

# **REVIEW OF LONDON'S PREPAREDNESS TO RESPOND TO A MAJOR TERRORIST INCIDENT**

Reviewer: Lord Toby Harris  
Email: [PreparednessReview@london.gov.uk](mailto:PreparednessReview@london.gov.uk)

27 July 2021

Dear Colleague

As you will no doubt be aware, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, committed in his 2021 manifesto to a further assessment of London's preparedness for a major terrorist incident, following on from the 2016 Harris Review.

He has appointed me to once again lead this work, and as before I will be examining the capability, capacity and collaboration arrangements of those London agencies with a part to play in protecting Londoners. I will seek to revisit considerations related to multi-site attacks, including the implications of those occurring simultaneously in other parts of the country; the effectiveness of collaboration between the emergency services; the inter-operability of services; and the programme of joint planning and exercising. I also intend to consider the extent to which those recommendations from my previous Review have been addressed, and to examine learning from the attacks which took place across London and, where relevant, in Manchester in 2017, as well as those perpetrated more recently at Fishmongers Hall and in Streatham.

The changing threat picture and the ongoing pandemic provide an increasingly complex backdrop against which to consider preparedness, but I will seek to provide assurance that London remains as ready and organised as it can be to respond to a major terrorist incident, with the necessary resources and expertise in place. Where I identify any new or continued weaknesses or gaps, I will propose how these might be mitigated.

The terms of reference for the review are attached. If you would like to submit any views or comments on these matters, or if there are any concerns you would wish to relay on behalf of those you may represent in respect of London's preparedness, I would be delighted to receive them. Please forward any correspondence to my secretariat at [PreparednessReview@london.gov.uk](mailto:PreparednessReview@london.gov.uk).

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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Toby Harris" with a small flourish underneath.

Lord Toby Harris  
Reviewer

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## **A Review into the Preparedness of London to cope with a Terrorist Attack**

### **AIM**

Undertake an independent review of London's preparedness for a major terrorist incident. To provide assurance to the Mayor that London is as ready and organised as it can be in case of a major incident and has the resources and expertise needed to cope, and where necessary and appropriate, to advise on what steps might be taken to mitigate any weaknesses. The Review will need to consider the changed, and changing, threat landscape and, in particular, any implications of the pandemic for London's immediate and long-term preparedness.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2016 when the first Preparedness Review was commissioned, the backdrop in terms of terrorism was shaped by the marauding firearms attacks such as occurred in the Bataclan, Paris. The Review was broadly welcomed and produced 127 recommendations, the vast majority of which have been implemented.

Since then London has experienced a succession of attacks, particularly in 2017, when terrorists often acting alone used vehicles and knives to murder people in London. A bomb attack in the Manchester Arena killed innocent children and then in Salisbury a chemical attack brought death, injury, and a new kind of threat to Britain.

We know the terrorist attack methodology is constantly changing. We recognise that terrorists are always looking at new opportunities to bring terror to our City. Unfortunately, in spite of the best efforts of our police and security services sometimes an attack succeeds. Recent Inquiries have highlighted important learning we must take from these instances, while acknowledging the successes these agencies do have.

In light of these circumstances, it is now an appropriate time to instigate another Review and ensure that London is as prepared as it can be to deal with the threat posed by terrorists.

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## **OUTLINE**

The review will have two parts:

1 A review of the London relevant recommendations from specified reports and the extent to which they have been acted on and implemented, and what gaps remain. Those specified reports are:

- a. Lord Harris Review;
- b. HMICFRS CT Prevent inspection;
- c. Jonathan Hall independent reviewer – MAPPA Review;
- d. Recent attacks in Streatham and Fishmonger's Hall; and,
- e. Inquest reports into the 2017 attacks

This list is not exhaustive and it will be appropriate for the Reviewer to consider the learning that emanates from the Manchester arena attack.

2 A strategic, London-wide look at how the city is prepared to cope with a serious terrorist attack in London. It will look at the working relationships and cooperation between all of the agencies involved, ability to cope with the different scenarios and highlight gaps between agencies or shortages of expertise and resources and propose actions to address this.

## **REMIT**

In order to do this the Review will consider the capacity of organisations and groups, statutory and non-statutory, operating in London, to effectively respond to a diverse range of terrorist attack. This will include looking at their planning and exercise regimes.

## **TIMESCALES**

The Final Report will be delivered in the autumn.

## **OUTPUT**

There will be no running commentary during the review given the likely handling of sensitive material which cannot find its way into the public domain, but the aim is to produce a report at the end of the process containing as many of the outcomes as can be made public.