# Selina Scott’s daylight mugging exposes London’s stretched police amid rising street crime



Veteran broadcaster Selina Scott has come forward with a harrowing account of a daylight mugging in central London, expressing deep frustration at the perceived lack of police assistance and the broader issues of rising street crime in the capital. The 74-year-old, known for her long career on British television, was attacked by a gang of around seven or eight individuals while leaving a Waterstones bookstore on Piccadilly. Despite bravely fighting off her assailants, Ms Scott was robbed of her purse, which contained bank cards, her driving licence, and cash.

The incident, which occurred in broad daylight, left Ms Scott feeling "shattered and traumatised" as well as "embarrassed and stupid" for having been caught off guard. She described the experience as leaving her with a sense that the streets of London are no longer safe, emphasising her unsuccessful attempts to find any police presence nearby. After the attack, she found that the nearest police station had been closed for several years, further compounding her frustration. When officers were scheduled to visit her home the following day, they failed to attend, citing a lack of available vehicles. "You’ve got to fend for yourself in this world. You can’t depend on anyone," she told Good Morning Britain.

This case has drawn attention amid a wider context of increasing crime in London. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, issued an apology acknowledging that the police could not provide the expected level of service on that day, reflecting broader challenges facing the force. According to official data, thefts of a similar nature have surged by 23.5% over the past year alone. Conservative politicians have criticised the current leadership under Mayor Sir Sadiq Khan for what they see as a failure to stem the rise in crime, pointing to cuts in police funding and staff as contributing factors. They have called for a zero-tolerance approach, including better use of technology such as facial recognition to improve prosecution rates, which remain disappointingly low.

London’s standing on crime indexes tells part of the story: it ranks 103rd out of 380 major cities worldwide, a position that places it below Naples but above Milan and Rome. These figures highlight growing concerns about public safety, corroborated by other reports of rising street crime in key areas like the West End and Westminster. Notably, thefts from individuals in the West End have more than tripled over two years, fuelling anxieties among retailers and residents alike.

Community responses also reflect this sense of vulnerability. In Enfield, for example, local volunteers have taken to patrolling areas around schools to protect children from frequent robberies, revealing a grassroots push for safety amidst perceived police scarcity.

The Metropolitan Police have responded by highlighting increased patrols, both in uniform and plain clothes, focusing on robbery hotspots and efforts to apprehend repeat offenders. They report a recent 18.6% reduction in neighbourhood crimes and a 10% increase in arrests over the last 15 months. Additionally, Mayor Khan’s office stresses the ongoing challenges posed by historic police funding cuts and maintains that significant investment is being made to support neighbourhood policing and frontline officers.

Yet, with private security increasingly filling gaps left by stretched police resources and high-profile incidents such as muggings targeting luxury goods in affluent areas, concerns remain acute. Some critics argue that more decisive, better-resourced policing is urgently needed to prevent London’s growing reputation as a crime hotspot from worsening.

Selina Scott’s ordeal underscores the human impact behind the statistics – highlighting how even well-known and resourceful individuals can feel vulnerable and isolated when crime strikes and public safety mechanisms fall short. Her case invites renewed scrutiny on how London’s policing and community safety strategies can be strengthened to restore confidence in the city’s streets.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14845231/Selina-Scott-says-streets-London-arent-safe-left-fend-no-help-police-following-daylight-robbery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14845231/Selina-Scott-says-streets-London-arent-safe-left-fend-no-help-police-following-daylight-robbery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14845231/Selina-Scott-says-streets-London-arent-safe-left-fend-no-help-police-following-daylight-robbery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/02/09/mugging-spree-threatening-future-west-end-retailers/), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-65788756)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14845231/Selina-Scott-says-streets-London-arent-safe-left-fend-no-help-police-following-daylight-robbery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/indian-ceos-complain-to-uk-leader-about-mugging-rolex-thefts-in-london-5011969)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14845231/Selina-Scott-says-streets-London-arent-safe-left-fend-no-help-police-following-daylight-robbery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/02/09/mugging-spree-threatening-future-west-end-retailers/), [[6]](https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/uk/2024/08/16/panic-on-the-streets-of-london-a-city-with-a-growing-reputation-as-a-hotbed-of-crime/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd1vymmmxj1o), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-65788756)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14845231/Selina-Scott-says-streets-London-arent-safe-left-fend-no-help-police-following-daylight-robbery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-65788756)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14845231/Selina-Scott-says-streets-London-arent-safe-left-fend-no-help-police-following-daylight-robbery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/indian-ceos-complain-to-uk-leader-about-mugging-rolex-thefts-in-london-5011969), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-65788756)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14845231/Selina-Scott-says-streets-London-arent-safe-left-fend-no-help-police-following-daylight-robbery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/uk/2024/08/16/panic-on-the-streets-of-london-a-city-with-a-growing-reputation-as-a-hotbed-of-crime/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14845231/Selina-Scott-says-streets-London-arent-safe-left-fend-no-help-police-following-daylight-robbery.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/02/09/mugging-spree-threatening-future-west-end-retailers/> - A significant rise in muggings and pickpocketing in London's West End has been reported, with thefts from individuals increasing more than threefold over the past two years. In 2023, there were 2,806 such incidents, up from 796 in 2021. This surge in crime is causing concern among retailers, particularly on Bond Street, and has prompted calls for a greater police presence to deter criminal activities and ensure public safety.
3. <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/indian-ceos-complain-to-uk-leader-about-mugging-rolex-thefts-in-london-5011969> - Indian CEOs have expressed concerns to UK leaders about rising crime in London, particularly muggings and the theft of luxury items like Rolex watches. During a meeting in Delhi, they highlighted incidents where individuals were targeted in central areas such as Mayfair. The CEOs emphasized the need for improved police response to ensure the safety of both residents and visitors in the city.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd1vymmmxj1o> - In Enfield, London, a community group called Love Your Doorstep has been established to protect schoolchildren from muggings. Volunteers patrol the town centre, especially during school hours, in response to a spate of robberies. The initiative reflects growing concerns about youth crime and the perceived lack of police presence in the area, with residents calling for more officers on the streets to safeguard young people.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-65788756> - The rise in retail crime in London has led to an increase in private security measures, with more businesses hiring private security personnel. This trend coincides with a significant rise in shoplifting incidents, which have increased by more than a fifth in the 12 months to April. The growth of private policing reflects concerns over the Metropolitan Police's stretched resources and its ability to respond effectively to retail crime.
6. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/uk/2024/08/16/panic-on-the-streets-of-london-a-city-with-a-growing-reputation-as-a-hotbed-of-crime/> - London is facing a growing reputation as a hub for crime, with incidents such as the stabbing of an 11-year-old Australian tourist at a major landmark. The city is experiencing a rise in opportunistic robberies and violent crime in areas previously considered safe. This shift in crime patterns has raised concerns about public safety and the effectiveness of law enforcement in maintaining order.
7. <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publication-html/police-response-to-public-disorder-in-july-and-august-2024-tranche-2/> - An inspection by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services evaluated the police response to public disorder in July and August 2024. The report highlighted areas where the police service's public order capacity and capabilities were lacking, and identified lessons for future responses to similar incidents. The findings underscore the need for improved preparedness and management of public disorder by law enforcement agencies.