Manchester police scour Victoria station after triple stabbing

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<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/dec/31/three-people-stabbed-at-manchester-victoria-railway-station>

Police forensic officers are scouring Manchester’s Victoria station after a man stabbed three people, including a British Transport Police officer, during New Year’s Eve celebrations.

The incident, classified as critical, was being investigated by counter-terrorism police officers after the perpetrator was allegedly heard shouting Islamist slogans. A man in his 30s was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and remains in custody.

National security officials in government, police and security services were helping the investigation into the incident in which the British Transport police officer was stabbed in the shoulder, a man and woman in their 50s sustained abdominal injuries, and the woman received wounds to her face.

Manchester city centre police said the incident just before 9pm was one of several “serious crime incidents” overnight, with 15 arrests being made and a total of 120 incidents recorded since 7pm on Monday.

They said in a tweet just after 6am on Tuesday that officers had “[done a great job of looking after people in the city](https://twitter.com/GMPCityCentre/status/1079982633524883456)”.

The former chief constable of Greater Manchester police Sir Peter Fahy commended the courage of the officers who dealt with the station incident.

“It would certainly appear police officers showed incredible bravery in tackling the attacker at Manchester’s Victoria station last night, saving lives,” he said.

Greater Manchester police said the cordon at the station would be lifted soon, but a large police presence would remain in place. They also said the officer who was attacked, a sergeant in his 30s, had been released from hospital.

“You will see more officers in and around the station throughout the morning but this is not as a result of any increased threat,” the police said. “Please follow directions from officers on the ground and speak to them if you have any concerns.”

Rob Potts, the assistant chief constable of Greater Manchester police, said officers were keeping an open mind about the attack. “[The] events will have understandably worried people but I need to stress that the incident is not ongoing. A man is in custody and there is currently no intelligence to suggest that there is any wider threat at this time.”

Sam Clack, a BBC producer, who was waiting for a tram when the attack took place, said: “I just heard this most blood-curdling scream and looked down the platform. What it looked like was a guy in his 60s with a woman of similar age and another guy all dressed in black.

“It looked like they were having a fight, but she was screaming in this blood-curdling way. I saw police in hi-vis come towards him. He came towards me. I looked down and saw he had a kitchen knife with a black handle with a good 12-inch blade. It was just fear, pure fear.”

Clack said he heard the man shouting “Allah” during the attack. “He shouted it before, he shouted it during it – Allah.

“The guy, his exact words were, he said: ‘As long as you keep bombing other countries, this sort of shit is going to keep happening.’”

He said police used a stun gun and pepper spray on the man before “six or seven” officers jumped on him. “It was scary. I have never been so scared in my life. Someone with a knife six to eight feet away, he had just stabbed someone. It was the proximity. It just highlights the fact that it can happen anywhere.”

The North West ambulance service said it sent three vehicles to the incident and took all three victims to hospital for treatment. While the station was closed after the attack, the city’s fireworks display in Albert Square went ahead amid increased security.

There have been no major terrorist attacks in the UK for the past year but MI5 and the police say they remain extremely busy dealing with 700 investigations into suspected terrorism. In 2017, there were five terrorist attacks – four in London and one in Manchester.

The terrorism threat level for the UK remains at severe, meaning an attack is assessed as being highly likely.