotters), or additional terrorism offending linked to extreme-right beliefs (additional offending).
- To be identified as a terrorist attack an incident needed to be both clearly motivated by extreme-right beliefs and demonstrate the intention to bring about political or social change.
- Data was collected from a range of sources including: original research by the team,

secondary reporting by campaign organisations and law enforcement, and consultation with subject matter experts.

- The available data was considered limited for several reasons, including a likely recency bias in reporting.
- The limitations of the categories used and the data mean that this report should not be considered comprehensive. All headline figures relating to extreme right-wing terrorism should be interrogated carefully.

FINDINGS

- 14 extreme right-wing terror attackers were identified in the UK between 1999 and Summer 2022. Of these one attack resulted in multiple fatalities, three resulted in a single fatality, and the remainder were none lethal, although two resulted in serious injury.
- All but two of the 14 attackers acted alone. Some cases included known group affiliations but none of the attacks were directed by a central authority.
- 22 plots were included in the dataset, all but two of them lone actors.
- There were 54 additional terrorism offenders in the dataset. The majority of offenders held some organisational affiliation. This category included the only two women in the dataset.
- Overall, the analysis suggests that right-wing terrorism in the UK is a continuous threat and there have been a steady stream of attack and plots since 1999.
- The number of additional terrorism offenders

not engaged in attacks or plots began to rise dramatically in 2018 as a result of the proscription of National Action, and an increased willingness to charge right-wing extremists with terrorism offences.

- Extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK differs substantially from recent high-profile attacks. It is less lethal, firearms are less frequent, and in many cases extreme right-wing terrorist attacks and plots do not generate significant policy or media interest. With the sole exception of Copeland (the London Nail Bomber), there has never been a mass-casualty right-wing terrorist attack in the UK.

EDGE CASES

- Conceptual questions and data limitations mean decisions about which cases to incorporate into the dataset were not straightforward.
- To highlight this, several edge cases have been included in the report, these are cases that are right-wing terrorism adjacent, but have not been included in the dataset. They include examples where despite criminal behaviour and convictions, actors have not been convicted of terrorism offences, as well as instances where motivations and intentions were insufficient to connect offenders to terrorism.
- A secondary objective of this report is to highlight the conceptual ambiguity surrounding extreme right-wing terrorism, suggesting that focusing on terrorism as a concept provides only a partial picture of the harms arising from the extreme-right.

CONCLUSIONS

- Broad trends indicate that the UK has to date escaped mass casualty extreme right-wing terror attacks since 1999.
- Despite this, extreme right wing terror attacks and plots are a constant feature of the UK landscape.
- In addition there has been a dramatic increase in terrorism offences connected to the extreme-right likely linked to changes in the extreme-right itself as well as state responses to right-wing terrorism and extremism.
- Data issues and low overall numbers limit the potential for in-depth quantitative analysis of these trends. Individual actors need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- These findings are an important baseline for anyone with a professional interest in extreme right-wing terrorism.
- The overall picture suggests extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK does not closely resemble the high-profile international attacks that dominate the headlines. The overall character of extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK is more mundane, features fewer firearms, and tends to be more confused and less easily identified.
- These findings also highlight the conceptual and data issue that make extreme-right wing terrorism difficult, and at times controversial, to analyse.
- The findings also suggest that headline statistics about the growth of right-wing extremism or terrorism are likely to mask quite a bit of variation and are unlikely to be sound assumptions to support analysis.

INTRODUCTION: “WHAT DO THEY ACTUALLY DO?”¹

Claims about growing extreme right-wing terrorism are plentiful (Ashby 2021; Pauwels n.d.; Blazakis & Fink 2021). One report claims that in 2019 far-right terrorism incidents increased by 320% over the previous five years (IEP n.d.: 4) However, these claims are often based on ambiguous geography and headline statistics; they give little detail of what is happening within individual countries or different parts of the extreme-right. Furthermore, claims are often reactive, triggered by high profile events, most notably the mass casualty terror attack that took place in Christchurch New Zealand in 2019 (Christchurch Call n.d.), or the Trump-inspired insurrection at the US Capitol building in January 2021 (Kaplan 2021). These reactions are understandable and if they help in bringing policy attention and research focus to a relatively under-researched area of extremism then they are useful. However, they also risk giving a misleading impression of the threats emanating from right-wing extremism. In particular knowledge about specific examples of extreme right-wing terrorism overall is low, with individual cases subsumed under a broader narrative about extreme right-wing terrorism.

Writing about the sequence of internet enabled attacks tied broadly to the Alt-Right/Identitarian faction² of the extreme-right, historian Graham Macklin (2019) argued that the combined use of manifestoes, online posting, and often livestream video established a ‘cultural script’ for right-wing terrorism. For many, attacks like Christchurch and more recently Buffalo have become almost the definitive examples of right-wing terrorism (Nilsson 2022; Obaidi et al 2021; Ware 2020). However, far from being typical, livestreamed attacks like these are only the most

prominent, clear-cut, and spectacular examples of extreme right-wing terrorism. That they have come to dominate understanding is a testament to the emergent effectiveness of livestreamed terrorism as a propaganda weapon (Conway & Dillon n.d.; Thorleifsson 2021). In contrast the day-to-day realities of right-wing terrorism are more mundane, confused, and harder to recognise.

This report is an attempt to provide a realistic overview of what extreme right-wing terrorism looks like within the UK. Its target audience are those with an interest in contemporary extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK who need a baseline for their research or may encounter extreme right-wing terrorism in their work. The report focuses on terrorism exclusively, detailing: extreme right-wing terror attacks, identified plots, and additional terrorist offending. Actors are set in chronological order to form a timeline of extreme right-wing terrorism in the United Kingdom.

There are limitations to this data discussed below, but the key point is that this is a timeline of extreme right-wing terrorism specifically, not right-wing extremism more broadly. Terrorism is only a single outcome of a range of possible outcomes related to right-wing extremism. Many of these outcomes are also harmful and they can include everything from murder, interpersonal violence, and harassment. However, the focus of this report is only on those events that are categorised as terrorism and additional harms are not considered in this report.

A key secondary aim for this report is to highlight the ambiguities that surround the concept of terrorism and the difficulties in accurately categorising complex

¹ This question was asked by a notable UK-based forensic psychologist in the context of risk assessment, suggesting that practitioners should pay greater attention to the details of index offences in their understanding of risk as opposed to relying on offender accounts. This argument was developed further in: West & Greenall 2011.

² For a broader discussion of the relationship between Identitarianism and the Alt-Right see: Ravndal 2021

phenomena, especially in the loosely organised extreme-right. For more on the definition of terrorism used in this report see below. The judgements that have gone into categorising individual events are fine, complex and often based on incomplete information.

The final conclusion of this report argues that extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK is markedly different from the cultural script established by Christchurch. The UK has had a single right-wing terrorist attack with multiple fatalities since 1999: David Copeland's nail bomb in the Admiral Duncan Pub, Soho, that killed three including a pregnant woman. In contrast the majority of extreme right-wing terrorist attacks in the UK have not resulted in any fatalities, and many of them are not readily identified as being a terrorist attack at all despite meeting the criteria for inclusion. The majority of cases in the dataset are either plotters, often with immature plans, or have been convicted of terrorism offences without ever engaging in a terrorist attack or plot.

Despite the low headline figure for fatal attacks this should not be taken as reassurance. Extreme-right wing terrorist attacks and plots have been a constant theme in the UK since 1999. Many attacks could have easily had more fatalities. Many plotters assembled fearsome arsenals of weapons (including in one case manufacturing Ricin) which could have been used to inflict mass casualties. The potential for a mass casualty event in the UK that matches the established cultural script is clearly there.

DATA & METHODS

This report is based on research done to assemble a timeline of extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK between January 1999 and June 2022. 1999 was chosen for both practical and narrative reasons. Practical in that records before 1999 tend to be even more inconsistent and difficult to access than post 1999. Preceding this date would have increased the time and resources required for the project at the expense of introducing less easily comparable data. 1999 also marks a watershed in the extreme-right in the UK as it is the year of David Copeland's series of bombings targeting minority groups in London. This is probably the UK's most infamous example of extreme right-wing terrorism. However, by starting at this year the dataset also captures a less well-known firebombing of an Asian owned shop perpetrated by a man who was reported as having a shrine to Hitler in his home, Stuart Kerr. Kerr was sentenced in November 1999 (The Argus 1999).

The unit of analysis in the dataset is sentencing decisions against individual actors rather than individual incidents or specific actors. Sentencing decisions were the most consistently reported information about actors and in many cases also revealed specific charges made against individuals. This often also avoided the need to report multiple incidents perpetrated by a single individual (e.g., an extended bombing campaign) and allowed for offences that occurred over time as opposed to a single date (e.g., membership of a proscribed organisation or possession of documents). One drawback of this approach is that sentencing usually took place a significant period of time following a specific incident meaning that dates lag the actual incidents significantly.

Data was collected through a combination of:

- An extended search of news archives and other sources by a team of interns
- Reporting and opensource intelligence by campaign groups, in particular the website far-rightcriminals.com, a list published by the group Small Steps, and Hope Not Hate (although none of these sources dates back to 1999).
- Existing knowledge and previous research by the research team
- Additional government and related reporting e.g., Europol's annual TE-SAT reporting
- Consultation and triangulation with subject matter experts

A key decision was around the criteria used to include cases in the dataset. These were determined by the need to a) keep the dataset manageable, b) be as rigorous as possible, and c) maintain the focus on terrorism as opposed to extremism. Core to this was the definition of terrorism used to select cases. This was based on two sources, the UK legal definition and the academic definition provided by Alex Schmid (2012).

The current legal definition of terrorism in the UK is set out in the Terrorism Act 2000 and a version edited for clarity is included below:³

- In this Act 'terrorism' means the use or threat of action which:
 - involves serious violence against a person,
 - involves serious damage to property,
 - endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action,

3 The full version can be read here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/section/1#commentary-c20335951>

- creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or
- is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.
- the use or threat is designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and
- the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial, or ideological cause.

This definition is not static and has evolved over time as legislation has been updated. For example, the reference to racial motivations was only introduced in 2009 (as a result of the Counter Terrorism Act 2008).

Schmid's (2012) definition is not reproduced in full here but two points covering intent and motivation are:

“10. The immediate intent of acts of terrorism is to terrorize, intimidate, antagonize, disorientate, destabilize, coerce, compel, demoralize or provoke a target population or conflict party in the hope of achieving from the resulting insecurity a favourable power outcome, e.g., obtaining publicity, extorting ransom money, submission to terrorist demands and/or mobilizing or immobilizing sectors of the public;

11. The motivations to engage in terrorism cover a broad range, including redress for alleged grievances, personal or vicarious revenge, collective punishment, revolution, national liberation and the promotion of diverse ideological, political, social, national or religious causes and objectives;”

Key components in both definitions of terrorism are the need for an intention to influence government or

intimidate the public, and the motivation to advance some sort of cause (political, religious, racial, or ideological). Both these clauses act as key limitations on the timeline as individual intentions or motivations are frequently unreported or undisclosed by actors. In other words, to qualify as an act of terrorism there needs to be some evidence of both a desire to bring about political or social change by some mechanism such as intimidation, provocation, or propagandising. Furthermore, there needed to be some evidence of an ideological commitment to a higher (extreme right-wing) cause. These are relatively high thresholds to meet.

This is by no means the only approach to considering extreme-right wing terrorism. Crucially, this approach removed from consideration identity-based violence and hate crimes where there is no clear evidence of intention to effect wider change or identifiable ideological motivation. There is an active debate on the merits of this kind of approach to right-wing terrorism. Scholars such as Pete Simi have argued that the all-pervasive nature of white supremacy (in the US) means that all racial violence should be understood as terrorism (2010). Others have argued that terrorism is a tactic and the definition should not evolve according to the ideology of perpetrators (Ravndal & Bjørge 2018). Further debate has considered the importance of planning in defining terrorism, asking if spontaneous acts of violence should or should not be considered terrorism (Sweeney & Perliger 2018). One possible solution to this dispute has been to switch the focus to severe violence as opposed to terrorism specifically (see: discussion of triangulation below). This has the effect of broadening the number of cases included but at the expense of losing a specific focus on terrorism.

In summary, no approach to extreme right-wing terrorism can be comprehensive or beyond dispute; opinions of definitions will always be open to debate. Casting the net too widely risks diluting the meaning of terrorism, overstating the threat of extreme right-wing terrorism specifically, and potentially securitising phenomena that are little to do with either right-wing

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extremist ideology or a desire to intimidate for political ends. As a result, civic, political, and social problems, are likely to then be reclassified as security problems and left to practitioners who lack the proper tools or legitimacy to respond effectively.

Conversely, too narrow an approach risks understating what is undoubtedly a significant threat, especially to minority groups, some of whom are already marginalised within UK society. Crucially, while much right-wing extremism may not meet the traditional definition of terrorism outlined above, it can still have devastating consequences for victims and the society in which they live. As an example, recent aggressive protests by UK-based far-right groups have targeted several hotels housing asylum seekers (Berrill 2021; Taylor 2021). While these actions do not meet the threshold of terrorism set out above, they are still a concerning trend both for law enforcement and victims.

The aim in focusing on a relatively narrow understanding of terrorism is not minimise the wider harms originating with the extreme-right. The most appropriate response to these debates is clarity and transparency around data, the decisions made in including cases and the limitations of any dataset. To further emphasise this point this report includes notes on how this dataset matches up with similar datasets and other claims, as well as a discussion of some notable edge-cases which have been excluded. An important secondary aim of this analysis is to foreground the complexity of making claims, especially headline quantitative claims, about extreme right-wing terrorism.

Cases needed to meet the following criteria to be included in the timeline:

- Completed extreme right-wing terrorist acts (attackers) – Sentences for acts of violence judged to meet the definition of terrorism as communicative violence. To meet this test an act must be identifiably motivated by extreme right-

wing beliefs and performed for propagandistic effect. These acts were rarely prosecuted explicitly as terrorism.

Or

- Extreme right-wing terrorist plots (plotters) – Sentences for individuals judged to have been clearly motivated by extreme-right wing beliefs and preparing to undertake a terrorist attack. Convictions can include both terrorism and non-terrorist offences (e.g., possession of explosives) where they are clearly politically motivated.

Or

- Additional terrorism offending (additional offending) – Sentences for non-violent and non-plot related terrorism offences, including encouragement of terrorism (section 1), dissemination of terrorist publications (section 2), and possessing documents useful to terrorism (section 58).⁴

Or

- Additional key developments – Such additional developments as judged important to understanding the overall picture of extreme right-wing terrorism and related violence and offending in the United Kingdom.

And

- Dates – Only cases between 1999 and June 2022 are included in the timeline.
- UK-based – Only cases based entirely or substantively in the UK are included.

LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations to this timeline. The most obvious limitation, already discussed above, is that definitions of terrorism are contested. This report attempts to be as clear as possible in setting

⁴ These offences are often described with reference to the specific sections of various terrorism acts.

out how terrorism was defined, highlighting the need to understand both intention and motivation. Emphasising this definition is particularly important against a wider public debate in which the threat of right-wing terrorism can become politicised by differing camps seeking to play up or play down threat of terrorism (Ravndal 2016: 2). These debates often take place in the context of broader discussions around counter terrorism policy and where resources and attention should be focused (Townsend 2022; Zdjelar & Davies 2021).

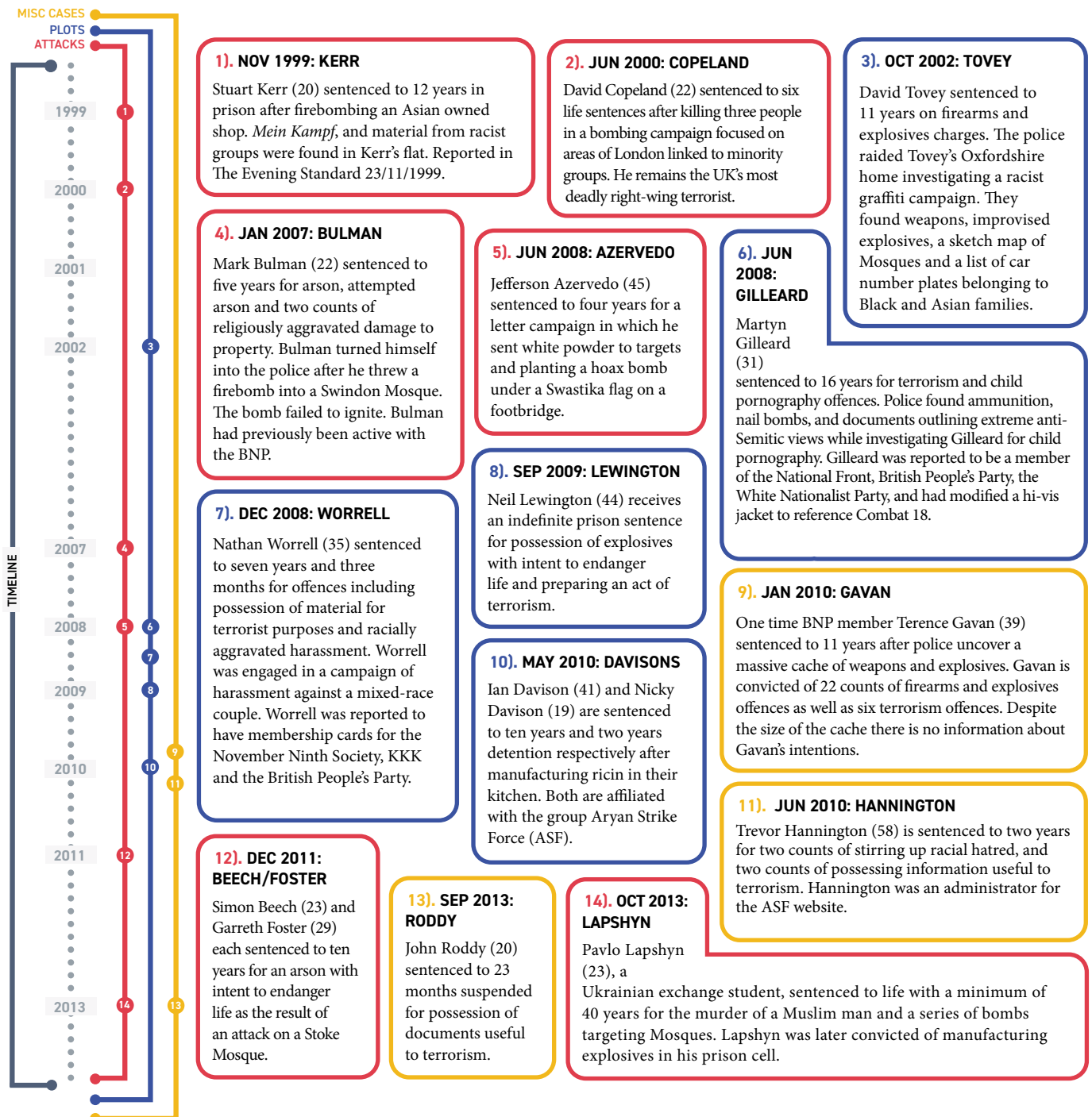
Beyond this conceptual issue however there are further limitations. For the most part these are based on the limitations of the data as opposed to conceptual or other limitations:

- The data likely include a strong **recency bias** representing recent developments differently to events that happened longer ago. This may partially be related to news values (see below) but also comes from archiving and search practices. The changes in the media landscape between 1999 and 2022 are dramatic. Much of the earlier content is harder to identify using commonly available search tools or is simply no longer online. This likely reduces the accuracy of the timeline overall and limits the comparability of events over time. Efforts to combat this have included triangulating with other data sources and expert knowledge but even these are imperfect.
- The data is also potentially affected by changing **news values**. The newsworthiness of specific events varies over time as public interest ebbs and peaks depending on sensitising events. For example, events from 2016 onwards, including the murder of sitting MP Jo Cox by a neo-Nazi and subsequent proscription of National Action, arguably increased public interest in right-wing terrorism, something that media editors were likely to have responded to by increasing coverage. Again, this means that coverage post 2016 is likely to be more accessible and detailed than coverage from before this date.
- The data is entirely **open source** and is almost entirely based on journalistic reporting. This means that only publicly disclosed plots, attacks, and offences that go on to be convicted and sentenced are included in the data. This timeline does not include events that may not have been publicly reported. Plotters may be especially affected by this bias as plots may happen entirely in secret, or not be disclosed if they are abandoned before they become actionable.
- Also linked to data are potential **reporting limitations**. A good example of this is the practice of not fully reporting charges (e.g., “a string of terrorism offences”), or abiding by reporting restrictions where an individual is involved in multiple trials simultaneously (e.g., Jack Renshaw), or where an actor is under the age of 18. In some cases there may insufficient evidence to judge if an actor should be included in the timeline or to distinguish between actors.
- Reliance on sentencing decisions means that incidents where perpetrators are not caught or are not convicted are not included in the data. This means that some events that were potentially significant were excluded.
- Lastly, and not related to data is the inherent **complexity of right-wing ideology**. The extreme-right is growing increasingly complex ideologically. While much of it remains within the envelope of defining beliefs such as neo-Nazism and fascism, those at the margins have begun to pursue beliefs that are less clearly part of the extreme-right. These include expressions of occult beliefs (e.g., Danyal Hussein) and anti-feminist beliefs (e.g., Jake Davison). Some examples are explored in more depth via a discussion of edge-cases, but many cases often defy easy categorisation as fitting right-wing belief sets. For the most part this analysis has had to rely on the available reporting rather than engaging in any original analysis of the beliefs underpinning specific cases.

TIMELINE

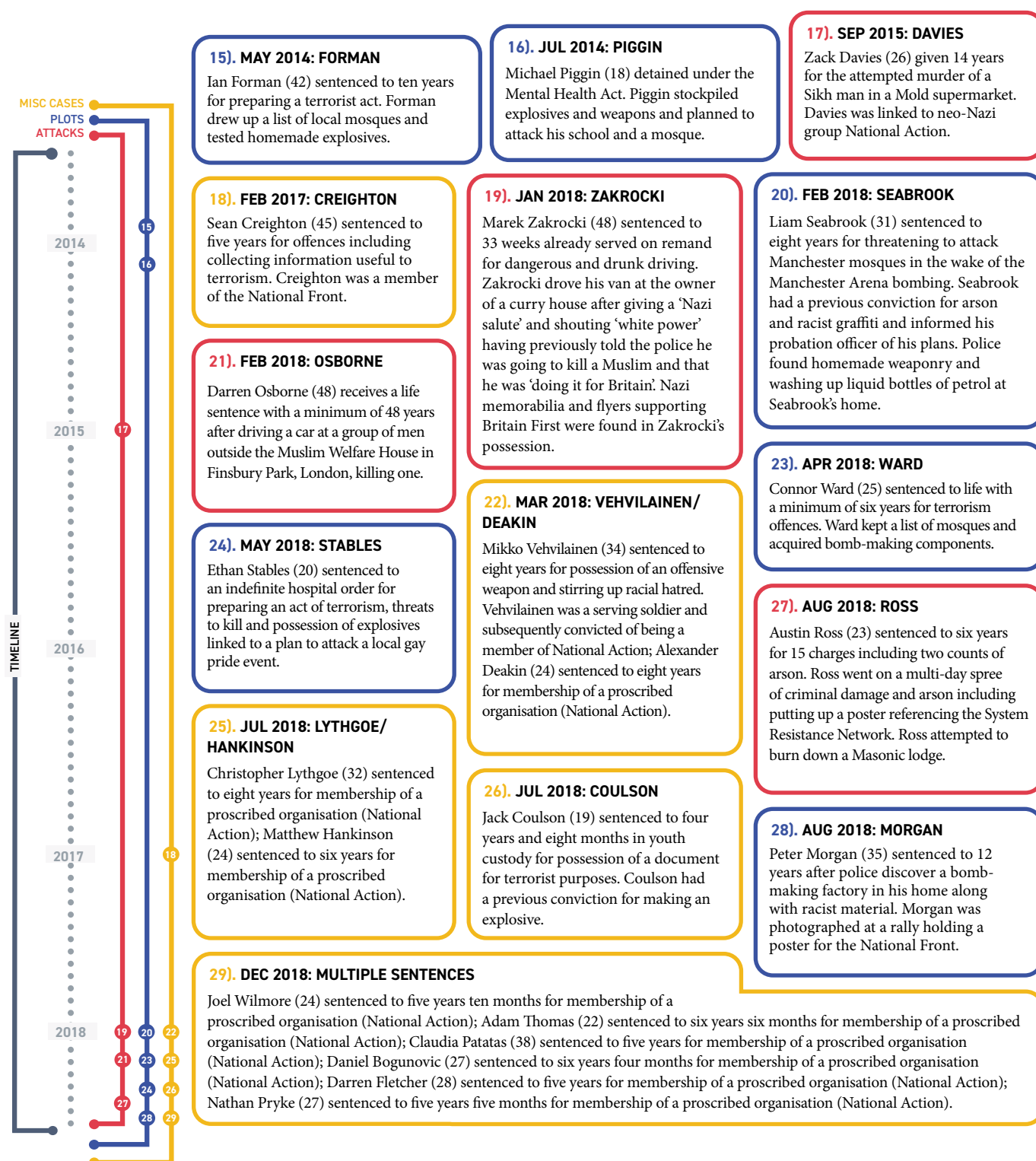
This timeline provides an overview of sentences stemming from right-wing terror attacks, plots, and offences in the UK between 1999 and summer 2022.

The timeline is intended to give some insight into the extent of offending connected to right-wing terrorism since 1999 and demonstrate the broad range of offenders, offences, and locations involved.



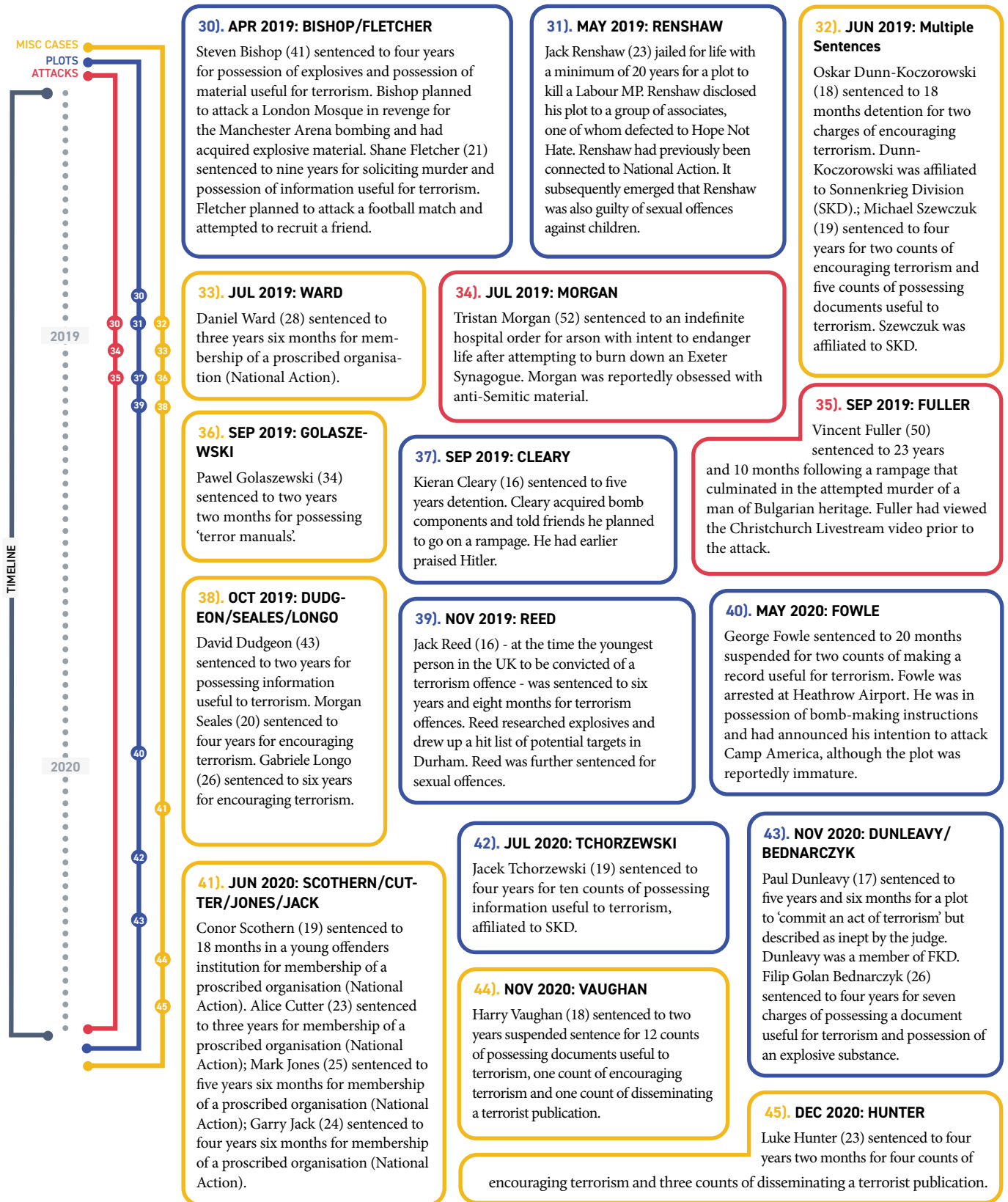
It reflects the day-to-day reality of terrorism offending originating from the extreme-right, but also highlights how much right-wing activity may not be accounted for in this type of analysis. Individual entries refer to sentences given and not the date of specific attacks or offences.

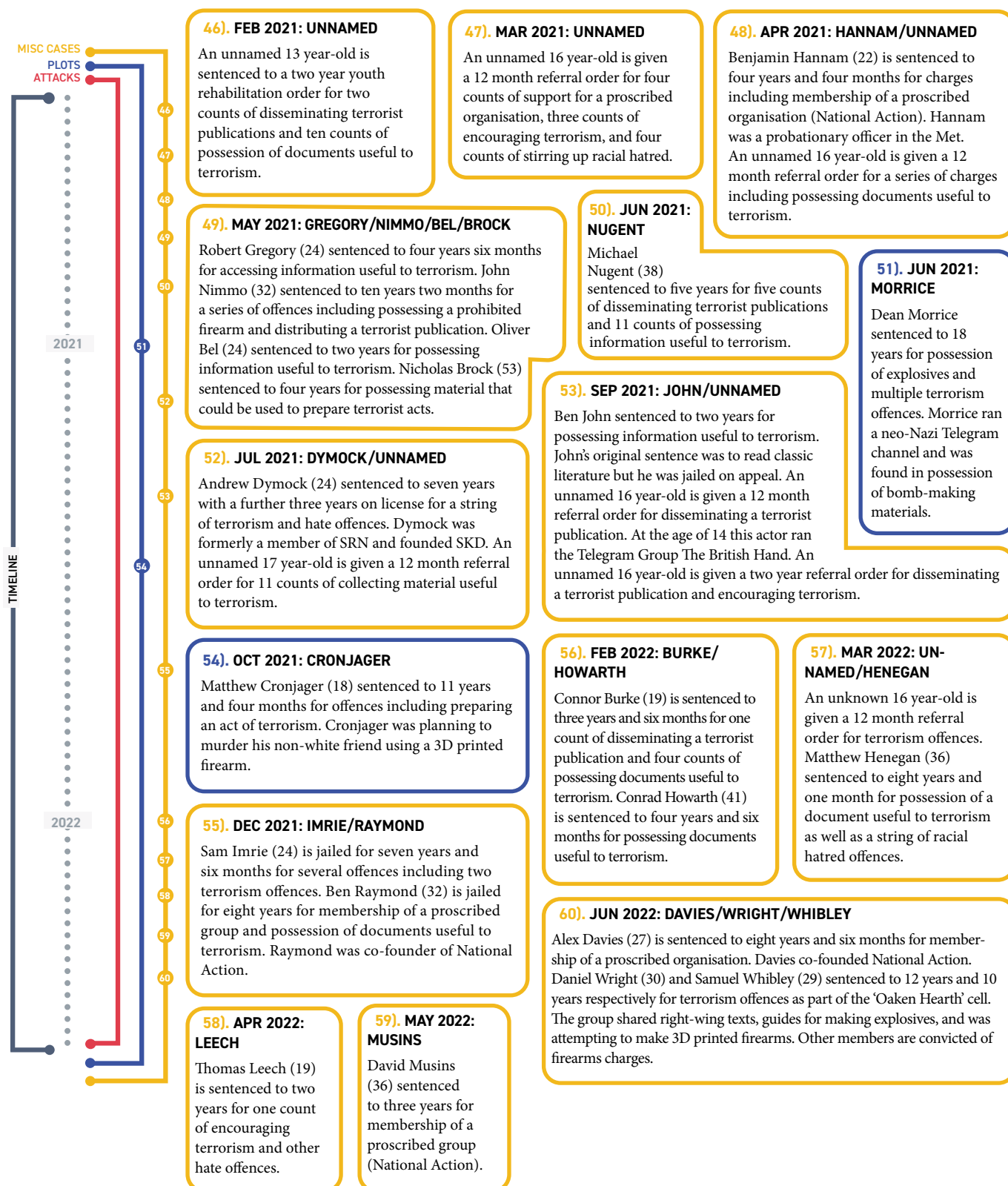
This timeline is based on open source reporting only. Definitions of terrorist attacks and terrorist plots can vary. This should not be interpreted as a comprehensive list of right-wing terrorism or extremism. This timeline does not reflect wider harms connected to the extreme-right, such as online harassment.



TIMELINE

Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism in the UK





To see the full size timeline, including an interactive, online version, please visit:
www.crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/timeline-extreme-right-wing-terrorism-in-the-uk/

FINDINGS

This section sets out the findings based on the timeline. Findings are reported in three sections covering each type of actor: attackers, plotters, and additional offenders, as well as additional sections that discuss trends over time and how well this timeline fits with other sources of data.

In total the timeline includes 85 actors: 14 attackers, 22 plotters, and 54 offenders.

RIGHT-WING TERRORISM 1999-2022

In total 14 right wing terror attacks were included in the dataset.

Of these, one attack resulted in multiple fatalities (David Copeland), three further attacks had a single fatality (Pavlo Lapshyn, Thomas Mair, and Darren Osborne), two resulted in injury only (Zack Davies and Vincent Fuller) and remaining eight resulted in no fatalities or injuries to targets. One exception to this is Tristan Morgan who was sentenced to an indefinite hospital order after setting fire to an Exeter synagogue. Morgan required hospital treatment for burns he sustained during the attack. CCTV footage of the incident clearly shows Morgan setting fire to his own hair after pouring an accelerant through the window of the synagogue (ITV 2019).

Almost all 14 attacks fit the description of lone actor terrorism. All but one attack was undertaken by a single individual, the exception being Simon Beech and Gareth Foster's joint arson attack against a Stoke Mosque (BBC 2011). None of the attacks can be described as organised in the sense that they were not directed by a command structure. However, several of the cases demonstrated some kind of affiliation to organised groups including the BNP (Mark Bulman, Simon Beech), EDL (also Simon Beech), National

Action (Zack Davies) and the System Resistance Network (Austin Ross). David Copeland was reportedly an organiser for the 1990s UK iteration of the National Socialist Movement, while Jefferson Azevedo, a postman who sent harassing letters with caustic soda and planted a hoax bomb also referenced a National Socialist Movement (Gable & Jackson 2011: 62). These are not the same organisation.

Only one of the attacks used a firearm (Thomas Mair). More common were knives (also Thomas Mair, Pavlo Lapshyn, Vincent Fuller) and explosives (also Pavlo Lapshyn, David Copeland). There were two vehicle attacks (Marek Zakroki and Darren Osborne). With the exception of Azevedo's letter campaign, arson attacks make up the rest of the attacks. Arson cases, while technically fitting the description of terrorism and therefore included in the dataset, were typically less reported on and less notorious amongst right-wing terror attacks than other modes of attack.

Attacks targeted a wide range of groups. Most frequently attacks were directed against either people presumed to be Muslim (Lapshyn, Davies, Zakroki, Osborne, Fuller) or Mosques (Bulman, Beech & Foster). Kerr attacked an Asian owned shop although reporting at the time would more typically focus on race over religion. Azevedo targeted a wide range of people and sites over an extended period, Copeland attacked areas of London associated with the black, South Asian, and gay communities, Ross attempted to burn down a masonic lodge, while Tristan Morgan attempted to burn down a synagogue.

Of the 14 attackers, the mean age was 34.5 years, older than the overall dataset by some margin. Three of the attackers (Thomas Mair, Tristan Morgan, and Vincent Fuller) were 50 or over by the time of sentencing, and two others (Mark Zakroki and Darren Osborne) were 48. The youngest attacker (Stuart Kerr) was 20 at the

time of sentencing. Of the four fatal right-wing terror attacks in the dataset, two were perpetrated by over forties, two by those in their twenties.

Amongst the 14 attackers, only one was sentenced for terrorism related offences, Jefferson Azevedo. Each of the four fatal attacks were charged as murder often with additional charges such as causing an explosion (Copeland, Lapshyn) and grievous bodily harm and firearms offences in the case of Thomas Mair. All four fatal attackers received life sentences. The two attacks that resulted in injury only (Davies and Fuller) were both charged as attempted murder. Of the remaining cases all are linked to arson attacks or in one case an attacker was sentenced to time served for assault, dangerous driving, and drunk driving. This relates to Marek Zakrocki who drove his van at the owner of a curry house after disclosing to his wife and daughter, and later the police, that he intended to hurt Muslims. Prior to the attack Zakrocki (who had consumed two bottles of wine) could be heard shouting “white power” (Mortimer 2018). He was sentenced to 33 weeks which he had already served on remand. The comparison with Darren Osborne who drove a rented van at a crowd outside a Muslim Welfare House in Finsbury Park, killing one and injuring twelve, is stark although this may be explained by details of the case not obvious from reporting. Osborne, sentenced a month later received life with a minimum of 43 years (Rawlinson 2018).

PLOTTERS

22 plotters were included in the data set.

The plotters resembled attackers in that none of them were identified as part of a wider campaign or strategy directed by another, all but one dyad (Nicky and Ian Davison) were lone actors.

There was a similar mixture of affiliations which often reflected the groups active at the time. Early plotter Martin Gilleard (sentenced in 2008) was affiliated with the National Front and British People’s Party. He had

also modified a jacket to reference Combat 18 (Press Association 2008). Nathan Worrell, also sentenced in 2008 held membership cards for the Klu Kluk Klan, British National Party, and the November 9th Society (Daily Mail 2008). Nicky and Ian Davison, a father and son who produced ricin in their kitchen were involved with a group branded Aryan Strikeforce (ASF) although there is little further detail available (Wainwright 2010). More recently Paul Dunleavy was affiliated with the Feuerkrieg Division (FKD) and Jack Renshaw was a one-time affiliate of National Action although Renshaw was not convicted of membership of National Action, only for his plot to kill Labour MP Rosie Cooper and a police officer investigating him for child sexual offences (BBC 2019). Matthew Cronjager, a teenager who acquired plans to 3D printed firearms in an attempt to murder his non-white friend, was referenced in one report as a member of the internet based Exiled 393 (Dearden 2021). Again, any further detail on this organisation is sparse.

18 of the 22 plots included explosives or petrol bombs either acquired by actors or researched by them. Most exotic was the production and storage of a small amount of the poison ricin by Ian Davison. Davison made the poison in his kitchen and stored it for two years. The prosecution claimed there was enough ricin to kill nine people, although there were no further details of what Davison intended to do with the substance (Wainwright 2010). Less common were firearms, the most prominent case being David Tovey who acquired a submachine gun and shotguns which he kept along with homemade explosives (Dodd 2002). Where firearms have featured in more recent cases they have been aspirational. In the case of Paul Dunleavy, he sought information online how to convert a blank firing pistol. His efforts were described as “inept” by the judge (De Simone 2021a).

Details of targets of plots were available for 15 cases of the 22 total plotters. The most frequent targets were Muslims and Mosques (5 cases) and non-white people (5 cases). One plot (Martin Gilleard) included a reference to targeting Jews alongside black and

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Asian people (Press Association 2008). One plot centred on an attack on LGBT people (Ethan Stables) (BBC 2018). Only one plot targeted and MP or other political figure: Jack Renshaw's plot to kill Rosie Cooper MP (BBC 2019). In some cases targeting appeared vague and undefined. For example, Jack Reed produced a handwritten list of possible targets that included the bus station, council buildings, post offices, telephone wires, pubs, schools, and banks, all of which he believed would "damage the system" (De Simone 2021b).

At sentencing the mean age of plotters was 27.7 years. Five plotters were aged 18 or younger at the time of sentencing, the youngest was Jack Reed who was convicted in November 2019 but only identified publicly as he turned 18 in January 2021. As of January 2021, Reed was the youngest person to be convicted of planning a terror attack (De Simone 2021b). The oldest plotter was Neil Lewington who was 44 at the time he was sentenced for a plan to attack Asian families with explosives (Press Association 2009). All plotters were male.

The longest sentence was 23 years with 18 years in custody handed to Dean Morrice, a former army driver and prolific online propagandist who assembled bomb-making components and instructions as well as instructions to make a 3D printed firearm (BBC 2021a). Morrice was found guilty of two counts of having an explosive substance, three counts of dissemination of a terrorist publication, one of encouraging terrorism and four of possession of a document useful for terrorist purposes. The shortest sentence was the 20 months suspended sentence handed to George Fowle. Fowle was arrested at an airport and found to have viable instructions for making explosives and had previously spoken of a desire to bomb an American summer camp, although there was no evidence that he had taken steps to put his threat into action. Fowle was convicted of two counts of making a record useful to terrorism (Vaughn & Castle 2020).

ADDITIONAL TERRORISM OFFENDERS

54 additional terrorism offenders are included in the dataset. These are actors charged with terrorism related crimes, but not actors who have committed a terrorist attack or were involved in an identifiable plot.

Unlike attackers or plotters the majority (30) of offenders had some kind of identified affiliation. The earliest case was Trevor Hannington who was reported to be affiliated to the Aryan Strike Force (ASF), the same group as Ian and Nicky Davison (see above). 58 year-old Hannington who was sentenced to two years in 2010 for two charges of stirring up racial hatred and two charges of possessing info useful to terrorism. Other cases linked to ASF were dealt with under race hate legislation with only Hannington and two others connected to terrorism (Ian and Nicky Davison, also present in the dataset). Hannington was subsequently jailed for another 12 months after publishing the details of a witness in his trial online (Evans 2013). From 2018 onwards, affiliations are primarily with National Action, Sonnenkrieg Division, or Feuerkrieg Division. The dataset includes 20 cases affiliated to National Action. This matches closely a statement published by West-Midlands Police that identifies 19 convictions relating to National Action membership (West Midlands Police 2022). Four cases were linked to Sonnenkrieg Division, and two to Feuerkrieg Division.

The mean age of offenders was 26.7 years. The oldest offender was Hannington at 58 years, the youngest was an unnamed teenager sentenced to a two-year youth rehabilitation order for 12 offences including downloading a bomb-making guide. The boy was reportedly 16 at time of sentencing but began downloading the material at the age of 13 (DeSimone 2021c). This category included two women, Alice Cutter and Claudia Patatas, both convicted of being members of National Action.⁵

⁵ A third women, Stacey Salmon was part of Oaken Hearth group sentenced in June 2022, but she was not sentenced for terrorism offences and so not included in this dataset.

The dataset records a diverse array of offences. The most common was membership of a proscribed organisation at 19 cases, including one case sentenced for inviting support for a proscribed group rather than being a member, an unnamed 16 year-old (De Simone 2021d). Offences were not mutually exclusive, individual cases could be sentenced for more than one offence. The dataset includes 11 cases of sentences for encouraging terrorism (section 1), 11 for dissemination (section 2), and 22 section 58 offences which covers a range of information offences such as making a record or possessing information likely to be useful for terrorism. There were 13 cases in the dataset where actors had been sentenced exclusively for section 58 offences.

The longest sentence was for John Nimmo, an unaffiliated online extreme-right supporter who distributed *The Anarchist Cookbook*, but who was also sentenced for other offending including possessing a prohibited firearm. Nimmo had previously been jailed for an online hate campaign against Labour MP Luciana Berger. Nimmo was sentenced to 10 years and 2 months (BBC 2021b). Longer sentences were also handed out to leadership figures such as leader of Sonnenkrieg Division Andrew Dymock (7 years and 3 on license), and National Action founders Ben Raymond (8 years and 2 on license) and Alex Davies (8 years 6 months) (BBC 2021c; PA Media 2021; West Midlands Police 2022).

TRENDS

The majority of right-wing terrorist attacks do not garner much attention, the majority are non-fatal and they are rarely reported on extensively. Fatal attacks, or attacks resulting in injury are rare and attract far more attention.

Based on this data there does not appear to be any surge in right-wing terrorism, with right-wing terror attacks occurring relatively regularly throughout the period.

Plots form a similar trajectory to attacks, although there may have been an uptick from 2018.

The number of offenders has increased dramatically since 2018, with all but three additional terrorism offenders being sentenced in 2018 or after. This trend is likely explained by several changes:

- An increased willingness by authorities to use the terrorism act against the extreme-right.
- The proscription of National Action which opened the way to a large amount of terrorism offending.
- An increased tendencies by the extreme-right to organise online making them vulnerable to investigation and arrest for offences committed online

Although caution is needed it is difficult to conclude that extreme right-wing terrorism in the UK has become more prolific or deadly during this time-period. Instead, changes to the law and policing have led to more people being convicted and sentenced for terrorism offences.

The majority of actors in this dataset were unaffiliated to an organisation and there is little evidence to suggest any of the activities captured in this dataset were part of a broader conspiracy or organised strategy.

In terms of affiliation, this data is split between two eras: pre proscription of National Action (December 2016) and post, although the time taken over trials and sentencing effectively puts this split in March 2018 with the sentencing of Alexander Deakin, the first person in the dataset to be sentenced for membership of National Action.

Prior to 2018 those with affiliations were primarily connected to legacy neo-Nazi groups such as the National Front, BNP, and the more overtly militant Aryan Strike Force. Post 2018 affiliations were more commonly to National Action or one of the two groups in the UK patterned after Atomwaffen Division: SKD or FKD.

FINDINGS

Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism in the UK

With the exception of some terrorist dyads, the plots and attacks in this dataset were all undertaken by lone actors, albeit ones clearly plugged in to wider extreme-right milieus.

A final observation, not immediately obvious from the above, is that many of those described in this dataset had noticeable vulnerabilities and other issues alongside their terrorist offending. These included multiple actors with substance and alcohol related issues, mental health disorders, and several cases featuring some forms of autism spectrum disorder. These circumstances are not always reported in trials or sentencing and so systematic analysis is not possible. However, of the terrorist attacks in this dataset at least two were committed by people under the influence of alcohol. In another the perpetrator was identified as being psychotic.

All of these trends need to be treated with some caution and can only be considered tentative. The limitations of the data and the analysis means that these trends may reflect incomplete or biased reporting and a changing focus for reporting over time. Crucially, this report reflects a narrow interpretation of terrorism and cannot address broader trends in right-wing extremist violence and harms such as identity-based violence or harassment.

TRIANGULATION

As already noted, overall confidence in the available data is limited by the availability of data as well as the conceptual difficulties surrounding right-wing terrorism. To further emphasise these points, this section describes several efforts that have been made to check this data against other sources to see if it matches up and in what respect this timeline differs.

THE RIGHT-WING TERRORISM AND VIOLENCE DATASET (RTV)

The RTV dataset is produced by the Centre for Research on Extremism at the University of Oslo and

is available at: <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/groups/rtv-dataset/>. The dataset covers Western Europe between 1990 and 2021 which includes data for the UK within this period. However, the inclusion criteria for the RTV are different.

The RTV sets out to capture the “most severe types of events” meaning only incidents where perpetrator(s) intend or are willing to inflict deadly or disabling injury on victims as well as terrorist attack plots and the uncovering of weapon stockpiles (C-REX n.d.).

Where this timeline only seeks to record terrorist attacks, plots, and misc. terrorism offenders using sentencing as the basis for the analysis, the RTV dataset seeks to capture a broader range of terrorist and violent incidents.

This includes incidents that are not categorised as terrorism but where violence is used, meaning the RTV dataset covers a broader range of incidents than this dataset, including incidents that do not meet the definition of terrorism.

Incidents in the RTV are judged to be right-wing on the basis of targeting of minorities, opponents or the government, where these are motivated by beliefs in inequality. This is more inclusive than the approach taken for this timeline which requires evidence of motivation and intent.

Following on from this, another key difference is that the RTV potentially includes incidents where the perpetrators are unknown or were not sentenced.

Conversely, the RTV’s focus on serious violence means that non-violent terrorism offences, for example membership of a proscribed organisation, are not captured.

In the RTV dataset, the unit of analysis is individual incidents. This means single actors can feature multiple times where they have engaged in multiple violent incidents whereas this timeline includes actors on the basis of their most relevant sentencing (typically their most recent).

The RTV authors are very clear about the limitations of the data they are working with, arguing that differences in reporting between countries and overtime mean that only fatal events are really viable as a basis for comparison as these are more likely to be reported than events that may not have resulted in any fatalities. A further drawback is that the publicly available dataset purposefully does not contain enough information to identify individual cases. This means it is not possible to match the RTV to this timeline on a case-by-case basis. It also means that decisions around inclusion and exclusion cannot be reviewed to find out where datasets are diverging.

The current anonymised RTV dataset includes 109 incidents between 1999 and 2020 (the last year available) in the UK. 22 events were recorded as being fatal, one using explosives, one involving firearms, two including a car, and the rest a mixture of bladed weapons and beating. The discrepancy between the RTV dataset and this timeline are likely explained by a few key differences:

- The focus on incidents means that individual actors may be included in the dataset multiple times.
- Although this cannot be confirmed, much of the fatal violence recorded in the RTV dataset may related to identity-based violence more generally, including cases where ideology is inferred from the choice of victim, this is a less stringent inclusion criteria than that used in this timeline. Where they lack clear right-wing extremist motivation or communicative intent such attacks may not constitute terrorism as defined in this report.
- At the same time the RTV dataset does not include additional terrorism offending and so many of the terrorism cases identified in this timeline are likely absent from the RTV data.

The RTV and this timeline set out to record different things, where the RTV centres on serious violence, this timeline is exclusively focused on terrorism and related offending.

UK TERRORISM-RELATED PRISONERS (HOME OFFICE)

Data available for June 2020 published by the UK government provides a breakdown of people in custody for terrorism related offences. This included both those who had been convicted and sentenced and some case awaiting trial. 45 of these prisoners were categorised as holding far right-wing ideologies (Home Office 2020: 18). Details of release from custody are not usually publicised but a rough count of actors in the timeline who could plausibly still be in prison as of June 2020 yields 44 actors, suggesting a close match for the Home Office data.

NATIONAL ACTION CONVICTIONS (WEST MIDLANDS POLICE)

Following the sentencing of Alex Davies, co-founder of National Action, in June 2022, West-Midlands Police issued a press release in which they listed 19 people as having been convicted of National Action membership. This closely matches with the number of National Action affiliates in the timeline (20).

INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT

A 2022 report by the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (2022) includes references to reporting by various parts of the UK intelligence community on threat levels associated with Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism. MI5 was reported to have described the threat level as on a “gradual upwards trajectory” in 2019 (15) and a follow up report in 2021 referenced “no substantial change”. Reassuringly, the same report references the difficulties of conceptualising extreme-right wing terrorism and the corresponding difficult of measuring the overall number of incidents:

FINDINGS

Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism in the UK

“An act of terrorism ordinarily predicates violent action in support of an ideology, however the absence of an overarching ERWT [extreme right-wing terrorism] narrative and the broad spectrum of views encompassed within the ERWT umbrella means that proving an ideological motivation for a particular action can be challenging.

(Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament 2022: 16)

EXPERT OPINION

As a further check on the data a draft of the timeline was sent to experts on right-wing terrorism and ideology in the UK who were able to highlight some additional cases missing from the data as well as providing a broader perspective on some the historical events also included in the timeline. Overall, the expert opinion tallied closely with the timeline.⁶

⁶ The authors would like to express their gratitude to the experts we consulted.

EDGE CASES

Decisions about which cases to include and which to exclude from the dataset were not straightforward. These complications stem from both definitional issues around the concept of terrorism, as well as data issues which mean there is less information about some potential cases than others. To address these issues as transparently as possible, this section outlines four examples of cases that were either not included in the dataset for various reasons or were included but only after careful consideration. The intention is that these examples will highlight some of the complexity that makes accurate measurement of right-wing terrorism difficult.

CAVAN MEDLOCK – CASE STILL PROCEEDING

In September 2020 29 year-old Cavan Medlock was reported to enter the premises of a London law firm (Duncan Lews) armed with a knife and carrying handcuffs, and both a Confederate and ‘Nazi flag’, presumably a swastika (BBC 2021d). The prosecution have since argued that Medlock is a right-wing terrorist who intended to kill Toufique Hossain, a solicitor who had been active in preventing the government deportation of immigrants. Cavan Medlock has admitted battery and threatening a receptionist but has denied charges of preparing a terrorist act or a threat to kill. Medlock’s trial is set for July 2022 (Pennink 2021). In the press, the case has been interpreted as an example of how political rhetoric and critiques of lawyers who attempt to prevent deportations and otherwise engage with asylum and immigration cases has contributed to security fears at some law firms (Dearden 2020; Press Association 2020). Details on what transpired within the offices of Duncan Lewis or how it was resolved are unreported as of yet but there are no reports of any injuries as a result of the attack.

The Medlock case stands out for two reasons. The first is the tendency in some examples of right-wing terrorism, or reported terrorism, to downplay ideological motivations of actors in favour of tying attacks to wider social phenomena or political debates, in this instance framing the attack as a result of inflammatory right-wing political rhetoric as opposed to also recognising the clear right-wing extremist beliefs suggested by the ‘Nazi’ flag.

A second observation is that it is not possible to include Cavan Medlock in this timeline as there is currently insufficient detail. Little is known about what Medlock did inside the law office other than that he carried a knife and has admitted threatening people and battery. The lack of casualties suggests that if this was intended as a terrorist attack Medlock was prevented from carrying it out, or potentially abandoned his plans at some point after entering the law office. Another possibility is that Medlock’s actions may have been intended to threaten and intimidate. These are entirely speculative explanations. Beyond this, reporting on motivation and intent are speculative. The presence of a Nazi and Confederate flags suggests that Medlock was at least connected to various extreme-right milieus. The choice of target may suggest that Medlock was particularly concerned about immigration. This is enough to infer a likely motivation but only infer it. Likewise, it was not clear what Medlock thought was going to happen as a result of his actions. If his intent was to intimidate the wider legal community or pro-immigration lawyers more generally then this may well fit the definition of terrorism. If the Medlock’s intentions were more modest or directed specifically at Duncan Lewis then the attack may be closer to a racially aggravated crime.

Although it is not possible to include Medlock’s attack in the current timeline, as more details emerge it seems entirely possible that Medlock could be included as

another example of a right-wing terrorism in the UK, albeit a seemingly unsuccessful one.

JOHN LAIDLAW – UNCLEAR MOTIVATION AND INTENTION

John Laidlaw was given five life sentences with a minimum of 15 years. In May 2006 Laidlaw opened fire with a handgun in an Islington street and Finsbury Park tube station, both within the space of 30 minutes. He wounded two people, one accidentally, and attempted to hit a third person who gave chase to him. Despite serious injuries all of Laidlaw's victims survived. Both the people Laidlaw aimed at were black but during the trial the judge stated that the attacks were not racially motivated (BBC 2007a). However, in an earlier incident Laidlaw, who already had a string of convictions, was arrested for an attack on a black motorist. Following his arrest Laidlaw stated that he was a member of the BNP and that he was going to "kill all black people" (BBC 2007b).

Laidlaw's case could only potentially be considered a terrorist attack if there was clear evidence that he set out to target black people specifically and if this could be linked to an ideological motivation and some intended outcome. Although Laidlaw's earlier claim that he wanted to kill all black people would seem to speak to motivation and intention, this needs to be counter balanced both by the judge's remarks and the possibility that Medlock's earlier remarks, made in the presence and within earshot of a "black gaoler" may have been an attempt to threaten or intimidate as opposed to an actual expression of belief (BBC 2007b). Likewise, the immediate trigger for the attack may have been a street dispute rather than a pre-planned attack (Holmes 2007). Ultimately it was felt that in Laidlaw's case the available information was too contradictory to categorise him as motivated by ideology with an intention to terrorise. One important reflection however is how the case and trial would have been reported and in the contemporary news environment and if this may have resulted in a different classification.

DANYAL HUSSEIN – COMPLEX IDEOLOGY

Danyal Hussein was 19 when he fatally stabbed two sisters in Wembley. He was sentenced to life with a minimum term of 35 years. It emerged that Hussein had planned the murders in advance, acquiring various items in advance from Amazon and an Asda supermarket (Bancroft 2021). It also emerged that Hussein was a Satanist and heavily influenced by the works of EA Koetting. Koetting is a US-based Satanist who maintains a web presence although his presence on Facebook and Instagram was reportedly removed following Hussein's murders (Bancroft 2021).

Police found an 'agreement' written in blood between Hussein and "King Lucifage Rofocale" in which Hussein promised to murder six people every six months in return for a lottery win. This was consistent with Koetting's teaching (Bancroft 2021). Koetting has written in the past about being affiliated with the Tempel ov Blood (ToB), itself a US-based offshoot of the left-hand path Satanist group Order of the Nine Angles (O9A) (Feldman 2021). Both ToB and O9A have been linked to the extreme-right. Most notoriously John Cameron Denton, who took over the leadership of Atomwaffen Division in the US following the incarceration of Brandon Russell in 2017 was a member of the O9A and promoted O9A material via Atomwaffen. This was divisive, but also influential enough to be imported into the UK through groups such as SKD and FKD.

Left hand path Satanism, the occult, and extreme-right ideology is a complex landscape with than spans multiple ideological milieus and subcultures. This makes tracing a path between the ideas within the O9A, EA Koetting, and Hussein's murders difficult. This is further complicated by Hussein's non-white background which makes him not an obvious fit for right-wing extremist ideology, suggesting that Hussein was motivated potentially by esoteric belief as opposed to any political convictions. The pact Hussein signed also strongly suggests that Hussein had personal

rather than political motivations for the killing. Nevertheless, this case highlights the need for ideological context and understanding before attacks can be categorised as motivated by extreme-right beliefs and the wider array of marginal beliefs that can potentially motivate violent behaviour that lie outside the envelope of the traditional extreme-right.

RYAN FLEMING – MISCELLANEOUS CRIMINALITY

Ryan Fleming was a member of National Action when it was still a legal group and a one-time organiser for the North-East (DeSimone 2021e). Fleming had a series of convictions for child sexual abuse dating back to 2012 when he was convicted of falsely imprisoning and sexually abusing a young boy. In 2017 he was jailed for sexually abusing a 14 year-old girl he met on Facebook, and in 2021 he was sentenced to six months in prison for breaching a sexual harm prevention order after counter terrorism police found he was messaging teenagers on the app Instagram (DeSimone 2021e). Fleming is reportedly a Satanist and another affiliate of the O9A, publishing several fictional books with Martinet Press, an imprint associated with the US-based Tempel ov Blood (Miller 2018). The same article describes Fleming as believing himself to be one of a “Satanic Elite”.

Despite this track record, Fleming has not been convicted or sentenced for terrorism related offences. Although Fleming was active with National Action this pre-dated its proscription when the group was still a legal organisation. Fleming presumably ended his involvement when the group was banned, very likely given he would have likely been under police investigation prior to the ban in December 2016. As a result, Fleming, for all his notoriety, is not part of this timeline.

CONCLUSIONS

This timeline has suggested we are witnessing a range of trends in the evolution of right-wing terrorism in the United Kingdom:

- This timeline only addresses specific cases where individuals have been sentenced for right-wing terror attacks, plots, or right-wing terrorism offending. It does not cover extremist violence that does not fit the definition of terrorism or terrorism offending. It does not include incidents where no perpetrator has been sentenced. It does not include identity-based violence where a clear right-wing ideological motivation or terroristic intention was not reported. This timeline should not be treated as a complete accounting of the harms generated by right-wing extremism nor as an attempt to marginalise or ignore the seriousness of such harms.
- Despite the wave of high-profile right-wing terror attacks globally the UK has so far escaped without a mass casualty right-wing terrorist attack since Copeland's bombing campaign in the Summer of 1999.
- Several factors are seemingly at play here:
- Law enforcement has successfully disrupted several extreme-right plots.
- Many of the actors in the dataset could be described as having few resources (in particular firearms) and little capacity or aptitude which may have contributed to the low number of overall attacks and low lethality.
- Some measure of chance has also played a part in minimising right-wing terrorism in the UK, with several incidents, most notably Pavlo Lapshyn and Cavan Medlock (not convicted and not included in the timeline) could easily have had different outcomes. Likewise, several of the plots described in the timeline, if permitted to come to fruition, could have killed or injured many people.
- Overall, the level of attack and plots are relative stable over the length of the timeline, but with some notable clusters such as the number of plots between 2008 and 2010 and post 2018.
- The low overall numbers and data issues limit the possibility of quantitative analysis. Individual cases are idiosyncratic with their own motivations and contexts and must be viewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The number of right-wing extremists convicted of terrorism offences not involving a plot or attack increased dramatically from 2018. The proscription of National Action was the first time many of the extreme-right in the UK were exposed to the mechanics of counter terrorism legislation in the UK. From 2018 onwards prosecutors also seemed more willing to use other terrorism charges such as encouraging terrorism or possession of documents useful to terrorism against right-wing extremists.
- The increase may also be explained as an organisational vulnerability, the result of extreme-right affiliates communicating relatively openly online. As a result, prohibited statements and material may have been easier to identify than for offline networks. Attacks and plots remained primarily undertaken by lone actors.
- The available data limits analysis. Challenges were partially conceptual, with the categorisation of right-wing terrorism being complex and often dependent on sparse information. Few of the attacks were 'clear cut' examples of right-wing terrorism. None of them matched the cultural script associated with recent high-profile right-wing attacks internationally.

- Further challenges came from open source reporting. This was inconsistent and was highly likely to be influenced by news values and ebbing and flowing interest in right-wing terrorism. More recent reporting may be likely to better reflect the character of right-wing terrorism than older reporting as societal interest has risen.

Despite these challenges, the timeline remains a useful starting point for anyone seeking to better understand contemporary right-wing terrorism. Most importantly, right-wing terrorism needs to be understood as being both exotic and mundane. The series of attacks that began with Robert Bowers in 2018 seized headlines and policy attention, coming in the aftermath of the Trump campaign in the United States and the coalescence of belief and practices that became known as the Alt-Right. Characterised by shocking violence, digital distribution of manifestoes, subcultural awareness, semi-automatic firearms and livestreaming, these attacks have become the template for right-wing terrorism and have generated significant public and policy concern (Macklin 2019).

Despite this, the history of right-wing terrorism in the UK is far more mundane. Far from being competent and with a detailed plan, attackers and plotters were often inept, vulnerable, and in many cases impaired. Of 14 right-wing terrorist attacks identified since 1999, four resulted in a fatality. More common since 2018 have been a growing number of teenagers and young men falling foul of terrorism legislation after attempting to organise online.

The most important point for investigators is that right-wing terrorism on the ground is unlikely to resemble the right-wing terrorism seen in the headlines. Cases are likely to manifest in more unassuming, low-key, mundane, and less obvious ways than journalism and research may suggest.

The lack of clear intent and motivations in many cases may mask the wider threat presented by the extreme-right milieu. This is especially worth reflecting on given that prominent examples of right-wing terrorism

such as Peter Mangs in Sweden and the National Socialist Underground in Germany, have at times been missed by investigators who were unable to identify the role of ideological drivers of crimes.

The extreme-right is a steady, persistent and at times hard to categorise threat in the United Kingdom. More troubling still, extreme-right milieus remain hard to predict and the threat is inherently uncertain. In the past some of the most serious attackers have emerged from the extreme-right ideological milieu with little or no warning, suggesting that the historical lack of mass casualty attacks in the UK is not certain to continue.

The main aim of this research has been to provide an accessible empirical starting point for those interested in right-wing terrorism in the UK and a counterpoint to headlines and journalistic coverage that tends to focus on sensational mass-casualty attacks. Future researchers then would do well to develop more in-depth knowledge about specific cases and offenders as opposed to trying to discern aggregate trends which are likely to be confused by individual factors in most cases. There is no typical right-wing terrorist attack, nor is there a typical right-wing terrorist.

Likewise, future research should recognise that soundbites and headlines describing trends in right-wing terrorism should be treated with caution as unlikely to be a valid starting point for research. They unavoidably collapse a range of trends and narratives into a single phenomenon labelled as right-wing terrorism.

Finally, future research needs to be attuned to the limitations of terrorism as a concept for discussing right-wing extremism more generally. Terror attacks, plots, and offending are narrow and imprecise categories to capture what is a much broader and complex phenomenon. Terrorism is only a single tactic undertaken by a minority of actors, but the rhetorical power of the term, coupled with intense policy interest, means that this is often used as the default framing device for right-wing extremism.

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