



THREAT ASSESSMENT

Manchester Arena Attack: Implications for New Zealand

Issued: 25 May 2017

483/17/TA

DMS6-14-158

S // AUS CAN GBR NZL USA

This assessment is based on information drawn from a variety of domestic and international resources and open source data. Threat definitions can be found on the last page.

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New Zealand

Terrorism - LOW

Key Points

- (R FVEY) In the wake of the 22 May attack on the Manchester Arena, the terrorism threat level for New Zealand remains at LOW; a *terrorist attack is assessed as possible but not expected*.
- (C) CTAG is currently not aware of any direct link between the Manchester attack and New Zealand but notes that investigations are in early stages.
- (S FVEY) CTAG has seen no intelligence to specifically indicate any heightened threat to impending major events, sports matches, concerts or other places of mass gathering, or dignitary visits to New Zealand from known subjects of security interest.
- (R) CTAG will continue to assess the threat implications for New Zealand of the evolving investigation in the UK and will review threat levels accordingly.

Summary

1. (R) This Threat Assessment outlines and assesses implications of the 22 May Manchester Arena attack on and for New Zealand.
2. (U) On 22 May at approximately 22:35 (local time), British national Salman Abedi conducted a suicide attack with a person borne improvised explosive device. The

attack targeted the Manchester Arena, one of the largest indoor music venues in the UK. At least 22 people were killed and 59 injured in the attack.

3. (R) The United Kingdom's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) have raised their national terrorism threat level to CRITICAL, the highest level in their system.
4. (R) CTAG emphasises that the forensic investigation is ongoing and also that the intelligence picture is still dynamic and developing. Depending on the nature or scope of any developments, ongoing assessment will be required to ensure that New Zealand implications are specifically considered.

New Zealand Situation

5. (S FVEY) CTAG is currently not aware of any direct link between the Manchester attack and New Zealand. s6(a) [REDACTED]
6. (S FVEY) CTAG has not sighted any intelligence to indicate the Manchester terrorist attack has inspired New Zealand-based Islamist extremists to consider conducting a terrorist attack themselves or to hasten any aspirational plan already contemplated.
7. (S FVEY) Previous terrorist attacks in the West, such as Westminster in March 2017, the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando in June 2016, and the 2015 Paris attacks, evoked a range of reactions from Islamist extremists in New Zealand. Responses included anti-Western statements and rhetoric, generalised support for the attacks, and comments on perceived media bias in the way events were reported. s6(a) [REDACTED]
8. (S FVEY) s6(a) [REDACTED]

Potential Implications for New Zealand

9. (C) CTAG has seen no domestic or international reporting which impels us to alter the current terrorism threat level for New Zealand, or for any domestic major event currently under consideration. CTAG notes ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and AQ (al-Qa'ida) have both advocated for attacks during *Ramadan*, which starts on 26 May. We are also mindful that several 2016-17 attacks in the West have targeted places of mass gathering, such as public markets or festivals, transport hubs, concerts and entertainment venues. Ultimately, we are not aware of any person or group having any more advanced intent and capability to conduct a terrorist attack in New Zealand as a direct consequence of the Manchester attack.
10. (C) Copy-cat attacks are a recognised phenomenon. We assess ISIL relies on the impact of successful attacks and public claims of responsibility to further both its reputation and its pool of potential recruits. Similarly, a call by ISIL External Operations head Abu Muhammed al-Adnani to conduct attacks during *Ramadan* in 2016 is judged by CTAG and partners to have been a legitimising factor in several

attacks, especially in Europe, during that time. ~~s6(a), s6(b)(i)~~

11. (C) Events such as the Manchester attack, by design, create tremendous media coverage as well as social interest and indignation. They can also serve to highlight and exacerbate perceived security vulnerabilities. This sensitivity is particularly and understandably acute as New Zealand prepares to host several high profile sports events, concerts and diplomatic visitors, amongst a range of public events.

Upcoming Major Events in New Zealand

12. (R) **2017 British and Irish Lions Tour.** CTAG has not sighted any reporting to indicate a heightened threat towards the British and Irish Lions rugby union tour, which takes place in New Zealand between 3 June and 8 July 2017. However, we note places of mass gathering have frequently been the target of attacks internationally. CTAG will continue to monitor our intelligence holdings in the lead up to and during the Lions tour.
13. (C) **Visiting dignitaries.** CTAG has not sighted any reporting to indicate any heightened threat towards upcoming official visits to New Zealand by dignitaries, either specifically or generally. We note some visiting dignitaries might be viewed by New Zealand-based Islamist extremists as more legitimate or permissible due to a variety of factors specific to the person or office which they hold. However, we have not sighted any reporting to suggest attack planning against dignitary while they are in New Zealand.
14. (R) **Sports and entertainment events.** CTAG has not sighted any reporting to indicate any heightened threat towards major sports events or concerts but notes the desirability of places of mass gathering as a significant targeting factor in recent international attacks.
15. (R) **Commemorative events.** CTAG has not sighted any reporting to indicate any heightened threat towards imminent commemorative events including the 100 year commemoration of the Battle of Messines at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park on 07 June 2017.

Other possible domestic reactions

16. (R) CTAG notes that social, political and religious tensions can rise following terrorist attacks in Europe. It is possible that elements of the New Zealand community could respond to the Manchester attack with xenophobic statements, tagging and other forms of expression or intolerance. CTAG has seen no local indications of this type of response. We judge that if this was to occur, such expressions would be more likely to be isolated and unlikely to gain wide following.
17. (C) Right-wing groups in the United Kingdom and Europe have used terrorist attacks to underscore their own narrative and rally support to social or political causes. According to open source reporting, the English Defence League conducted a small protest in Manchester following the attack. Additionally, an arson attack took place against a Mosque in Oldham, Greater Manchester, five hours after the attack.
18. (R) A heightened incidence of and sensitivity to bomb threats in New Zealand, including hoaxes, is possible for a period of time after the Manchester attack. A hoax

is a deliberately false threat, intended to cause nuisance and disruption and potentially to test the response by emergency services. Disgruntled employees, mischievous individuals or criminal groups are more likely to deliberately use hoaxes. They may not have the intent to cause physical harm, but instead seek personal gain by impacting the reputation or livelihood of affected businesses and individuals. Hoaxes will remain a feature of the security environment in New Zealand, potentially more so in the near future following events in Manchester.

Threat Level

19. (R) The terrorism threat level for New Zealand remains **LOW**; *terrorist attack is assessed as possible, but is not expected.*
20. (R) CTAG will continue to assess the threat implications for New Zealand of the evolving investigation in the UK and will review threat levels accordingly.

Prepared by s6(a)
Reviewed by [REDACTED]

Released by s6(a)
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CONFIDENCE STATEMENT

(R) This Threat Assessment draws on intelligence from a range of sources on whose reliability we comment in the main text where appropriate.

(R) Our judgements regarding the threat of terrorism have been drawn from classified and open source material, of which we are confident of the accuracy.

(R) The assessment is reliant upon an absence of threat reporting rather than positive reporting that threats are not extant. CTAG notes that activity could occur, or may have already occurred, that is not detected by available sources.

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CTAG THREAT DEFINITIONS

Threat Level	Definition	Qualitative Statement
Negligible	Terrorist attack, or violent criminal behaviour, or violent protest activity is assessed as very unlikely	Remote / Highly Unlikely
Very Low	Terrorist attack, or violent criminal behaviour, or violent protest activity is assessed as unlikely.	Improbable / Unlikely
Low	Terrorist attack, or violent criminal behaviour, or violent protest activity is assessed as possible, but is not expected.	Realistic Possibility
Medium	Terrorist attack, or violent criminal behaviour, or violent protest activity is assessed as feasible and could well occur.	Probable / Likely
High	Terrorist attack, or violent criminal behaviour, or violent protest activity is assessed as very likely.	Highly/Very Probable/Likely
Extreme	Terrorist attack, or violent criminal behaviour, or violent protest activity is expected imminently.	Almost Certain

- Unless otherwise stated, all threat levels in CTAG threat assessments reflect the country-specific threat level.
- Numbers of New Zealanders in overseas countries are provided by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade based on a voluntary registration system. The numbers do not include non-registered New Zealanders.
- Please advise CTAG of events or developments that relate to our threat warning function.