# Notting Hill Carnival sees significant drop in serious violence amid controversial facial recognition use



This year's Notting Hill Carnival saw a notable reduction in serious violence compared with recent years, according to the Metropolitan Police. The two-day event resulted in 423 arrests, with 223 arrests recorded on the day of the adult parade alone. Despite the large crowd, only two stabbings were reported, neither of which caused serious injury. This marks a significant improvement from previous years, where multiple stabbings and fatalities had cast a shadow over the festivities.

The Metropolitan Police attributed this reduction in violence in part to the use of advanced security measures, including live facial recognition (LFR) technology, metal detectors, and stop-and-search operations. Assistant Commissioner Matt Ward, who led policing at the event, stated that these measures proactively targeted individuals seeking to cause harm. According to police records, 52 arrests over the weekend were directly made through LFR identifications, highlighting its growing role in maintaining public safety at mass gatherings.

The use of live facial recognition at the carnival, however, remains controversial. Civil liberty and anti-racism groups have criticised the technology as a form of mass surveillance that unfairly targets all attendees as potential suspects, particularly raising concerns about its accuracy for women and people of colour. In a letter to Met Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley, 11 organisations condemned the decision to reintroduce LFR, describing it as "deeply disappointing." The Metropolitan Police maintain, however, that the technology's accuracy is balanced across ethnicity and gender, and that it plays a key part in crime prevention.

Looking at the nature of offences, the majority of arrests were related to cannabis possession, offensive weapons, and drug supply. Specifically, 70 people were arrested for cannabis possession, 46 for carrying weapons, and 44 for drug dealing. Additionally, 18 sexual offences and five robberies were recorded during the event. The two stabbings occurred in Powis Terrace and Oxford Gardens, areas within Notting Hill. The police's data for the year also reflects ongoing challenges in managing large-scale gatherings but points towards an overall downward trend in serious violent incidents.

Last year’s carnival was notably more violent, with eight stabbings resulting in two deaths, including the tragic killing of Cher Maximen, who was fatally stabbed with a zombie knife in front of her child. The 2023 event saw a higher number of arrests—334—with numerous incidents of serious injuries, marking the year as particularly challenging for law enforcement. The contrast between the two years suggests that the recent enhanced policing strategies may be beginning to bear fruit.

The Notting Hill Carnival is one of London’s largest cultural celebrations, attracting close to a million people annually. While efforts to ensure safety often face criticism for perceived heavy-handedness, organisers and the police alike emphasise the importance of maintaining an environment where attendees can celebrate without fear. The 2024 festival, despite its relative improvement in violence figures, still saw significant law enforcement activity, reflecting the complexities of managing such a vibrant and diverse event.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpdj7lnx40xo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/metropolitan-police-london-brazilian-african-scotland-yard-b1244408.html), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2023/aug/30/notting-hill-carnival-violence-stabbings)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpdj7lnx40xo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/metropolitan-police-london-brazilian-african-scotland-yard-b1244408.html), [[6]](https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2023/november-2023/notting-hill-carnival-data/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpdj7lnx40xo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/05/met-police-facial-recognition-software-notting-hill-carnival)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpdj7lnx40xo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/metropolitan-police-london-brazilian-african-scotland-yard-b1244408.html), [[6]](https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2023/november-2023/notting-hill-carnival-data/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpdj7lnx40xo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c07e55159kro)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpdj7lnx40xo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2023/aug/30/notting-hill-carnival-violence-stabbings), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/culture/article/2024/aug/26/police-notting-hill-carnival-violence-stabbings)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpdj7lnx40xo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/metropolitan-police-london-brazilian-african-scotland-yard-b1244408.html> - The Standard reports that the Metropolitan Police stated this year's Notting Hill Carnival experienced significantly fewer serious violent incidents compared to previous years. Over the two main days, there were 423 arrests, including 46 for possession of an offensive weapon. Two stabbings occurred, one in Powis Terrace and one in Oxford Gardens, but neither resulted in life-threatening injuries. The police utilised live facial recognition technology to proactively identify and arrest individuals attempting to cause harm during the event.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2023/aug/30/notting-hill-carnival-violence-stabbings> - The Guardian reports that the Notting Hill Carnival in 2023 was marred by violence, with two men stabbed, one critically, and six others sustaining non-life-threatening injuries. A total of 275 arrests were made over the two days, including 165 on the final day for various offences such as possession of offensive weapons, assaults on police officers, drug possession, and sexual offences. The organisers condemned the violence, emphasising that it was not representative of the carnival's values.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/05/met-police-facial-recognition-software-notting-hill-carnival> - The Guardian reports that the Metropolitan Police planned to deploy facial recognition technology at the 2017 Notting Hill Carnival to identify potential troublemakers by matching faces in the crowd against databases of individuals previously arrested or under bail conditions. This initiative aimed to enhance public safety during the event, which attracts up to 1 million people annually. The technology was intended to proactively identify and prevent potential incidents before they occurred.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c07e55159kro> - BBC News reports that the Notting Hill Carnival in 2024 saw eight people stabbed, with a total of 334 arrests made during the event. Three stabbings occurred on Sunday, including one involving a young mother who remains in critical condition. On Monday, five people were stabbed, with two critically injured. The Metropolitan Police stated that the majority of arrests were for possessing an offensive weapon or drug offences, highlighting the challenges of policing such a large-scale event.
6. <https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/metropolitan-police/disclosure-2023/november-2023/notting-hill-carnival-data/> - The Metropolitan Police's official disclosure provides detailed statistics on the Notting Hill Carnival, including the number of stabbings and arrests over the years. In 2023, there were 10 stabbings, none fatal, and 308 arrests, with the most common offences being possession of an offensive weapon, drugs, and sexual offences. The data highlights the ongoing challenges in ensuring public safety at the event.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/article/2024/aug/26/police-notting-hill-carnival-violence-stabbings> - The Guardian reports that the Notting Hill Carnival in 2024 was marred by violence, with three people stabbed on the first day, narrowly avoiding fatalities. The Metropolitan Police condemned the violence, emphasising that the carnival is a community event meant for celebration. The police utilised metal-detecting 'knife arches' and a helicopter to monitor the event, resulting in 230 arrests on the final day, including 49 for possession of an offensive weapon.