



## **UK Briefing: November 2024**

*Reporting period: 1st November - 31st November*

### **Political Developments**

#### **Release of Home Office statistics indicate rise in both Prevent referrals and counter-terror arrests in aftermath of October 7th**

- Two sets of recently released statistics from the Home Office illustrate the pattern of repressive powers used by British counter-terrorism since the launch of the war on Gaza in October 2023. Both the latest [Operation of police powers under TACT \(Terrorism Act\) 2000](#) and [Individuals referred to Prevent: to March 2024](#) data packs cover the period following October 7th.
- In the year to October 2023 - September 2024 there were 245 arrests for 'terrorism-related activity', representing a 41% increase in arrests in the year prior, and the highest rate of arrests since the period of October 2018-September 2019.
- Of the 88 charged thus far among thus far from the 245 arrests, the most common terrorism charges related to:
  - Membership of a proscribed organisation (13)
  - Dissemination of terrorist publications (13)
  - Encouragement of terrorism (8)
  - Preparation for terrorist acts (10)
- Meanwhile 2,527 individuals were subject to Schedule 7 port and border stops within the recorded period, representing a 2% increase on the year prior. Of the stops, 57% included the taking of biometric markers, marking an upwards trend over the years of biometric data being collected at Schedule 7 stops.
- The latest statistics for Prevent also saw an increase in usage, with 6,922 referrals constituting the 3rd highest year for referrals on record. Of these, 13% were discussed at Channel panels and 7% were ultimately adopted as

Channel cases - meaning 93% of referrals were dropped, offloaded or redirected.

- The highest proportion came from the Education sector (40%), while 11-15 year olds were the most-referred age range (40%).
- This affirms the pattern of Prevent being used in the context of suppressing Palestine solidarity within the education sector since October 7th.

## Labour foreign relations drive in question as it loses key allies abroad

- Amidst his attempt to reassert Britain's role on the international stage, including through his post-Brexit 'reset' with the EU, Keir Starmer's government has faced a number of foreign relations setbacks in the last month as some of its 'natural allies' have, or face, significant defeats. This comes amid Labour and [Starmer's own cratering popularity](#), and the rise in support for the Conservatives and Reform party at home.
- The German coalition government led by Olaf Scholz of Labour's sister party, the SPD, has collapsed, [triggered by the sacking of a minister from one of the coalition parties](#). Snap elections are expected to be held in February where the deeply unpopular [Scholz will again lead his already-unpopular party](#), to almost certain defeat at the hands of the German right (CDU) and far-right (AfD). Scholz has been noted across Europe for his indecisiveness and lack of political ability, especially compared to his longstanding predecessor Angela Merkel of the CDU who enjoyed de facto stature as a leader of the European Union. His decisions in support of the US-NATO proxy war in Ukraine, while criticised by European partners as not vigorous enough, have still had serious domestic and economic repercussions for Germany, and discontent against his foreign policy decisions and their outcomes have been captured in large part by the far-right AfD.
- In France, Michel Barnier, the Prime Minister chosen by President Macron following the summer's snap elections, was [defeated by a vote of no confidence](#) after trying to push through an unpopular budget. Macron's decision to appoint Barnier from the right wing Republicans party rather than the election's winning left bloc, as per custom, led to outcry, and Barnier's ouster has further undermined Macron's beleaguered government. However the prerogative to appoint a new PM still lies with Macron, who in mid-December [selected centrist ally Francois Bayrou](#).
- Most consequential for Labour, however, has been the comeback of Donald Trump and his Republican Party's clear victory over Kamala Harris and the Democrats in

November's US elections - taking with it Labour's key transnational ally and threatening to upset the so-called "special relationship" between the two countries..

- While Labour had tried to [prepare contingencies for a Trump comeback](#) beforehand and to build bridges with him, relations have already been frosty between the British government and the incoming President. This includes over [Labour activists' role in the Harris campaign](#), while Foreign Secretary David Lammy has been rowing back [criticisms he previously made of Trump](#). Trump has also [attacked the recent Chagos Island deal](#) made by Britain and the Mauritian government at the behest of the Biden White House as a threat to US national security interests - a deal which is [under renewed scrutiny by the new government of Mauritius](#) itself.
- However Starmer's choice of international alliances has proved malleable rather than being driven by traditional party affinities - as can be seen in his anti-migration collaboration with Italy's Giorgia Meloni, figurehead of the increasingly powerful hard right flank of the EU. Despite existing tensions, and the expected clashes between the incoming US President and certain EU leaders, Starmer has said [he rejects 'picking sides'](#) between either the US or the EU - with whom he has been attempting a 'reset' since his election. But it is doubtless that the international political terrain is expected to become increasingly difficult for a Labour government already struggling for wins at home.

## **Britain deepens security and defence collaboration with Gulf states**

- In early December PM Starmer pledged to '[step up the UK's engagement in the Middle East](#)' as part of an agenda to secure domestic security considerations, as he travelled through the Gulf to build relationships with the various monarchies of the region.
- Most significantly this included confirming an [agreement for a 'Future Framework' with Qatar](#) which will span greater economic, security and social collaboration. Part of the agreement announced alongside the Emir of Qatar included developing 'a strategic framework for the future of our security and law enforcement relationship and enable closer cooperation between the UK Home Office and the Qatari Ministry of Interior and Internal Security Forces' as well as joint work on cybersecurity.
- Days later Starmer visited Saudi Arabia and [courted 'green energy' investment](#) from the Saudi government while also speaking about [opportunities for shared defence](#)



[and security](#) collaboration.

- He also met with the President of the UAE, with the [government's press release speaking](#) of 'a joint desire to build on existing cooperation in defence and security'