Terrorism in Great Britain: the statistics

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Background

The beginning of this millennium saw an increased political focus on the threat from international terrorism, heightened by the attack on the Twin Towers on 11 September 2001. Only one year previous to 9/11, new counter-terrorism legislation had been passed in the UK. Designed to reform and extend state powers found in previous counter-terrorism legislation, the **Terrorism Act 2000** gave increased powers to the Home Secretary and the police to combat terrorism and moved the focus of counter-terrorism away from solely on Northern Ireland to all forms of domestic and international terrorism.

In 2003, the Government introduced its counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. Now in its fourth iteration, CONTEST aims to reduce the risk to the UK from terrorism with four objectives:

- **Pursue**: to stop terrorist attacks
- **Prevent**: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
- **Protect**: to strengthen protection against a terrorist attack
- **Prepare**: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack

Statistics relating to terrorism and the use of counter-terrorism legislation have been collected by the Home Office since the 1970s. The publication (and consistent collection) of data was halted in 2001. Home Office statistical bulletins on terrorism statistics resumed in 2008. This break in comparative data collation means the start date for the majority of data relating to counter-terrorism legislation passed since the millennium is 11 September 2001.

This briefing examines the available statistics on terrorism since 2001 in Great Britain including:

- Deaths due to terrorism
- The use of stop and search legislation
- Terrorism arrests
- Pre-charge detention periods
- Prosecutions and convictions for terrorism
- Terrorist prisoners
- The use of TPIMS
- The number of foreign fighters fighting in Syria

With the exception of the number of deaths due to terrorism, data in this paper relates solely to Great Britain, i.e. England, Wales and Scotland. This is largely due to the application of different and more varied counter-terrorism legislation in Northern Ireland, and the different counting rules used in
Northern Ireland’s terrorism statistics, making it difficult to compare with the rest of the UK.

The main source of data on terrorism in Great Britain is the Home Office’s quarterly statistical release, *Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000*. This is the source of data used in this briefing, except where specified. **The data in this paper generally covers the financial year up to 2020/21 (unless otherwise specified).**
1 Deaths due to terrorism

The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is contracted by the US Department of State to collate statistical data and information on terrorist events around the world. The chart below uses data from the GTD to show the annual number of deaths due to terrorism in the UK from 1970 to 2019 (including perpetrators).

According to this data there were 3,416 deaths in the UK in the time period shown. The majority of deaths between 1970 and 1990 were in Northern Ireland (84%). There are two clear peaks in the annual number of people killed: 1972, when 344 people were killed in Northern Ireland, and 1988, when 271 people were killed in Scotland in the Lockerbie bombing.

The general trend from around the 1990s is a decrease in the number of people killed due to terrorism. However, in 2005 and 2017 there were higher than average deaths recorded. In 2005 there were 57 deaths related to terrorism (including perpetrators), of which 56 occurred in London in the 7 July bombings. In 2017, three separate attacks in resulted in multiple deaths: Westminster Bridge and Palace (6 deaths), Manchester Arena (23 deaths) and London Bridge (11 deaths).

The Office for National Statistics also publish data on deaths due to terrorism. The available figures show that there were 95 deaths in England and Wales from April 2003 to 31 March 2020 due to terrorism (excluding perpetrators).³

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2 Stop and Search

The Terrorism Act 2000 introduced three new stop and search powers to assist police in the prevention, disruption and detection of terrorism.

2.1 Section 44 and 47

Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 provided the power for a constable in uniform to stop and search any vehicle and its occupants, or any pedestrian, within an authorised area. Authorisation was to be given by an officer of at least the rank of Assistant Constable (or equivalent), and could cover any geographical area for up to 28 days, after which the authorisation must be renewed. Whilst the search was only to be ‘for the purpose of searching for articles of a kind which could be used in connection with terrorism’, there was no requirement under Section 44 for the police officer conducting the search to have grounds for reasonable suspicion that the person being searched may be involved in terrorism.

The Act was amended to extend Section 44 powers to the British Transport Police (BTP) and non-Home Office forces such as the Civil Nuclear Constabulary, thereby covering most of Great Britain. However, the use of this power remained overwhelmingly concentrated in London where a continuous rolling authorisation under Section 44 remained in place from 2001 to 2009.

The use of these powers was highly controversial. In 2007 a challenge was brought before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on the basis that they violated Articles 5, 8, 10 and 11 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Delivering a final verdict in January 2010, the court ruled that the powers under Section 44 were contrary to Article 8 – the right to a private and family life – but did not rule on whether the powers violated Articles 5, 10 and 11.

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2 An ACPO rank is a rank of at least Assistant Chief Constable, or that of Commander in the City of London or Metropolitan Police. ACPO, the Association of Chief Police Officers, was replaced by the National Police Chief’s Council on 1 April 2015.

3 Terrorism Act 2000, Section 45(1)(a) & (b) as enacted.


5 Gillian v United Kingdom (4158/05), 2010 ECHR 28.
Following the Court’s ruling, the powers under Sections 44-47 were suspended by the Home Secretary on 8 July 2010, and after a Home Office review, repealed by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, s.59.

The Terrorism Act 2000 was subsequently amended to include a new power under Section 47A which again allowed a constable in uniform to stop and search any vehicle, its occupants or any pedestrian in an authorised area. However, the authorisation required from a senior police officer under Section 47A now has a significantly higher threshold than under Section 44: an authorising officer must now reasonably suspect that an act of terrorism will take place and consider that the authorisation is necessary to prevent any such act from occurring.⁶

Stop and search under S44 and S47A

The chart below shows the number of searches carried out under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 in Great Britain between 2001/02 and 2010/11. Note that stop and search data prior to 2009/10 (coloured light green) are less reliable and include only forces in England and Wales (excluding the British Transport Police). Data for 2009/10 onwards (dark green) is for England and Wales and includes the BTP but excludes Greater Manchester Police (GMP).⁷

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⁶ Terrorism Act 2000, Section 47A(1)

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There were just under 460,000 stop and searches carried out under S44 powers from 2007-08 to its repeal on 18 March 2011. Just over 3,000 searches (0.7%) led to an arrest being made. Of the 108,534 people stopped and searched in 2009-10, only 511 were arrested (0.5%), and only one arrest was terrorism-related. In 2010-11, there was a total of 11,761 searches and 79 arrests (0.7%), none of which were for a terrorism-related offence.

Following the Parsons Green attack on 15 September 2017 the police used the power to stop and search under S47A for the first time – 149 stop and searches were carried in total in 2017/18 (145 by the British Transport Police), of which 5 resulted in an arrest, with 3 of these terrorism-related. No further stop and searches have been carried out under S47A.

### 2.2 Section 43

Section 43 and 43A of the *Terrorism Act 2000* authorise a constable to stop and search any person whom they reasonably suspect to be a terrorist, or any vehicle (and its occupants) they believe is being used for terrorist purposes.

Data on the use of these powers is only available for the Metropolitan Police Force and only from year ending 31 March 2010 onwards.

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**Stop and search under S43, Metropolitan Police Service**

**year ending 31 March, 2011-2021**

Note: does not include ‘vehicle only’ searches.


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8 On 26 January 2011 the Home Secretary announced that the [review of counter-terrorism and security powers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-counter-terrorism-and-security-powers) recommended stop and search powers under sections 44-47 be repealed and replaced with a more targeted and proportionate power. Sections 44 to 47 of the Terrorism Act 2000 were subsequently replaced by a more limited [remedial order](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-remedial-order-2011) which came into force on 18 March 2011.


10 Data for all other police forces is collected centrally in the ‘other’ category under Section 1 of the [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/30/contents) and can’t be separately identified. Some data for individual police forces is available on their websites.
Between 2009/10 and 2020/21 there have been 8,231 stop and searches in London under Section 43 powers. Approximately 6% of these (526) have resulted in a subsequent arrest. **In 2020/21 there were 513 stop and searches with 11% (55) of those stopped arrested.**
3 Port and border controls

Under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, an examining officer may stop any person at a port who is entering or leaving the UK (or any person travelling by aircraft within the UK) for the purpose of finding out if they are involved in acts of terrorism. Officers can question an individual and inspect their documents, search them or any vehicle (including ships or aircraft) and detain a person for up to six hours if necessary.\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{Examinations made under Schedule 7}
\end{figure}

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\hline
Examinations (thousand) & 81 & 74 & 64 & 52 & 47 & 40 & 36 & 29 & 22 & 16 & 12 & 6 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Note: data does not include examinations on unaccompanied freight
Source: Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, table S.03, 10 June 2021

Data on Schedule 7 examinations is available from 1 April 2009. Between 2009/10 and 2020/21, there were 430,039 examinations conducted, of which 5\% lasted for over an hour.

The number of examinations conducted under Schedule 7 has reduced year on year since the year ending 31 March 2010. In the year ending 31 March 2021 there were 2,263 examinations conducted, of which 39\% lasted over an hour.

There were 73\% fewer examinations conducted in 2020/21 than in 2019/20. This fall coincides with travel restrictions imposed during the Coronavirus pandemic resulting in a substantial decrease of traffic at UK ports.\textsuperscript{12}

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{11} Terrorism Act 2000, Schedule 7.
\item\textsuperscript{12} Home Office, Operation of Police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2019, table S.03
\end{footnotes}
Arrests

An arrest is terrorism-related if either at the time of arrest, or during any subsequent investigation, a constable suspects the arrested person to be involved in terrorism.³

Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000 gives a police constable the power to arrest a person whom they reasonably suspect to be a terrorist. Any person arrested under Section 41 is then subject to the provisions within Schedule 8 which allow for the extension of that person’s detention, prior to release or charge, beyond the normal limits (see section 4.5 of this paper).

However, as a suspect’s involvement in terrorism may only come to light following investigation, a person suspected of terrorism may initially be arrested under other powers: either the general powers of a constable (Section 24 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, or Common Law in Scotland), or powers of arrest contained within other legislation.

Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000 came into force on 19 February 2001. Between then and 11 September of that year, there were 38 arrests made under the Act.

Between 11 September 2001 and 31 March 2021, there have been 4,907 terrorism-related arrests, 2,091 (43%) of which were made under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

The following chart shows that in the six years after the introduction of the Terrorism Act 2000, there were a large number of arrests made under Section 41, with an approximate average of 200 arrests made under this legislation each year. This compares with an average of 20 terrorism-related arrests made under other legislation over the same period.

In contrast, over the six most recent years, the number of arrests made under Section 41 has dropped to an average of about 60 per year, whilst the average number of terrorism-related arrests made under other legislation has increased to 250 per year.

The number of terrorism-related arrests made in Great Britain since 2001 reached a peak in 2017/18 with 447 arrests.

In **2020/21 there were 166 terrorism-related arrests: 29 (17%) were S41 arrests and 137 (83%) were made under other legislation.** There were 37% fewer terrorism-related arrests than the 264 made in 2019/20 - the lack of opportunity during the period of the pandemic is likely to account for some of the fall in arrests.

Notably, there is increasingly large proportion of terrorism-related arrests that are being made under non-terrorism legislation. There is no clear reason for this apparent change in preference of the police for arrests under PACE or common law powers over the specific power of arrest contained in the Terrorism Act 2000.14

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14 This is noted in D. Anderson Q.C, *The Terrorism Acts in 2014*, para 7.6, September 2015, who recommends a detailed study of this change.
4.1 Categorisation of the terrorist link

When an arrested person is suspected of a terrorism-related offence, the terrorist threat they are suspected to pose is categorised by the National Counter Terrorism Police Operations Centre (NCTPOC). The categories are not mutually exclusive and may be amended during the course of an investigation. The possible categories are:

- **International** – activity linked to or motivated by a terrorist organisation based outside the UK (this does not relate to the nationality of the suspect).
- **Northern Ireland** – activity supporting the actions or ideology of any Northern Ireland terrorist organisation.
- **Domestic** – terrorism other than International or Northern Ireland related.
- **Not classified** – other suspected offences under terrorism legislation by individuals who are not thought to have any links to a terrorist group, e.g. failing to comply with border controls.

The majority of terrorism-related arrests made since 11 September 2001 have been classified as being related to international terrorism (79%). In 2018/19

Note: Figures for the year ending March 2002 include data from 11 September onwards. Includes all charged under terrorism legislation and all charges under non-terrorism legislation where the offence was considered by the NCTPOC to be terrorism-related.


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(the latest year for which data has been published), 60% (162) of arrests were classified by ACTCC as being related to international terrorism.

4.2 Gender and age

The majority of people arrested for terrorism-related offences are male. Between 2001/02 and 2020/21 a total of 4,449 men have been arrested – representing around 91% of all terrorism-related arrests. This proportion is maintained for the numbers of people charged, and again among those subsequently convicted of terrorism offences.

In 2020/21, 90% of those arrested were male (149) and 10% (16) female. These broad proportions are maintained for the number of people charged, and again among those subsequently convicted of terrorism offences.

![Gender of persons arrested for terrorism-related offences](image)

Note: Figures for the year ending March 2002 include data from 11 September onwards. Includes all charged under terrorism legislation and all charges under non-terrorism legislation where the offence was considered by the NCTPOC to be terrorism-related.

Source: Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, table A.09, 10 June 2021

Between 2001/02 and 2020/21, 51% of all terrorism-related arrests have been of people under the age of 30. There were 204 people (4%) under the age of 18 at the time of their arrest. This proportion was broadly maintained when looking at those who have been charged and those charged with a subsequent conviction.16

In 2020/21, 48% of all terrorism-related arrests have been of people aged 30 and over. There were 21 people (13%) under the age of 18 at the time of their arrest.

There has been an increase in the number of young people arrested for terrorism-related offences in recent years. Of the 207 under 18s arrested since 11 September 2001, around half (52%) have been arrested since 1 April 2015.

Data for the gender and age of those persons arrested for terrorism-related offences between 2001/02 and 2020/21 is given in Appendix table A1.

4.3 Nationality

The majority of people (61%) arrested for terrorism-related offences in Great Britain since 11 September 2001 declared they were a British national at the time of arrest.17

The proportion of those arrested who are British nationals has generally increased each year, as shown in the chart below. In 2001/02 29% were British nationals. In 2020/21, 78% of those arrested for terrorism-related offences were British nationals.18

![Chart: British nationals arrested for terrorism-related offences as a proportion of total arrests, year ending 31 March](image)

Notes: Figures for the year ending March 2002 include data from 11 September onwards. Nationality is self-declared by persons at time of arrest and may differ from their country of origin. Excludes British dual nationality.

Source: Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, table A.12a, 10 June 2021

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17 Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, table A.12a, 10 June 2021

18 Ibid.
Since 11 September 2001 there have been 103 different nationalities arrested for terrorism-related offences. The table below shows the top 30 nationalities of people arrested.

### Top 30 nationalities of terrorism-related arrests
by number of arrests in Great Britain between year ending 31 March 2002 and year ending 31 March 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Arrests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>2,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Figures for the year ending March 2002 include data from 11 September onwards. Nationality is self-declared by persons at time of arrest and may differ from their country of origin.


After Great Britain, the next 10 most common nationalities (Algeria through to Sri Lanka) account for 21% of all terrorism-related arrests (1,011) - this is greater than the remaining 93 nationalities combined (17%).

### 4.4 Religion

In September 2013, the Home Office published an additional briefing alongside the regular counter terrorism statistics release to show an analysis by religion.\(^{19}\) This was, in part, the government’s response to David Anderson’s 2011 review of the terrorism legislation, in which he noted that some Muslims perceived an automatic bias in the characterisation of attacks by Muslims as 'terrorism' by law enforcement, politicians and the press in contrast to other extremist groups:

\(^{19}\) Home Office, *Terrorism arrests: analysis of charging and sentencing outcomes by religion*, 12 September 2013.
This, they say, results in discriminatory sentencing and cements popular perceptions of terrorism, at least in Great Britain, as crime perpetrated overwhelmingly by Muslims.\textsuperscript{20}

David Anderson said he had found no evidence indicating discrimination along these lines.\textsuperscript{21} Likewise the Home Office analysis found no statistically significant differences between Muslim and non-Muslim offenders in the proportions charged, sentence length or seriousness of offence.\textsuperscript{22}

When a person is arrested, charged or convicted, there is the option for them to self-report their religious beliefs, however there is no legal requirement for a person’s religion to be recorded. In the Home Office statistical release, which considers people arrested for a terrorism-related offence between 1 September 2001 and 31 August 2012, the religion was marked as unknown in 47% of cases.

Given the lack of a legal requirement for an individual’s religion to be recorded when they are in custody, it is likely that some religions were over-recorded simply due to practical reasons (considerations such as dietary requirements for example). This means that it is potentially more likely that Muslim religion will be recorded as opposed to somebody of Christian faith, for example, which may go unrecorded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terrorism-related arrests by religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain, September 2001 - August 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Other or no religion</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arrested</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1,066</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>2,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total arrests</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total charged</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total arrested</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charged with terrorism offence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total charged</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Religion is self-declared by persons at time of arrest and data is only available for those who choose to declare their religion as there is no legal requirement to do so.

Source: Home Office, \textit{Terrorism arrests: analysis of charging and sentencing outcomes by religion}, 12 September 2013

Between 1 September 2001 and 31 August 2012, there were 2,297 people arrested for terrorism-related offences, of which 1,066 (46%) declared themselves to be Muslim. The remaining 54% were reported as being of a different religion, of no religion, or were recorded as unknown.

Following arrest, 41% of Muslims were subsequently charged compared with 37% of those of another or no religion: these differences are not statistically significant and may be down to chance. However, a statistically significant difference was found between Muslims charged and those of an unknown religion.23

Currently, more recent data relating to the religion of those arrested for terrorism-related offences is not available. Information on the religion of those in custody can be found in section 6.

4.5 Pre-charge detention

Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000 gives a police constable the power to arrest a person, without warrant, if they reasonably suspect them to be a terrorist. Arrest under Section 41 also provides the police with wider powers of investigation by extending the time limit for which a person may be detained without charge beyond the normal limits allowed under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in England and Wales, and the more restrictive Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995. These provisions extending the limit on pre-charge detention are contained within Schedule 8 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

The maximum period of detention allowed under Section 41, currently 14 days, was subject to considerable variation between 2001 and 2011:

- 2001-2003: 7 days
- 2003-2006: 14 days
- 2006-2011: 28 days

Following a Home Office review in 2011 it was concluded that there should be no routine requirement for 28 days detention and that a maximum of 14 days should suffice.24 An emergency power allowing for temporary extension to 28 days was provided for from 25 January 2011 and this remains the current maximum.25

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23 Home Office, Terrorism arrests: analysis of charging and sentencing outcomes by religion, 12 September 2013, section 3.
Of the 2,091 people arrested under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000 since 11 September 2001, the majority (87%) have been detained for fewer than 7 days; 757 people (36%) have been held for less than one day; and 1,069 (51%) for between one and seven days. Only 11 people have been detained for longer than 14 days, 10 in 2006/07 and one in 2007/08. Six people were detained for the 28 day maximum period in 2006/07.

4.6 Types of charges

Charges following terrorism-related offences are not limited to offences under terrorism legislation, nor does an initial arrest categorised as ‘terrorism-related’ mean that the resulting outcome of any investigation is recorded as such.

The chart below shows the total number of charges against people arrested for a terrorism-related offence by type of charge.

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Note: Figures for the year ending March 2002 include data from 11 September onwards.
Source: Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, table A.02, 10 June 2021

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26 Home Office, Operation of Police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: quarterly update to December 2017, table QA.02
In total, 41% of those arrested for terrorism-related offences since 11 September 2001 have been charged, and of these, 67% were terrorism-related charges.  

In 2020/21, of 166 terrorism-related arrests, 27% resulted in charges, and of these, 82% were terrorism-related charges.

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Note: Figures for the year ending March 2002 include data from 11 September onwards.

Prosecutions and convictions

Not all individuals charged are subsequently prosecuted. For a prosecution to go ahead, the CPS must be satisfied that there is a realistic prospect of a conviction and that it is within the public interest to pursue a case.

Note: Figures for the year ending March 2002 include data from 11 September onwards. Data includes all charges under non-terrorism legislation and under other legislation where considered by NCTPOC to be terrorism related. Excludes cases where conviction was later quashed on appeal.
Source: Home Office, *Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021*, table A.06c, 10 June 2021

Of the 1,352 individuals charged with a terrorism-related offence since 11 September 2001, 85% (1,154) were proceeded against, and of those, 87% (1,004) were convicted.29

Of the 37 persons charged with a terrorism-related offence in the year ending 31 March 2021, 14 were charged with a terrorism-related offence, of whom 13 were found guilty. As at 14 January 2021, 19 were awaiting prosecution. 30

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29 Home Office, *Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021*, table A.06c, 10 June 2021
30 ibid.
It may take some time, following a suspect’s arrest, for an individual to be charged and for any trial to begin. For this reason, the prosecution rate for the most recent years (shown by a broken line in the charge above) will be lower but is more than likely to be revised upwards as on-going investigations are completed.

The conviction rate of terrorism-related offences has increased since the year ending 31 March 2002, after an initial drop to a low of 53% in 2004 when 18 defendants were found not guilty. The conviction rate reached 100% in 2011 and has remained above 90% since the year ending March 2013.

Full data on the charging outcomes of terrorism-related offences since September 2001 is given in Appendix table A2.
Prison population

The number of people in custody either convicted and sentenced for a terrorism-connected offence, or on remand pending trial, is provided by the National Offender Management Service (for England and Wales) and the Scottish Prison Service. Data on terrorist and extremist prisoners is published on a quarterly basis and provides a point in time indication of the number of individuals in custody; it does not necessarily indicate a flow.

From September 2020 onwards, the Ministry of Justice and Home Office have formally adopted the definition 'Terrorism-Connected Offender'. This definition replaces the previously used term 'Terrorism-Related Offender' which will no longer be used for the purposes of publishing official statistics for terrorist prisoners. For this reason, figures for September 2020 onwards are not directly comparable with previous years or quarters.31

‘Terrorism-Connected Offender’ refers to individuals who have committed specified offences which the sentencing court has determined have a ‘terrorist connection’ in accordance with Part 3 of the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008. Whereas ‘Terrorism-Related Offender’ refers to individuals who have been convicted of a terrorism-related offence under both terrorism (Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation) and non-terrorism legislation. The later includes prisoners who may be linked to prisoners who are charged with a terrorist offence but they themselves are charged with a criminal offence such as providing false documentation.

The Home Office classifies terrorist prisoners by ‘ideology’ in relation to their membership to proscribed groups believed to be involved in terrorism, according to the following definitions:32

- **Islamist extremist** – This refers to individuals from Islamic proscribed groups who advocate, justify or glorify acts of violence (especially against civilians) or other illegal conduct to achieve fundamental changes to society.
- **Extreme right-wing** - This refers to individuals from politically extreme right-wing proscribed groups such as National Action which became the first extreme right-wing group to be proscribed as a terrorist organisation in December 2016.
- **Other** – This refers to individuals from proscribed groups not categorised as ‘Islamist extremist’ or ‘far right-wing’. For example, this includes

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32 ibid
Northern-Ireland related groups such as the Ulster Volunteers Force (UVF). This category also includes cases whereby the individual’s proscribed terrorist group is unclear meaning their ideological link is not known.

On 31 March 2021, there were 157 individuals in prison classed as ‘Islamist extremists’, with a further 44 categorised as ‘extreme right-wing’.

On 31 March 2021, 98 (46%) of the 215 prisoners in custody for terrorism-connected offences defined themselves as Asian or Asian British, 68 (32%) as White and 18 (8%) as Black or Black British.

The majority (73%) of prisoners in custody for terrorism-related offences on 31 March 2021 declared themselves as Muslim. 25 prisoners (12%) were of a Christian denomination.

Notes: includes persons on remand as well as those sentenced to prison. Figures for 31 March 2021 are not directly comparable with previous years.

Source: Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, table P.01, 10 June 2021
Terrorism in Great Britain: the statistics

Ethnicity and religion of terrorist and extremist prisoners
Great Britain, as at 31 March

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or Black British</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic group</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrecorded</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religious groups</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Both ethnicity and religion are self-identified. Prisoners may change religion while in prison. These changes will not be accounted for in the figures.

Ethnicity

7.1 Stop and Searches

When a person is stopped and searched under Section 43, the searching officer asks the person their ethnicity. Data for the self-defined ethnicity of those stopped and searched is only available for the Metropolitan Police Service. The chart below shows this data annually from 2010/11.

Note: does not include ‘vehicle only’ searches.
Source: Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, table S.02, 10 June 2021

Of those stopped and searched in London under Section 43 powers between 2010/11 and 2020/21: 33% self-defined as White; 28% as Asian or Asian British; and 12% Black or Black British.
Data from the 2011 Census shows that the percentage of Asian people stopped and searched in the period was proportionally higher than the share of the London population that was Asian (17%). White people accounted for almost two thirds of the London population (60%) but represented around one third of those stopped and searched.33

Of all the people stopped and searched under S43 in 2020/21: 27% self-defined as White; 21% Asian or Asian British; and 12% Black or Black British. Note that 33% did not state their ethnicity.

### 7.2 Schedule 7 examinations

The self-defined ethnicity of those stopped for Schedule 7 examinations has been recorded from 2010/11 and is shown in the chart below. Of those stopped between 2010/11 and 2020/21: 37% were White, 26% Asian or Asian British, 19% were Chinese or another ethnicity, and 8% were Black or Black British.

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33 ONS, *Regional ethnic diversity* (2011 Census data), 1 August 2018.
In 2020/21, of those stopped: 24% were White, 25% Asian or Asian British, 25% were Chinese or another ethnicity, and 7% Black or Black British.

7.3 Arrestrs

The ethnicity of a suspect is based upon the observation of a police officer at the time of arrest or charge. Those arrested may consider themselves to be of a different ethnic origin than what was observed by the police officer.

Of those arrested for terrorism-related offences between 2011/12 and 2020/21, 44% were reported as being of Asian appearance, 33% White, 13% Black, and 10% Other or Not Known.

Data from the 2011 Census for England and Wales and the 2011 Scotland Census shows that in Great Britain: 87% of the population identified as White, 2% identified as being of Mixed ethnicity, 7% as Asian, 3% as Black, African or Caribbean and 1% identified as ‘Other’.

In 2020/21, of those arrested for terrorism-related offences: 53% were reported as White, 30% of Asian appearance, 6% Black, and 11% Other.

Note: Ethnic appearance as recorded by the police at time of arrest.
Source: Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, table A.11, 10 June 2021

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34 National Records of Scotland, Scotland’s Census 2011 Table KS201SC – Ethnic Group, ONS, 2011 Census for England and Wales Table KS201EW via nomis, both accessed 12 October 2021
35 Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, table A.11, 10 June 2021
As the graphs above show, data suggests that in recent years, those arrested for terrorism-related offences are increasingly of White ethnic appearance whilst the proportion of those arrested of Asian ethnic appearance has fallen. The proportion of those who are either Black or Other has generally remained around 10% in recent years.
8 Control orders and TPIMS

The basis for executive measures against individuals suspected of terrorism is rooted in legislation passed at the time of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Legislation such as the Prevention of Terrorism Acts 1974, 1976 and 1989 brought in wide ranging emergency and special powers, including ‘internment’ (i.e. detention without trial), exclusion orders and detention orders.36

8.1 Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001

Following the attacks on the Twin Towers on 11 September 2001 the Government at the time reacted quickly with the passage of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001.37 The incompatibility of this legislation with Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the right to liberty) led to the Government making a controversial derogation order, just two years after the Convention had been incorporated into UK law.38

As explained by the then Home Secretary, a total of 17 people had been certified under the Act, 16 of them detained:

Eight were detained in December 2001, one in February 2002, two in April 2002, one in October 2002, two in November 2002, two in January 2002 and one in October 2003. One further individual has been certified under Part IV of the ATCS Act in August 2003 but is detained under other powers.

Of the total detained, two have voluntarily left the United Kingdom. The other fourteen remain in detention.39

37 Measures provided for by this Act include the extension of police powers in carrying out searches and obtaining fingerprints of terrorist suspects for identification purposes, retention of communications data and freezing and seizure of terrorist assets. Part IV of the Act extended powers to indefinitely detain foreign nationals who are suspected international terrorists.
39 HC Deb 18 November 2003 vol 413 c27WS
Eventually six of the individuals detained under this legislation left the UK. The other 11 individuals remained in detention and certified under the Act until Part IV was replaced by Control Orders in 2005.

8.2 Control Orders

In 2004, the House of Lord ruled to quash a derogation order in relation to Part IV of the Act. The Government did not seek to renew the Part IV powers and instead introduced a system of Control Orders under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005.

Control Orders were executive measures which imposed certain obligations upon an individual considered ‘necessary for purposes connected with preventing or restricting involvement by that individual in terrorism-related activity. Non-derogating Control Orders (i.e. those which were deemed not to impact on an individual’s rights under ECHR) were issued by the Home Secretary. Derogating Control Orders could only be issued on application to a court, but no such Orders were ever made.

Under the Control Orders regime (and subsequent Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures) the Home Secretary was required to make a statement to Parliament every three months listing the number of measures in force. Data has been collated from these statements, as recorded in Hansard, and used to create the charts below which show the number of measures in force.

Notes: Control Orders were provided for under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005. This was replaced by Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures on 15 December 2011 and therefore there is a discontinuity in the 3 month period in the dataset.

Source: Figures collected from Hansard by House of Commons Library

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40 A and others v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2004] UKHL 56
41 Section 1(3) Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005.
In total, 52 individuals were subject to Control Orders; all were men who were suspected of involvement in Islamist terrorism.\(^{43}\) When Control Orders were introduced in 2005, all the individuals subject to an Order were foreign nationals. By the time they were replaced by Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures in 2011, all were British Citizens.

8.3 TPIMS

Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (TPIMs) were introduced by the Coalition Government in 2011 as a replacement for Control Orders.\(^{44}\) Like Control Orders, TPIMs are issued by the Home Secretary. They may also place certain obligations on an individual but are restricted to the 12 measures listed in Schedule 1 of the 2011 Act.

There are currently five TPIMs in force as at 31 May 2021\(^{45}\), considerably fewer than at the peak of 20 Control Orders in June 2009. One notable trend is the reduction in the number of measures issued against foreign nationals over the years with a contrasting increase in those issued against British Citizens.

\(^{44}\) The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 was repealed by the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011.
\(^{45}\) Home Office, Terrorism Prevention, and Investigation Measures: 1 March to 31 May 2021 [Written Statement HCWS161], 8 July 2021
9

Extremists abroad

In a statement to the House on 1 September 2014 the then Prime Minister David Cameron highlighted the concern of the European Council over the “creation of an Islamic Caliphate in Iraq and Syria, and the Islamist-extremist export of terrorism on which it is based”. The Prime Minister went on to emphasise the potential threat posed by Britons travelling abroad to take part in extremist activity, subsequently returning to the UK and posing a threat to national security.

It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of foreign fighters who have travelled abroad to join Sunni militant organisations such as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In September 2014, the security services estimated that 500 Britons were fighting in Syria, many of whom were affiliated with ISIL. This was in addition to 700 from France, 400 from Germany and “hundreds more from other countries including America, Canada, Austria, Denmark, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands and Australia”.

The latest (4 February 2019) Government estimate of the number of British nationals who have travelled to Syria and Iraq to take part in the conflict is 900, with around 20% of these being killed overseas and 40% being known to have returned. Only “a very small number of travellers have returned in the last 12 months”. More recent data is unlikely to be published “for reasons of national security.”

Further background information on extremists abroad can be found in the HC Library Briefing Paper: Returning terrorist fighters.

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46 HC Deb 1 September 2014 c23.
47 Ibid., c24.
48 PQ 216313 [Islamic State: British Nationals Abroad] 4 February 2019
49 Home Office, PQ 175698 [on Proscribed Organisations: British nationals abroad]
### A1. Persons arrested for terrorism-related offences, by age and gender

**Great Britain, year ending 31 March**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total arrests</th>
<th>Under 18</th>
<th>18-20</th>
<th>21-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30 and over</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002 ¹</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>269</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 ²</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>181</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>335</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>391</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 ³</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 ⁴</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total since Sept 2001</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,907</strong></td>
<td><strong>207</strong></td>
<td><strong>442</strong></td>
<td><strong>784</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,089</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,384</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,449</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Proportion | 4% | 9% | 16% | 22% | 49% | 91% | 9% |

**Notes:**

1. Figures for the year ending December 2002 include data from 11 September 2001 onwards.
2. Includes 1 arrest of unknown age.
3, 4. Include 1 arrest of unknown gender.

Source: Home Office, Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021, tables A.09 and A.10, 10 June 2021
### A2. Charging outcomes of terrorism-related offences under terrorism and non-terrorism legislation

#### Great Britain, year ending 31 March

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Charged</th>
<th>Prosecutions</th>
<th>Convictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Not proceeded against</td>
<td>Awaiting prosecution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>63</td>
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<td>2004</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2007</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total since Sept 2001</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,352</strong></td>
<td><strong>143</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Notes:
1. Data presented here are based on the latest position with each case as at the date of data provision from NCTPOC (14 January 2021).
2. Includes all charges under non-terrorism legislation and under other legislation where considered by NCTPOC to be terrorism related.
3. Figures for the year ending December 2002 include data from 11 September 2001 onwards.
4. Refers to the substantive charge at indictment recorded by the Crown Prosecution Service.
5. Includes other cases/outcomes such as cautions, transfers to UK Border Agencies, the offender being circulated as wanted and extraditions.
6. Excludes cases when a conviction was later quashed on appeal.

Source: Home Office, *Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: financial year ending March 2021*, table A.06c, 10 June 2021
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