

## RSS news

**Title:** London Attack by Convicted Terrorist Disrupts U.K. Campaign

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**Summary:** (Bloomberg) -- The man suspected of stabbing two people to death near London Bridge had been released early from jail after a terrorism conviction, allowing an attack in the heart of the city that is disrupting the U.K.'s general election campaign two weeks before the vote. Officers shot and killed the 28-year-old attacker, who was wearing a fake suicide vest after members of the public wrestled him to the ground on London Bridge, on the edge of the city's financial district. He was tackled by passersby moments after carrying out the attack at about 2 p.m. on Friday. Boris Johnson broke away from campaigning on Friday for the Dec. 12 election to rush back to Downing Street for a security briefing on the attack. Speaking afterward, he praised the civilians who tried to stop the suspected terrorist before police arrived, and declared that "Britain will not be cowed" by the incident. On Saturday, Johnson met with police at the site of the attack and used the opportunity to criticize the U.K.'s criminal justice system, which routinely allows for jail sentences, even for criminals committing violent crimes or acts of terrorism, to be reduced. "The practice of automatic early release, when you cut a sentence in half and let serious and violent offenders out, is not working," he told the BBC after his meeting with police. [Click Here for the Day's Events as They Happened](#) The suspect, identified by police as Usman Khan, was released from prison on parole in December 2018, the police said in a statement. Khan was one of nine people convicted in 2012 for offenses ranging from a plot to bomb the London Stock Exchange to planning a terrorist training camp. Khan originally received an indeterminate sentence, which was changed on appeal in 2013 to 16 years, the BBC reported. Johnson also praised the men who fought the attacker and pinned him to the ground on London Bridge until the police arrived. Khan began the attack while attending a conference on prisoner rehabilitation at a building called Fishmongers' Hall next to the bridge. A Polish chef grabbed an ornamental narwhal tusk off a wall and used it to confront the attacker, while another chased Khan with a fire extinguisher, Sky News reported. A third man who aided the victims and tried to fend Khan off was a convicted murderer who was close to completing his sentence, the Telegraph reported, while another man stopped his car and helped the others force Khan to release the two knives he was carrying. "I want to pay tribute to the sheer bravery of the members of the public who went to deal with and put their own lives at risk," Johnson said. The first victim of the attack was identified as Jack Merritt, 25, a University of Cambridge graduate who was a coordinator of the conference that Khan attended, the BBC reported. With voters set to go to the polls on Dec. 12, the impact of such a potentially disruptive event is unclear. But the revelation that the attacker was a former convicted terrorist is likely to put pressure on the ruling Conservatives -- who traditionally view crime prevention as one of their stronger cards -- to explain why the person was allowed out of jail. Johnson also told the BBC that his government would review sentencing policies in the wake of the attack. Campaigning in the U.K.'s last election in 2017 was thrown off course by two terrorist attacks, including one in the same area of London just five days before the vote. In that incident, eight people were killed and 48 injured. In the aftermath of the 2017 attack, U.S. President Donald Trump triggered a diplomatic row when he criticized London Mayor Sadiq Khan over his response, and their spat has continued ever since. The U.S. president arrives in the U.K. next week for a NATO summit, which Johnson hopes will be a low-key visit. Trump spoke to Johnson on Saturday and expressed his condolences following the attack, White House spokesman Judd Deere said in a statement. On Friday, Johnson and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn spoke by phone and each suspended their election campaigns in

the capital for the rest of the day. Johnson's team said he would also cancel his events on Saturday so he can focus on the security response. But speaking to television reporters just before a meeting of the government's 'Cobra' crisis committee on Friday evening, Johnson highlighted his election pledge to hire extra police officers. 'Hunted Down' "Anybody involved in this crime and these attacks will be hunted down and will be brought to justice," he said. "This country will never be cowed or divided or intimidated by this sort of attack and our British values will prevail." After the alarm was raised on Friday lunchtime, armed police cleared cafes and shops in the London Bridge area. Officers burst into restaurants in the popular Borough Market area on the other side of the river, urging diners to leave immediately. They shouted "Out, out, out," to people at the Black and Blue bar, and ordered customers to walk away with their hands on their heads. Nearby, police shouted to pedestrians to "run." The police asked people to avoid the area. Mayor Sadiq Khan said Saturday on BBC's Radio 4 that while there will be "more high visibility police officers present in London" through the weekend "there's no reason to believe there is an increased threat" from terrorism. The bridge will remain closed for some time, he said from the site on Saturday afternoon. (Updates with Trump-Johnson phone call from 15th paragraph.) \--With assistance from Tim Ross. To contact the reporters on this story: Jessica Shankleman in London at [jshankleman@bloomberg.net](mailto:jshankleman@bloomberg.net); Greg Ritchie in London at [gritchie10@bloomberg.net](mailto:gritchie10@bloomberg.net); Kitty Donaldson in London at [kdonaldson1@bloomberg.net](mailto:kdonaldson1@bloomberg.net) To contact the editors responsible for this story: Tim Ross at [tross54@bloomberg.net](mailto:tross54@bloomberg.net), James Amott, Andrew Davis For more articles like this, please visit us at [bloomberg.com](http://bloomberg.com) ©2019 Bloomberg L.P. <https://news.yahoo.com/terrorist-kills-two-london-putting-205829309.html>  
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