



“Treated With Contempt”

**An Independent Panel Report
into Fans’ Experiences Before,
During and After the 2022
Champions League Final in Paris**

**Phil Scraton, Deena Haydon, Lucy Easthope,
Patricia Canning and Peter Marshall**

October 2022

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FOREWORD

As the pinnacle of European club football, the Champions League Final in Paris on 28th May 2022 should have been a celebration of all that is good in sport. A match between two of Europe's finest Clubs - Liverpool and Real Madrid - played on a warm early summer's evening and attracting a global television audience of many millions, expectations were high.

UEFA shared 40,000 of the 75,000 stadium capacity between the Clubs, retaining the remaining 35,000 tickets for discretionary sale and distribution. With large fanbases, most fans who constitute the lifeblood of Clubs are unable to acquire tickets for the match. Over recent years this has led to the provision of Fan Parks in the host city, providing entertainment and screening the match to those unable to access tickets.

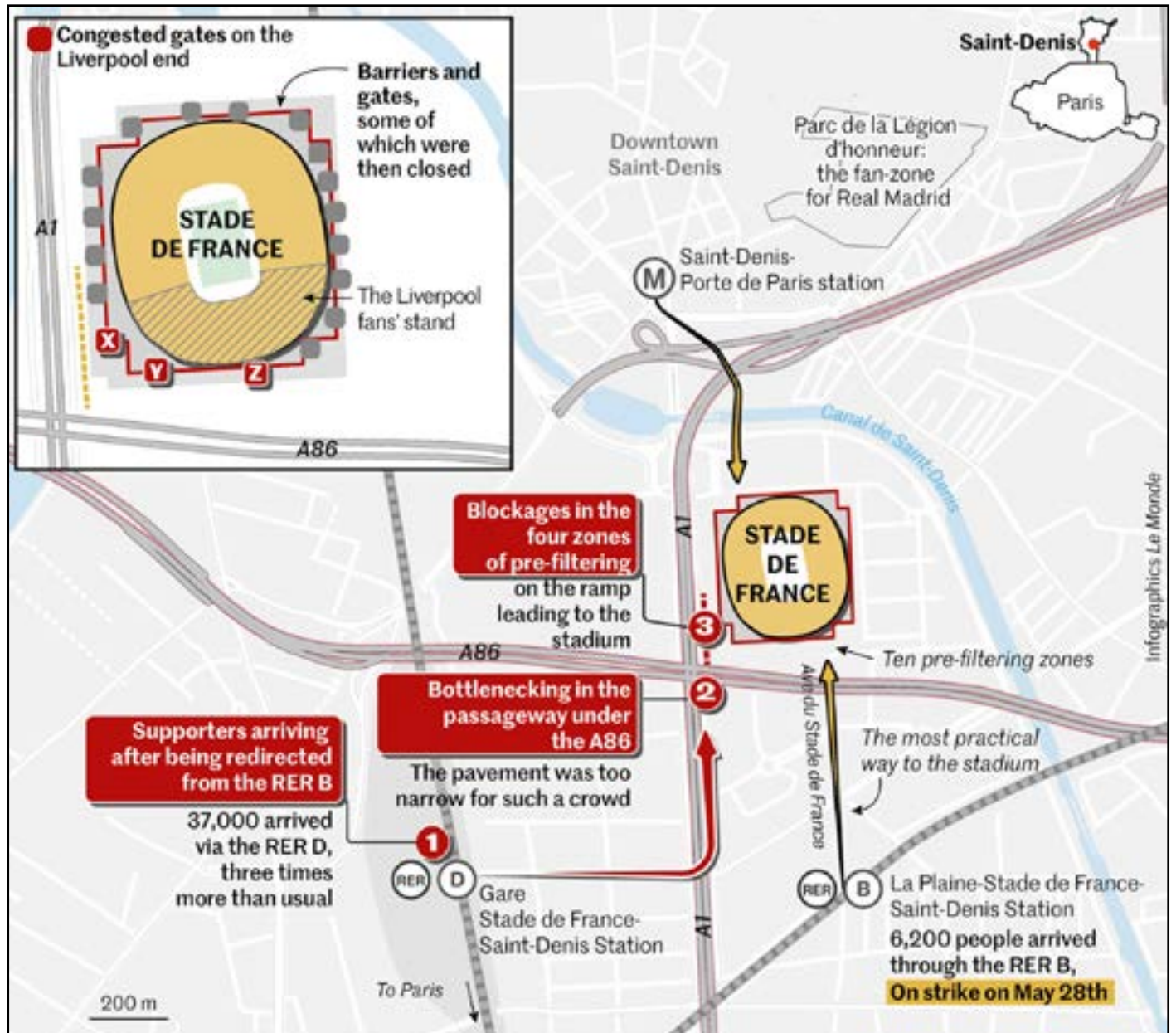
On an evening of excited anticipation, how could such a prestigious event collapse into a profoundly traumatising experience for men, women and children? How could key principles of crowd safety, venue management, personal security and duty of care be compromised by stadium managers, stewards and police? Within a short period reports were being filed on broadcast news programmes showing chronic overcrowding, severely restricted access to the stadium and, without provocation, attacks on defenceless fans by riot police discharging tear gas in enclosed areas.*

Based on in-depth, eye-witness testimonies, this Report seeks to reveal individual and collective experiences which challenge the initial police, French Government and UEFA narratives alleging late arrival of fans and widespread ticket forgery. Most inquiries into moments of crisis are commissioned, researched and written with only marginal participation of those directly involved and affected. As a team with complementary research backgrounds, the Independent Panel has a shared commitment to ensuring that those who rarely have a platform are heard.

We combine in-depth knowledge and research experience in the following areas: law and law enforcement; crowd safety and emergency planning; children's rights and the experiences of vulnerable groups; analysis of documents, media and personal testimonies.

* As this Report was in production, a tragedy occurred at the Kanjuruhan Stadium, Malang, Indonesia following a match between the home team, Arema FC, and Persebaya Surabaya FC. Because of fierce rivalry between the teams, only Arema fans were allowed to attend. Arema lost the match and their fans invaded the pitch. Using tear gas and batons, the police drove them towards the stadium's narrow exit gates. At least 125 fans - many children - were killed and hundreds injured. Malang's Police Chief and nine officers were suspended and a further eighteen officers placed under investigation for deploying tear gas in a confined area.

Stade de France location



Published in Le Monde, 31 May 2022

Executive Summary and Findings

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The UEFA Champions League Final was due to kick-off at Stade de France, Paris, at 9pm CEST/ 8pm BST. Coming out of two years' of Covid-19 related restrictions on international travel and social gatherings, the Final was much anticipated. Fans were encouraged to travel to Paris regardless of whether or not they had tickets for the match. Throughout the afternoon, those without tickets would be accommodated and entertained in two Fan Parks/ Fan Zones dedicated to each set of travelling fans, where the match would be screened live on giant screens. The BBC estimated a global television audience of 400 million.

As the audience tuned in it became apparent that there were problems at the stadium. Many seats, particularly in the area accommodating Liverpool fans, were unoccupied. Fans had arrived at the stadium in good time, many three hours before the scheduled kick-off, but faced serious delays gaining entry. With kick-off approaching, and the teams warming up on the pitch, it was announced by stadium managers that there would be a delay due to the 'late arrival' of fans. This statement, shown on screens inside the stadium, was broadcast worldwide. The unequivocal message was that one of the showpiece finals in world football had been disrupted by Liverpool fans.

Very soon, however, another narrative began to emerge. Outside the stadium, fans - many in family groups - used mobile phones to film a different version of the events causing delay. Families and friends of players, those closely associated with both clubs and media personnel, together with fans who had travelled internationally, were trapped in narrow approaches to the stadium, on its concourse and at gates that were opened and closed indiscriminately and irregularly. Without provocation, riot police tear gassed fans standing in static queues. Fans were assaulted and robbed by local youths who then, without tickets and with the collusion of stewards, gained entry into the stadium. At the end of the match fans were herded from the stadium, again attacked by gangs and tear-gassed by police.

In the aftermath the Paris police defended their tactics including deploying riot police and using tear gas indiscriminately on women, men and children trapped in enclosed spaces. The Prefect of the Paris police, Didier Lallement, accepted that there had been failures by the 'organisers to handle British fans' yet he reaffirmed his earlier allegation that a 'massive' number of fans arrived 'late'. Without presenting any supporting evidence, he also stated that between 30,000 and 40,000 fans had attempted to gain entry using forged tickets. In doing so they had blocked entry into the stadium. This had necessitated the use of tear gas on the crowd.¹

Minister for the Interior in the French Government, Gérald Darmanin, repeated Lallement's unsubstantiated claim that, '30,000 to 40,000 Liverpool fans had turned up for the game either without tickets or with counterfeits'. He claimed that approximately 62,000 Liverpool fans arrived at the stadium with tickets, 70 per cent of which were counterfeit. That explained why at 9pm, the

1 <https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/playbook-paris/cest-la-brute-finale-darmanin-bien-discret-macron-de-retour-a-bruxelles/>

scheduled kick-off time, only half of Liverpool's fans were inside the stadium. Defending police use of tear gas, he commented 'this kind of incident only seems to happen with certain English clubs'.

Echoing Darmanin's comments the Minister for Sport, Amélie Oudéa-Castéra, stated that Real Madrid had supervised and arranged transport for its fans. She accused the Liverpool club of letting 'its supporters out in the wild'.² Without any independent verification, both Ministers reiterated Lallement's initial report. Media personnel and Liverpool Football Club officials, who had witnessed the unfolding events in and around the stadium, vociferously denied this 'official' narrative.

Within two days UEFA announced it was appointing an 'independent review'. Tiago Brandão Rodrigues, Portuguese Minister of Education, was appointed Chairman. It quickly became evident that he had a close association with UEFA. His two senior advisers, Kenny Scott and Frank Paauw, were previously UEFA's former Head of Safety and Security and Safety and Security Officer respectively.

While five others were appointed to the review team, including three supporters' representatives, it was evident that Rodrigues and his advisers had well-established UEFA connections. Revealing these concerns in the *Guardian*, David Conn called into question the review's independence, reporting concerns raised by fans' groups, not least *Spirit of Shankly*.³

Fans' experiences before, during and after the Final - at the Fan Park/ Fan Zone, at the stadium and on public walkways and transport - are central to the narrative and analysis that follows. Considering their collective experiences through the lens of crowd safety is a core element within the research underpinning our findings. In the aftermath of the events at Stade de France, an appeal was published on social media for fans to provide their experiences and concerns. This generated 485 detailed statements.⁴ Analysis of these statements constitutes the main body of this report by an Independent Panel (see Appendix 1).⁵

The intention is to integrate issues raised within the statements to establish a coherent overview of personal experiences. It is striking that the accounts reflect a wide diversity of respondents: in age, gender and, when provided, occupational status. Also included in this report is a quantitative analysis of the impact on fans (see part 2), a detailed review of media coverage (see part 3), commentaries on safety regulations (see Appendix 2) and the French Senate's inter-departmental review (see Appendix 3).

² <https://www.politico.eu/article/france-sport-minister-amelie-oudea-castera-blame-liverpool-paris-stadium-chaos/>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/jul/14/revealed-two-members-of-paris-final-independent-review-worked-for-uefa>

⁴ UEFA's ticket allocation to Liverpool Football Club was 20,000. The statements received by the Panel constitute a sample of the Liverpool fans attending the match.

⁵ As this Report was being finalised a comprehensive 'visual investigation' of the events at the stadium was published by *The Guardian*: David Conn, Elena Morresi, Niels de Hoog, Lydia McMullan, Gary Blight, Antonio Voce *How the Champions League Final descended into chaos*, 21 September 2022. Accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/ng-interactive/2022/sep/21/liverpool-real-madrid-paris-stade-de-france-champions-league>

Presented below are the findings of the Independent Panel.

FINDINGS

From St Petersburg to Paris

On 25th February, the day following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, UEFA announced that the Champions League Final would be held on 28th May at the Stade de France in the suburb of St Denis, Paris. This gave UEFA, and all agencies involved, three months to prepare for the event.

It is assumed that the speed with which this decision was taken reflected UEFA's confidence that the stadium, the Fan Parks and the City could safely and securely accommodate large numbers of travelling fans.

As the organiser of the tournament, the commissioner of the stadium and the hosts of the Champions League Final, UEFA had responsibility to ensure that the stadium was fit for purpose.

Being 'fit for purpose' includes: safe access to the stadium, to the outer approaches, the inner concourse, the entry gates/ turnstiles and seated areas; safe egress when leaving the stadium, from seats, on gangways, through exit gates and onto the concourse leading to public highways.

It is clear from coverage of events held at Stade de France prior to the Champions League Final, that tensions existed in relation to residents of St Denis threatening and stealing from fans and the role of the police in safeguarding those visiting the area.

Given the high level of economic deprivation and social exclusion endured by the St Denis community, it is inevitable that relatively affluent people arriving in the neighbourhood in large numbers would be targeted, thereby requiring police protection while ensuring prohibited access to anyone other than those attending the event.

Throughout the three months prior to the Final, arrangements were made to accommodate travelling fans and those arriving in Paris to enjoy the atmosphere in Fan Parks allocated to the supporters of each Club.

Fan Parks are a recent development, promoted by UEFA and supported by Clubs, to encourage those with tickets for the match to experience an afternoon's festivities before moving to the stadium, and those without tickets to remain in the Fan Parks to view the match on large screens.

The provision of Fan Parks has become a necessity given the relatively low number of tickets distributed by UEFA to Clubs and their supporters. For this Final, ticket allocation was 20,000 to each Club, with 35,000 held back for UEFA's discretionary distribution.

In Paris, the Fan Park for Liverpool fans was located several miles from the stadium.

The Panel questions whether UEFA carried out inspections, in association with relevant agencies in Paris, to ensure its due diligence duty regarding the safety of fans in the Fan Parks; arriving at, entering, inside and exiting the stadium; and in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Preparation for the Final

The Champions League Semi-Finals were held on the 3rd and 4th May, with Liverpool and Real Madrid progressing to meet in the Final twenty-four days later. Costs of flights to Paris and accommodation in the City immediately escalated.

In Paris, Government Ministers and officials received briefings from the Paris police prior to the match which appear to have established an expectation that Liverpool fans could be the source of disturbances on match-day. This would explain the deployment of more than 6,000 police as a response to anticipated problems.

While the Semi-Finals were held in early May, preparations for the Final would have been made by UEFA and the relevant Paris authorities well in advance, regardless of the finalists. This raises questions concerning the preparations put in place by the Paris authorities, particularly the police, for ensuring fans' safety. All briefings involving the police and Government officials should be made public.

Policing

The Panel recognises that it is a challenge, when policing large and disparate crowds, to balance the necessity of crowd control/ regulation with that of safety/ protection. The strategy adopted by the police, evidenced by multiple examples of aggressive police behaviour at the Fan Park and at the stadium, prioritised regulation at the expense of protection.

Subsequently, it became evident in the report of the Ministerial Delegation for Major Sports Events that the decision to deploy riot police in large numbers at the Fan Park, in the vicinity of and inside the stadium, was predicated on an erroneous assumption that there was 'a risk of collective phenomena of hooliganism and devastation', despite recognition that Liverpool supporters 'had not been particularly conspicuous in previous years for acts of violence'.⁶

⁶ Ministerial Delegation for Major Sports Events, *Report on the Organisation of the UEFA Champions League Final on Saturday May 28th 2022 at the Stade de France and the strengthening of the management of major sporting events.* Paris, June 10th 2022, p 6.

Deployment in the stadium of large numbers of riot police towards the end of the match, in front of the areas where Liverpool fans were located, reflected this incorrect assumption.

While there were isolated examples of positive police responses to fans in distress, the evidence from fans of negative police behaviour is overwhelming. This ranged from callous indifference to orchestrated, systemic and indiscriminate violence, without provocation, putting fans at risk of serious injury regardless of age, gender or disability.

The police failed to safeguard fans from persistent attacks by local gangs at the Fan Park, at the stadium, on the routes between the stadium and transport links.

Persistent, random police assaults on fans, and unprovoked deployment of tear gas on men, women and children trapped in confined spaces, was reckless and dangerous. It constituted criminal assault.

It is evident from fans' testimonies, their mobile phone footage and media coverage that tear gas was sprayed indiscriminately and at close quarters - in some instances directly into the faces of women, men and children who were unable to move.

The casual and indiscriminate use of tear gas escalated tension within a benign crowd already anxious as a result of the imposed long wait to gain entry into the stadium. Many left and did not attend the match.

Fans stated that on leaving the stadium after the match there was a notable absence of police, leaving them vulnerable to attack by local gangs. Emerging from the underpass, however, they were confronted and again indiscriminately tear gassed by riot police.

In the statements there is considerable evidence of the physical and psychological impact, especially on children, of consistent police attacks using batons and tear gas.

The approach adopted by the French police in the decision to use tear gas appears to be that its deployment is a 'first call' strategy for crowd regulation rather than as a chemical weapon of 'last resort'.

It is clear from the evidence in this Report that the policing strategy adopted before, during and after the match prioritised harsh measures of control rather than ensuring the safety of the crowd. For many fans, police behaviour was provocative and posed the most significant threat to their safety.

There was no justification for the deployment in large numbers of aggressive, paramilitary-style police who confronted fans regardless of age, gender or mobility. The hostility of the police prior to the match (at the Fan Zone and stadium approaches), during (in the stadium) and after (at the stadium, the stations and in the City) demonstrated a collective mind-set which resulted in breaches of criminal law.

Crowd Safety and Event Management

The evidence presented to the Panel demonstrates comprehensively that crowd safety was compromised at every stage of the event: Fan Park; stadium approach; stadium concourse; stadium entry; during the match; exiting the stadium; dispersal onto the public highway; at the stations; in the City.

Given the industrial action which disrupted service on the RER B line, there was a serious failure to deploy contingency plans for managing unusually high numbers of passengers arriving on the RER D line.

There were: serious deficiencies in appropriate signage and direction at the approaches to the stadium from the stations, particularly the congested RER D line; lack of information in the vicinity of and within the stadium; failure to communicate with the crowd at the stadium entrances and inside the stadium.

Crowd safety on entering and exiting the stadium - including stadium design, access routes, disability access, lighting, clear gangways, regular and efficient flow of the crowd - are key principles recognised in UEFA's 'quality' stadiums guide. At all levels these principles were compromised.

Fans' statements raise concerns about access for, and the safety of, fans with disabilities. In addition to clear and unimpeded entrance and exit routes for disabled users, stewards should have been trained to support those with additional needs,

Safe management of fans' arrival at sports event or concerts held in large venues is a priority. Yet the sustained confinement of fans at the underpass bottleneck, on stadium approaches, and within the concourse, compromised crowd safety.

The organisation and execution of ticket checks was inadequate and chaotic. Security checks were inconsistent, ranging from superficial to invasive, particularly for women. Ticket scanners were faulty and ineffective, contributing significantly to false readings on ticket checks.

The decision to repeatedly lock stadium entry gates for short periods of time was reckless, adding to the compression of fans on the concourse, confusion regarding the possibility of entry, and further tear gassing by the police of stationary crowds in tightly confined areas.

There was a lack of appropriate and necessary response by police and stewards to the dangerous situation outside the stadium and at the gates with no evident contingency planning or suitable intervention.

It is expected that support and guidance at major arenas are provided by well-trained stewards in sufficient numbers. Yet, in their experience, training and effectiveness, stewards' behaviour on the stadium approaches and on the concourse was deficient and reckless, including allowing illicit entry to local gang members without tickets.

Not only did stewards fail to check many tickets, but also some were verbally and physically aggressive towards fans. Women reported inappropriate body searches, which constituted sexual assault, and searches of women by male stewards. Parents questioned the necessity of pat down searches on children.

Help or information points, First Aid and emergency support were neither evident nor easily accessed.

There was serious failure to communicate with the crowd outside and inside the stadium, exacerbated by limited employment of English-speaking staff.

The announcement on screens inside the stadium, broadcast internationally, regarding 'late arrival' of fans deflected attention from institutional responsibility for delayed entry.

Fans were reliant on those who had gained access to the stadium, or family and friends at home, to provide information via phone and text messages.

It is clear from fans' statements that they were put at risk by aggressive policing, ineffectual safety measures and a failure to implement comprehensive stadium safety management plans based on risk management principles.

Fans' safety was compromised by significant deviation from standard event management regulations, guidance and best practice including inconsistent application of UEFA regulations.

Egregious, sustained failure in crowd management severely compromised the health and well-being of fans. There was a lack of signage informing and directing fans from the stations to the stadium. Creation of bottlenecks on the stadium approaches confined fans for long periods in high temperatures without access to water or toilets. The crowd was 'kettled' without any explanation or communication. There was a lack of care, particularly regarding children, older people and those with disabilities.

Fans' Experiences

There is consistency across fans' statements regarding a systemic failure in managing the crowd on its arrival at stations, on coaches and by taxi, and in directing access to the stadium.

There is also clear and consistent evidence in the testimonies of failure to meet the diverse needs of a crowd including men and women of all ages and different physical capacities, a significant number of whom were accompanied by children.

In their extensive testimonies, often reflecting on the Hillsborough tragedy, fans demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the unfolding, dangerous circumstances: the underpass bottleneck where crushing occurred; the confusion regarding gates, their irregular operation and crushing in queues; and hostile policing.

Grounded in their understanding, and for some direct experience, of the Hillsborough disaster, Liverpool fans prevented a fatal tragedy occurring through their collective action. They protected vulnerable fans, appealed for calm, and took care of those affected by crushing or tear gas.

The immediate official response, at the stadium and from senior French politicians, was to hold Liverpool fans responsible for the situation outside the stadium that led to the delayed kick-off. It is clearly evident, however, that fans' responsible conduct and self-regulation prevented the occurrence of further serious injuries and potential deaths.

Fans with many years of experience following Liverpool to away matches, both domestic and European, have provided compelling evidence that what unfolded at the Fan Park and at the stadium has impacted on their physical and mental health.

Many fans experienced the cumulative impacts of being: crushed in crowds approaching the stadium and in queues at gates; tear gassed and hit by police batons or riot shields; robbed, attacked and assaulted by locals. Some required hospital treatment for physical injuries and many report emotional

harms - anxiety, sleeplessness and nightmares. Hillsborough survivors have suffered re-traumatisation.

Men, women and children travelling to the Champions League Final, at considerable expense and with great optimism, were impelled into personal and collective danger by negligent management of the event, poorly trained stewards, unprovoked aggressive policing, criminal assaults by local gangs and the police. This has resulted in physical injury and, for many fans, sustained psychological harm.

UEFA

It is clear from fans' statements that UEFA guidance on exiting the stadium, including provision for wheelchair users, was breached: walkways were restricted; stewarding was inappropriate and lighting inadequate.

Following the match, UEFA offered no significant support to fans who had suffered physical and psychological harm.

UEFA initially endorsed false claims made by French authorities that an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 'fake tickets' had been presented at the stadium, causing delayed entry. Following statements from Real Madrid and Liverpool Clubs condemning the mismanagement of the Final, UEFA issued an apology to supporters.

Regarding the appointment by UEFA of an independent review there is significant scepticism, voiced by Liverpool Football Club, supporters' groups and fans in general, regarding its independence given previous close associations with UEFA of the Panel Chair and his two senior advisors.

The testimonies in this Report raise legitimate questions about UEFA's role in: ticket allocation and distribution; liaison with relevant authorities to ensure the venue was 'fit for purpose'; ensuring compliance with safety regulations and adherence to established guidelines regarding crowd safety, event management, employment of suitably qualified stewards and policing.

The Panel recommends that UEFA undertakes an emergency management review and develops guidance fully cognisant of the psycho-social dynamics of crowd safety and support.

The UEFA Guide to Quality Stadiums, published in November 2020, provides clear guidelines 'site accessibility' to and within the stadium, 'health and safety', 'security', 'emergency contingencies' and 'disability access', 'as a response to several major disasters ...ensuring the safety of spectators'. It specifies: 'optimum flow of people'; 'all turnstiles should be fully operational'; 'optimum flow of people' along gangways; and 'CCTC provision ... to ensure operational safety' from a 'fully operational control room'. At the Stade de France there were egregious failures on all aspects of UEFA's responsibility for stadium safety.

Part 1

Testimonies

PART ONE

CONTEXT

Relocation of the Champions League Final

The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) is the 'governing body of European football ... an association of associations, a representative democracy ... the umbrella organisation for 55 national football associations across Europe'.⁷ It is a company registered in Switzerland and in Nyon. It asserts political and religious neutrality, 'a continental confederation recognised by the world football governing body FIFA, based in Zurich, Switzerland'.

On 24th September 2019 UEFA announced that the 2022 Champions League Final, the most prestigious and lucrative international club competition, would be held at the recently opened Krestovsky Stadium/ Gazprom Arena in St Petersburg, Russia. On 24th February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine. The next day UEFA held an extraordinary Executive Committee meeting regarding the hosting of the Final.

Following this meeting it was announced that the Final would be relocated to the Stade de France in the Paris suburb of St Denis. UEFA's press release acknowledged the role played by French President, Emmanuel Macron, in giving 'his personal support and commitment to have European club football's most prestigious game moved to France at a time of unparalleled crisis'.⁸

The competition's group qualifying stages had been completed in December 2021. During the week prior to UEFA's announcement the competition had progressed to its knock-out stage. Sixteen clubs remained with matches played over two legs, the competition building towards quarter and semi-finals in April and early May. The Final was scheduled for 28th May.

As the competition progressed, the possibility that two clubs with the most impressive European records might win the Champions League became increasingly likely. Real Madrid had won the trophy on 13 occasions, Liverpool on 6. Given their recent domestic league successes and the international fan bases for each club, the Paris Final was much anticipated.

With a capacity over 80,000, Stade de France is one of Europe's highest capacity all-seater stadia. Opened in 1998 it is home to France's national football and rugby union teams. It is scheduled to host the 2023 Rugby World Cup Final and is the principal venue for the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics. Investment to upgrade the stadium for the latter amounts to 40m Euros.

7 <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/about-uefa/what-uefa-does/>

8 <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/mediaservices/mediareleases/news/0272-148740475a92-1b97baa3e9d7-1000-decisions-from-today-s-extraordinary-uefa-executive-committee-m/>

Since its opening, Stade de France has hosted an impressive range of soccer and rugby matches: the 1998 World Cup, 2000 and 2006 Champions League Finals, 2016 Euros and also numerous high profile rugby matches and athletics meetings. Situated five miles from the centre of Paris in the northern suburb of St Denis, the stadium has limited car parking and therefore is dependent on public transport. Primary access to the stadium is via the Réseau Express Régional (RER) lines B or D, or Paris Métro Line 14.

Developed as an industrial city, St Denis has a current population just below 110,000. Enduring long-term decline, it is one of France's poorest city suburbs. Throughout a month in 2005 it endured some of the country's most severe rioting. It has high levels of unemployment and almost a third of its population live below the poverty line. As recently as November 2020 the police used force to remove an estimated 2,000 men, women and children from a makeshift migrant camp.

Inevitably, the juxtaposition of thousands of relatively affluent people entering St Denis to attend major sports events and rock concerts at Stade de France, and a local population enduring severe economic marginalisation and institutionalised racism, leads to tension. For fans travelling from outside France, their vulnerability to robbery and violence is heightened by a lack of knowledge of the local area and, for many, their inability to converse in French.

Stade de France, Paris

On 20th April UEFA announced the details of ticket allocation for the Final.⁹ The stadium capacity was set at 75,000. Real Madrid and Liverpool Clubs each received 20,000 tickets. A further 12,000 tickets were sold 'worldwide' by UEFA using a ballot process. The remaining tickets, approximately one-third of the total allocation, were reserved for the 'local organising structure, UEFA and national associations, commercial partners and broadcasters, and the Official Hospitality programme'.¹⁰

Ticket prices were in four categories: €70, €180, €490, €690. Termed 'accessibility tickets', those for fans with disabilities were set at €70 plus free companion ticket. Of its 20,000 ticket allocation, 'in line with UEFA guidelines', Liverpool allocated 382 'top category seats' to 'players, staff, travelling club staff and VIPs'.¹¹

Regarding the remaining 19,618 tickets, members of the Club's Main Stand suites, Sir Kenny Dalglish Stand boxes, executive lounge, centenary club and premium level hospitality were allocated tickets up to a maximum of eight tickets per application. The remaining allocation was by ballot to season ticket holders, based on home and away attendance at the season's previous Champions League matches.

⁹ <https://www.uefa.com/uefachampionsleague/news/0274-14f415b3124a-6d9caff64841-1000-apply-for-paris-final-tickets/>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ <https://www.liverpoolfc.com/news/champions-league-final-ticket-details>

Ticket prices were posted as follows: Category 1: £578.63 - 4.6% of the allocation; Category 2: £410.91 – 16.4% of the allocation; Category 3: £125.79 – 55.7% of the allocation; Category 4: £50.32 – 23.3% of the allocation. Across all categories, because the view from the seat was ‘restricted’, 1,324 tickets were reduced in price by approximately 20 per cent.

Announcing the ticketing allocation and arrangements, the Club stated that all tickets were ‘issued under UEFA’s Ticketing Terms and Conditions & The Stade de France Stadium Ground Regulations’. Tickets were non-transferable and the Club was obliged to provide UEFA with full details of ticket allocation: ‘names and addresses of supporters corresponding to the seat details on the tickets issued to the supporter’. The Club warned its fans that UEFA would conduct ‘random checks’ at the stadium.

Three weeks before the Final the *Liverpool Echo* noted the escalating prices of travel to, and accommodation in, Paris: *Liverpool FC fans face soaring costs for Paris travel ahead of the Champions League final*.¹² For example, in contrast to the weekend prior to the Final, Easyjet’s prices for Friday flights had increased by ‘456%’, Eurostar had almost doubled its prices, and Mercure hotel weekend accommodation had escalated from £265.53 to £4,321.

On 23rd May the Club published a document on-line, *Transport information for fans heading to the Champions League final*.¹³ It detailed warnings about potential delays in Kent for those travelling by car via the Eurotunnel, Eurostar, coach, ferry and plane. In the information about public transport from Paris city centre to the stadium, it stated that the Metro and railway would be running at maximum capacity.

Because ticket allocation is so restricted, fans always travel in significant numbers to the city in which the Final is held to enjoy the atmosphere. Thus UEFA arrange ‘Fan Meeting Points’ or Fan Parks, a distance from the stadium, to accommodate each set of fans. Those who have match tickets enjoy the pre-match entertainment before travelling to the stadium. Those without tickets stay to watch the match on large screens. UEFA made an announcement to both Clubs regarding the Fan Park allocated to their fans: ‘*The Fan Meeting Point will also be screening the match on the big screen for Liverpool supporters without match tickets*’.¹⁴ Fan Parks were scheduled to open at 2pm, closing at 12.30am.

The Club published this information: *Liverpool FC can confirm there will be an official open-air fan meeting point in Paris for all travelling Reds ahead of the Champions League final this Saturday*.¹⁵ The capacity of the Liverpool Fan Park was over 45,000, located at Cours de Vincennes in south-east Paris, six miles from the stadium.

For those with tickets, the stadium opened at 6pm. On the evening, within 30 minutes of opening, the number of fans travelling on RER D was so great that stadium turnstiles were ‘no longer

¹² <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-fc-fans-face-soaring-23897867>

¹³ <https://www.liverpoolfc.com/news/transport-information-fans-heading-champions-league-final>

¹⁴ <https://www.uefa.com/uefachampionsleague/event-guide/fan-meeting-points/>

¹⁵ <https://www.liverpoolfc.com/news/paris-fan-meeting-point-confirmed-champions-league-final>

functioning in accordance with the operational plan'. 'Very high pressure in the "narrow gap" [a restricted underpass walkway] between the RER D station and the pre-screening interior' was recorded at 7pm, two hours before kick-off. This led the police to divert fans leaving the RER D station to another access road.

As discussed later in this Report, although arriving well in advance of the 9pm scheduled kick-off time, approximately 40% of Liverpool fans were delayed at the gates. The match kicked off thirty-six minutes late. Inside the stadium, and broadcast on television worldwide, the following statement was posted: DUE TO THE AN (sic) SECURITY ISSUE THE MATCH HAS BEEN DELAYED. FURTHER INFORMATION WILL FOLLOW IN 15 MINUTES MAXIMUM. This was followed by a public announcement that the delay was due to the 'late arrival of fans'.

FAN MEETING POINT/ FAN PARK/ FAN ZONE

For a City recovering from the impact of Covid, the Champions League Final offered a significant financial opportunity in providing accommodation, hospitality and retail outlets. The Fan Zone/ Fan Park was announced on the UEFA web-site as: 'the perfect spot to meet up with other Liverpool supporters and soak up the atmosphere ahead of the final'.

Music and entertainment was to be provided by Jamie Webster, The Lightning Seeds, other known artists and the Anfield Wrap. Sir Kenny Dalglish would also make an appearance on stage. For the thousands without tickets, entertainment throughout the afternoon followed by the match being shown on screen would be part of the excitement of being in the host city for the Champions League Final.

Liverpool's manager, Jürgen Klopp, recognized this when, in one of his press conferences prior to the match, he encouraged fans to travel to Paris. He questioned the limited ticket allocation to the Clubs and commented that Paris is a city with sufficient capacity for fans without match tickets to enjoy the experience as long as everyone behaved well.

At the entrance the police parked riot vans to confine and bottleneck the crowd as people arrived. Each person entering received a pat down and bag search. Some were impressed by the provision at the Fan Park as shown by the following three statements:

'The fan park was well set up and had plenty of room to host our fans. The shows on display at the fan park were really well put together, and the 3-ish hours that we spent in the fan park were probably the only time I was in Paris over our 3 day period, that I genuinely had a good time and felt safe.'

'Everybody was in great spirits and there was no hint of trouble at all. We didn't end up going inside the fan park ... there was a fantastic atmosphere with songs and a few words. We saw absolutely no trouble whatsoever ... It was setting up to be a fantastic day, with everyone in great spirits. People were making new friends, admiring the many cracking flags and banners ... It was exactly the reason many people travelled over, and was a memory I will cherish.'

'Like many of our friends we had a fantastic afternoon in the park at Place de la Nation.'

However, as the following statements indicate, others had less positive experiences:

'I flew early Saturday morning, got to the hotel, and got ready to be at the fan park for opening at 2.00 pm. Having strolled into the fan zone in Madrid, I naively thought it would be the same.'

'We tried to exit to move one road away from the fan park but the police made us continue along the road next to it. We saw a water cannon vehicle parked on the road outside the fan park and commented on the heavy policing tactics.'

A fan stated succinctly the situation recounted by many fans: *'The access to the fan park showed me the police focus was on security and not on crowd safety'*. Another fan stated:

'Our day began on Cours de Vincennes where the Liverpool fan park was located. Myself and three of my friends noted how the fan park was fenced off and this was striking as this was not the case in Madrid three years ago. I was lucky enough to be in Madrid in May 2019, as were two of the lads that I went to Paris with. This event was perfectly ran and policed. I did not see a Police Officer until I arrived at the stadium. Their policing was forceful but was nothing compared to what I would experience in Paris. The fan park in Madrid was situated in Plaza Salvador Dali which was a massive square. There were no fences and people could filter in and out of the fan park down one of the easily accessible side streets. This was not the case in Cours de Vincennes. The fan park seemed only accessible to us through one entrance which was the opposite end to the stage. The fan park was at least a mile long and we approached from the stage end. Police would not allow us down the sides of the fan park and we were made to walk the long way around. There was at least 200 feet between the fan park perimeter and the police cordon. When we eventually made it to the entrance there were thousands of Liverpool fans waiting to gain entry. We did not arrive late, in fact we were an hour early as we arrived at 12.10pm and the event didn't start until 1pm. The crowd gathered around the entrance which was constructed of two police vans reversed to within no more than 6 feet of each other for fans to filter through ... There were no police or security outside of the fan park directing people into queues. Instead, the crowd was left to gather at this pinch point in what I felt at the time, and still feel now, was an incredibly dangerous fashion. While we were treated like cattle and left here for two hours before eventually gaining entry, still fans showed no signs of causing trouble.'

A fan who was in Paris with her sister and father, *'didn't get into the Fan Park until after 2 o'clock despite queuing since midday and being near the front of the queue.'* She *'had to be pulled out of*

the queue to get into the Fan Park because I was being squashed and couldn't breathe. I climbed over the fence, leaving my dad and younger teenage sister in the crush because I felt uncomfortable and unsafe. I was told to sit at the nearest bench ... I asked if my dad or at least my sister could join me but was told no. I repeated this and asked if my younger sister could join me, but was told no again. A pregnant lady had climbed over the gate at the same time as me due to the unsafety of the situation. The authorities were pulling children and their parents out, but many adult Liverpool fans who felt the same as me and were wanting safety outside of the queue were pushed back in and not allowed the basic human right of being safe, including my dad.'

A fan who visited the fan park before going to the stadium stated that, 'thousands of Liverpool fans already started gathering' around noon and 'an entrance was finally opened at around 2PM near the centre of the square ... The French Police had parked two police vans facing each other with about 4 metres between the two ... They were funnelling Liverpool fans one at a time through the narrow passage between the two vans so they could then go onto another security checkpoint before entering the fan zone. The setup was moronic and pointless. After an hour it became dangerous ... Children had to be lifted from the crowd and brought to safety over the metal security fencing'. Yet he and his family 'enjoyed the Fan Zone. Saw several friends. Met other supporters. Had a great sing song and had a brilliant afternoon in the sun'.

A fan who arrived by coach from Liverpool accompanied by his 11 year old son stated: 'Police were stopping people going into the fan park with food or drink, it was all blocked off. Although there was no trouble at the fan park and everyone seemed in good spirits, the police were forcing people in one way so it all seemed to be very busy and overcrowded. My son became claustrophobic so we left and stayed outside the fan park.'

Another fan stated, 'When we got into the fanzone area it was very busy. Thousands and thousands of Liverpool supporters all having the craic and singing songs etc. Only thing I'd say about this is that there was only 1 entrance in and about 8 exits ... there should've been entry points at the same place as the exit points, which would've made it more accessible instead of walking around a 25m perimeter fence. Inside it was nearly impossible to get anywhere near the very limited food and drink outlets.'

A fan, who travelled to Paris with his 16 year old son and a friend, was concerned that 'the organisation of the Fan Park had not been set out with any regard for fans' safety'. Access was limited: 'There was armed police and a fence around the whole perimeter with only one entrance where alcohol and food was taken off fans before entering'. When they tried to watch the match 'it was too overcrowded and became frightening'. There were '3 screens, all behind one another, and everyone was trying to get to the first screen so a lot of pushing and shoving and people with young children, who I advised should leave as they could easily have been trampled'.

According to one fan, police, 'moved us to the entrance of a fanzone where we had to queue for 2 hours to be herded through the smallest opening'. Another fan commented, 'The police were heavy handed from the start of the day, riot police moving fans from bars where we were trying to eat food, have a drink, sat being quiet.'

Another stated: *'I met a 16 year old lad who had left the fan park for food because of the long queues and when he returned was beaten up by the police to the point where he was forced to leave again and meet back up with his dad by climbing over the fence at the side.'*

Following the afternoon's entertainment those with match tickets travelled across the city to the stadium using public transport or taxis. Those who remained watched the match on screens erected in the Fan Zone. Others visited local pubs/ hotels whose locations had been advertised on-line.¹⁶

A woman stated that she went to Paris, accompanied by her granddaughter to enjoy the atmosphere in the fan park and watch the match, *'on the big screens with likeminded Reds like myself'*. Once inside, *'We weren't at the front because since Hillsborough I do get a bit panicky. So we moved to the last screen near the exit'*. As the match started she *'noticed a large build-up of young local lads who the riot police had just let in. I even said to one of the other lads at the time, "Something is not right here." It was supposed to be a Liverpool Fan Zone for Liverpool supporters who never had a ticket to the game. I was standing there, arms folded just watching the game, when some massive riot police fella comes towards me and just pushes me out of the way and punches me on the top of my left arm, really nasty. The steward in a high viz who was walking behind him actually muttered "Sorry" to me. I'm a 65 year old 5ft Scouser lady who had done nothing wrong apart from stand there where we were supposed to be.'*

As the match ended, fans started to leave. Then, *'it all went crazy. They [locals] all blocked the main exit out of the Fan Zone while hundreds of riot police looked on. They started punching and robbing women, kids and the older ones at first and still those riot police stood and done nothing. People were on the ground screaming, bloodied faces and legs. Then they pushed a fella out of his wheelchair and stamped all over him while the other sewer rats stole what he had. And yet the police again never moved, they just watched. We were fighting for our lives trying to get out of that Fan Zone. We had nowhere to go. I tried to keep my granddaughter from getting hurt. Then a lady of about 30 got absolutely set upon and a few of the Liverpool lads tried to help her. The riot police seen this and that's when they started tear gassing us and using pepper spray. Their batons came out not on the sewer rats but on us - anyone who was in a red shirt, anyone who was supporting Liverpool.'*

A fan's fiancée stated that soon after the match ended the police used tear gas to disperse the crowd although *'everyone was calm and quietly walking towards the exit'*. She stated, *'The tear gas really hurt and everyone was panicking. I saw children crying and I lost all my mates. Meanwhile Fan Park security shouted insults at us and even shouted our family should die.'*

A woman, who watched the match in the fan park with her two sons, brother- and sister-in-law while her husband attended the game, stated: *'As we left the fan zone a large number of French police with batons ran at us and I suddenly couldn't see. My eyes were streaming and I lost my footing and fell to the ground. I started to scream for my sons ... I'd been to Hillsborough in the Leppings Lane end (Upper Terrace, thank heaven, but watched that horror unfold before my eyes).'*

¹⁶ <https://www.thisisanfield.com/2022/05/screenings-fan-zones-tickets-your-2022-champions-league-final-guide/> accessed 5 September 2022

Surely this wasn't happening again. Images passed through my head, as my son grabbed me up and said "You're ok Mum, I've got you, don't touch your eyes". How we got away I don't know. I don't recall which way I went, I just recall the stinging eyes, the blurred vision, the dry throat and constant cough.'

After the match, walking from the Fan Zone with friends, another fan stated: 'Bottles began flying over our heads, it was getting quite smoky and difficult to see who or what was happening. But I just heard people saying "Run!" In the midst of all this ... tear gas was used - one can or a flare struck me in my chest, which has left burn marks both on my stomach and legs. Overall I am ok but the situation at the time was extremely frightening...'

A group of friends left the fan park immediately after the match ended and returned to their coach: 'literally as we got out the fan park we were hit by gas canisters from the police, no warning no nothing. We were simply walking down the street, barely even talking, never mind singing or arguing. We just ran to get out of it. But even until now my throat and eyes and nose are in bits, never mind the mental trauma.'

Another fan stated: 'Many of the failings I've heard about surrounding the Stade de France shambles were also the same at the LFC fan zone. For instance: Using riot vans to bottleneck huge crowds on entry; Single person entry with pat down and bag search causing huge pressure; Confiscation of alcohol (and water) at the bottleneck single person check, meaning fans forced to drop their boxes of beer and bottles on the floor. This created masses of rubbish that people had to wade over (Please note, in Kiev and Madrid UCL final LFC fan zones fans could bring their own alcohol and there were no such checks); Forcing every LFC fan to walk to one entrance that did not have enough space to accommodate the number of fans. This meant that fans waiting had to spill onto the road with traffic still driving along. We arrived at 12pm and were left waiting for over 2 hours while crowds swelled. I know many people left this area as it was getting too crowded. No side entrances or exits available once the game ended, meaning fans had to push down the side gates to avoid a potential crush; Use of tear gas/pepper spray after exiting on LFC fans. Very aggressive riot police threatening fans with batons. Local youths causing trouble and antagonising police which resulted in aggression towards LFC fans.'

THE STADIUM: APPROACH AND ARRIVAL

Approach to the Stadium

As a consequence of strike action on the RER B line, usually the main line servicing the stadium, an exceptionally high number of fans travelled on the Réseau Express Régional (RER) D line and on the Paris Metro Line 13. Arriving in good time and in large numbers, fans expected to be directed to the stadium. However:

'Once we arrived we walked out of our metro station and up onto the street where we saw hundreds of LFC fans. This was where the mess really started.'

'There was no signage nor staff to direct us. At various points on the roads, the crowd was held back so it was stop and start.'

'We arrived near the ground. The police and local gangs were all around and there was no signage telling us where to go.'

'No sign posting, just police on street corners telling us we couldn't go up there.'

Fans' confusion regarding the route to the stadium was exacerbated by lack of help from the police and stewards:

'Out of SdF St Denis start walk to part of ground where our gate (R) is, following Google maps as again poor signage/help, get to the narrowed by police vans 'pinch point', (approx 18:55) takes 15 mins+ to pass, feels dangerous at times, police attitude bad, look to go up Mail de L'Ellipse ramp to concourse, but blocked by riot police, try to walk down Mail de l'Ellipse path/road to north east corner of ground, blocked by riot police.'

'There remained no indication of where the access route to the stadium lay. There were a significant number of Real Madrid fans in the area surrounding the bottom of the steps and Liverpool fans appeared to be being directed towards the right hand side road. We again sought advice from at least three riot police and stewards but again no one seemed to have any idea where we were supposed to go to gain access to the stadium. Thus, we followed the red shirts as they wandered aimlessly but in high spirits in the hope of an indication of the location of the stadium access.'

'Having had to cross what is basically a motorway to get to the ground, we saw long banks of Madrid fans stuck at the bottom of steps with the actual stadium above us, at the top of steps.'

'I ended up basically running across that motorway again and found myself in a side street, on my own, lost and extremely worried.'

While attempting to find their way fans became aware of local young men in groups loitering around the immediate vicinity of the stadium:

'You just kind of had to guess where you were headed. I think a lot of people, myself included, just followed the crowd. We went under a bridge before arriving at a ramp that was meant to lead us to gates Y and Z. I couldn't believe the amount of locals and non LFC and Real fans that were present.'

In the fan park and around the stadium in Madrid 3 years ago there were only Liverpool and Spurs fans, the Spanish locals didn't get involved and respected our presence in their city. That was not the case here at all. We started making our way up the ramp, I was with 6 other people who I had gone with. All along the left hand side railing of the ramp there were French locals watching us walk up the ramp towards the check point. You could tell they were there to pickpocket and cause trouble, looking for easy victims. When we approached the top of the ramp a crowd formed because people were being let through so slowly. I would say about 2/3rds of the crowd were local non ticket holders and a 1/3rd were genuine LFC fans trying to gain access to the gates.'

On a main route to the stadium fans described a blockage confronting them at an underpass:

'Got off train circa 6.15 and did the 15-20 minute amble to the underpass where the congestion and funnelling of fans started (this tactic was a repeat of the tactic deployed at the Fan Park, by the way, using vans and narrow gap to get through).'

'The really lucky ones [friends with tickets] decided to leave [the fan park] at 6pm via the metro. They described to us their journey. Getting off at Stade de France they met a few Madrid fans, families and talked and had banter before continuing on where they were held up by French police. Then allowing them to continue they were led into the underpass approx 7 pm. There they were stopped. In front of them were 2 police vans parked diagonally.'

Describing how the crowd 'slowly walked towards an underpass approximately 20m wide with very limited space due to riot vans flanking on the right-hand side', one fan stated that fans were 'tightly packed together, it was very hot and I could feel the breath of the person who was directly behind me'.

In a similar account another fan, a Hillsborough survivor attending with his 11 year old son, relayed how: 'The crowd was being funnelled towards an underpass under a bridge where police riot vans had been placed at an angle so as to create an extremely narrow area between the vans and a concrete wall for people to move forward. Thousands ... being ushered into this area ... was making the crowd bunch together and become tighter'.

A fan reported that 'near the underpass of the highway, the French Police have parked two vans diagonally across the road, blocking off the road and funnelling supporters down a narrow passageway against a concrete wall. The passageway is no more than 3 metres wide.' This 'created a dangerous build up of supporters behind', as the following statements demonstrate:

'We arrived at the stadium around 3 hrs before game ... met by various police bottleneck checkpoints. We managed to escape a crush around the tunnel area [underpass] by jumping a fence to the side, although the police did try to stop us. We had parked in Saint Denis, so I decided to go to that side of the ground to see if the access was any easier. At that entrance the police were using the same tactic of blocking off the entrance with riot vans with the riot police marshalling the small

entrance gap left between the vans. I joined the mass of people waiting as this was the only means of access. As I got closer to the entrance gap, the squash was becoming more like a crush. A young man next to me was having a panic attack and a Spanish child on the other side was very scared. I was starting to breath a bit faster myself at this stage. By the time I got to the front I had no control over myself, with my arms pinned to the side of my body.'

'Then we arrived at a tunnel which [had] a line of police vans down the centre so all fans, Liverpool and some Real Madrid fans as well, were squashed into one half and they were checking at the other end. They were sending loads of fans back with no tickets. On reflection these were all part of the gangs who attacked those trying to get in. It was horrendous, more and more people coming. We were in there about 90 to 120 minutes. I was not feeling too good, which must have been obvious to the young lads around me - they pushed me through so I was near to the end of the tunnel getting fresh air. One of them gave me his water. They suddenly stopped [checking tickets], moved the barriers and let everybody through, including a lot of these gang members. I made the decision then that I wouldn't go to another champions league.'

In the ensuing confusion and crush, some children and parents became separated. Arriving at the stadium at approximately 6.45pm, a fan noted that those in the crowd at the bottom of a bridge '*began to plead with the French authorities to allow people to move in order to prevent the situation becoming more serious*' but were ignored and threatened with use of pepper spray by a French police officer. After an hour, '*a mother asked my brother and I to pass her daughter forward towards the barrier as I am presuming she was concerned she would be injured. We obliged and a French police officer approached the barrier and prevented us passing her over. Although we continued to explain that we were concerned for her safety, we were met with a complete lack of interest.*'

At the Stadium

The intensity and immobility of the crowd was exacerbated by hostile indifference shown by police and stewards. Emerging from the confines of the underpass or via other streets, initially there was a ticket check conducted by stewards which slowed progress. As the following testimonies show, from this point fans were on the stadium concourse, which they crossed to then queue at gates into the stadium:

'I arrived at ground at 1830 from Saint Denis train station. At Gate X hundreds of Liverpool fans were congregated between the roadway and metal fencing waist high. The crowd was not moving. I was aware that thousands of fans were making their way to the ground. As far as I could see the access between X and Y, Z, A was blocked by police blue vans and police officers.'

'The queues again begin to bottle neck due to UEFA VIPs drop off between Liverpool end and Madrid end, middle of side stadium. Force again used by police and stewards to allow VIPs side entrance.'

'Because there were no signs outside the ground I inadvertently went in at the Madrid end so didn't experience the funnel that most supporters did. The checkpoint was disorganised with cursory bag checks and no ticket checks. Loads of locals got through and I would characterise them as organised gangs.'

'We arrived at the south west side of the ground shortly before 7pm local time, which we mistakenly thought would be ample time to get into the ground given that kick off was at 9pm, to what can only be described as chaos, thousands of fans were gathered before us, it was clear that there was no way through.'

'The queue of LFC fans had got bigger and we were now caught up in all this and we were all being affected by the pepper spray, including children and their parents, elderly people and disabled people.'

'The police had two lines to manage the flow close to the corner where there was a ramp up to the main part of the stadium, where 3-4 stewards were checking tickets. Further to this, more fans were filtering to this ramp from the 'long side' of the stadium from the direction of gates U, S and T. The flow was incredibly slow and as more people arrived the crowd got tighter and more tense. Hillsborough 2 was unfolding in front of our eyes and the police did nothing despite many crying for help.'

'I had an electronic ticket and when I reached the front of the queue the official swiped my ticket to activate it and allowed me access to the outer concourse, which I entered around access point D at 8.06 (time stamp from a picture I took of the ground).'

'As I approached 'Access Point R' there was a lengthy queue similar to the Liverpool end but not as big. The queue was very slow to move because they only had one access gate open, the stewards were allowing a couple of people through then closing it again for a period of time, which seemed like an eternity as kick off approached. It was a mixture of Madrid and Liverpool fans in the queue.'

Inexplicably, fans found that some gates into the stadium were closed. Not only was the signage to the gates unclear, but also some stewards were unhelpful:

'My gate for entry was gate Z, so as you came through the tunnel after the first ticket check, the concourse opened up and our gate was on the left. We decided to just head straight in. As we walked down towards the gate we noticed a queue and just assumed it may have been something else. When we got to the gate it was completely closed, which would have been about 18:50. I asked a steward stood there why it was closed and when would it be open, he gave me a loose answer about problems with the gate and walked away. When he came back a few seconds later a nearby fan politely asked him the same thing, he then shouted in French at him and stormed off whilst waving a hand.'

'The gate was closed - no communication from the club, UEFA, police or stewards.'

'At about 7.30 it was apparent that the turnstiles had been closed. No one knew why and there was no communication.'

'We still had an hour to go, so the crowd was patient and whilst many decided to exit the queue, most stayed because we were told in Comms before the game that we could only enter in our turnstile.'

Threats from locals persisted. They had managed to negotiate the outer perimeter checks, arriving at the turnstiles without tickets: *'Any time a gate opened what I can only describe as Parisian locals would storm to get in (I heard them speaking French – definitely not Liverpool fans) – hence they kept closing the gates'*.

Another fan stated. *'Upon arrival it was clear there were a thousand or so fans waiting on one turnstile entry, but it was unsafe to stay at the back as a result of the threat of gangs stealing phones and tickets, and you could see through fences to Gate B where stewards were fighting with unknown intruders.'*

As tension mounted, *'there was no communication from staff to tell people what was going on. I genuinely didn't think they were going to open the gate and was worried as I had been separated from my friends and stranded in a dangerous area of the city where people were being mugged'*.

Ticket checks at the turnstiles slowed progress into the stadium. As the following testimonies show, gates were closed and reopened repeatedly, leading to increased frustration of queuing fans, some of whom had been at the stadium for two hours:

'The queue was well behaved and waited patiently ... I noticed the turnstile directly in front of me was open and the stewards let around 6 people through without doing a ticket check. I don't know if it was a coincidence, but I was the first one of the group allowed through the gate who was dressed in red and I got stopped and directed to the turnstile to check my ticket and the people behind me ushered to the turnstile not checking tickets. I was then allowed access to the ground.'

'I could see gates X and Y clearly and both were initially a trickle of fans getting through. From gate X there was maybe 10 people over the course of the time I was there who tried to run through the checks to get in, everyone else was queuing properly and looking to get in with their own tickets. We kept seeing more and more police in and outside the stadium perimeter and nerves were getting much worse.'

'At about 7.30 it was apparent that the turnstiles had been closed. No-one knew why and there was no communication. The queue then started moving and there was a snake barrier system in place.'

As it got closer to KO [kick off] people were getting agitated and a group of about 10 fans moved the barriers to try and jump the queue. They had to turn back. This was the worst behaviour I saw. I don't know why but they then closed the gate again. I was really close to the turnstiles by then and getting increasingly worried there would be a surge. It was getting very tightly packed. At about 8.30 with the gate still closed I asked some lads to lift me out, intending to wait until the chaos died down and go in late.'

'I did notice Gate A had only one gate open. Then as I walked past Gate Z the queues were massive, around 500 at least. As I got to Gate Y I would say there were at least 1000 people in an orderly queue. Someone I knew was near the front of the queue so I stopped to have a chat. A few minutes later, there was lots of shouting and pushing. A group of local youths were trying to force their way in. At this point I made my mind up to stay with my mate, and try and get in as soon as possible. It was turning ugly quickly.'

While in the Gate Y queue, a woman 'could see through the railings people going through very slowly. I would say no more than 2 or 3 a minute which seemed very odd for the number of turnstiles. Each person who went through appeared to be getting tackled or manhandled by stewards. I saw through the gate stewards tackle and pin down a young boy about 10 years old.'

Arriving from the Metro at approximately 7pm, 'two hours before kick-off' three friends who had been 'funnelled under the tunnel and hardly moving for around about an hour ... finally got to the gates at just after 8:00pm'. The account continues: 'We were then met with huge queues at turnstile B (our turnstile). And after around 20 minutes of the queues not moving they completely shut the gates. This was causing a lot of distress but people were still managing to remain calm. It became aware to me that there were many people around me who were locals and I was wondering how they had got tickets for the game.'

On the approach to the stadium stewards were expected to check tickets while ensuring regular flow of the crowd. Fans expressed frustration at the lack of appropriate stewarding:

'No communication at all and zero stewards.'

'Stewards as a whole were rude and there was no one 'in charge' to speak to the fans to try and explain the problems.'

'The stewards did seem to relish roughing up these people whilst expelling them from the ground.'

Further tensions arose when fans realised that locals had managed to access the concourse: *'I reached the queue for gate Y at about 19.30 and at that point the queue ran to the corner of the fencing between gates X and Y. There was no queue control on the gate and so as more joined the queue became wider as well as longer - some stewarding outside the perimeter directing fans and helping manage the queues would certainly have made things a bit calmer and would likely have made their jobs easier. Whilst in this queue it was noted by those around me that there were quite*

a lot of locals running about - again, had there been better controls and an exclusion zone this would not have been the case. Over and over we saw the local police chasing them and so tensions certainly grew as people were nervous about what might happen if any fighting broke out.'

INDISCRIMINATE USE OF TEAR GAS

With queues hardly moving and the match kick-off drawing ever closer, an increasingly hostile atmosphere developed. This was exacerbated by local gangs intent on robbing from fans, then compounded by the inexplicable police decision to use tear gas indiscriminately on the crowd. The following statements capture the moment:

'A wave of force came over from the left, set off by the locals no doubt, which instigated the police to tear gas us. Me and one of my other friends were reasonably close to the top at this time and got hit pretty bad. I have never been tear gassed before, I was dazed, in pain, couldn't see, had lost most of my friends, uncontrollably crying, uncontrollably coughing. We were forced back down the ramp. Why would the police use such a ridiculous measure against innocent men, women, children who just wanted to gain access to the gates when it was clearly a select group of locals causing the issues who they should have dealt with. I thought I had been hit bad with it until I seen 2 of my friends again. They had been hit by the tear gas full force. Both had lost almost all their senses for a good 10-15 minutes.'

'5 minutes in and police deployed tear gas for absolutely no reason, we said fuck it and tried to find another way, ended up in a narrow street leading up to gates B and C. There was a ticket checkpoint there, it was an absolute chocker, however at around 8:20pm we managed to get through.'

'The first tear gassing – they did not directly gas us but we must have been in the dispersion area for it. I would guess that we got hit with between 6 and 8 waves of the gas but I can't be 100% certain. Then we were tear gassed again. There were kids in the queue, no older than 7-8 years, there were fathers with teenage daughters who were crying and asked their dads to leave, there were people in their 70s ...'

'There were 2 stampedes when fans ran away from being tear gassed.'

Having been held on the stadium approach in static queues, without reason or warning, fans were then subjected to being tear gassed. Trapped in a confined space, this police assault on fans was physically painful and emotionally traumatising, especially for children and those with respiratory health issues as the following accounts demonstrate.

Arriving in the vicinity of the stadium four hours before kick-off a fan recounted being '*forced into a bottleneck*' where '*people were getting crushed*'. To escape the crush he jumped a fence, injuring his knee. Arriving at the concourse he was surprised to find '*only 3 or 4 gates open*'. Then he was confronted by '*large groups of French youngsters charging the gates and snatching tickets off people, tear gas being sprayed in kids' faces!*'

A fan, at the match with his wife and two daughters aged 9 and 7, was '*funnelled with other fans into the underpass which at that point was nothing worse than normal - still a crush and took 20 mins or so to get past the ticket checkers and my daughters were pretty scared*'. A few metres further on '*the scenes were much worse – no gates open at this stage and crowds of people getting worse*'.

He continued: '*At one point we saw some people scale the fence (it looked like locals) and the riot police responded with tear gas – which my daughters were caught up in (both of them were sprayed) ... We were in this crushed situation for over an hour (with my girls, who wanted to leave), eventually getting in just before the revised kick off time.*' Having entered he '*went up to the riot police with my eldest daughter, showed them her eyes, which were streaming and asked them what they were playing at. One of them laughed at me & my daughter.*'

At 8.05pm a fan was queuing near Gates A and B when, '*the area ... was CS gassed - seemingly for no reason and in an area where many families were, kids as young as 9 and 10 with eyes streaming and coughing, was horrendous.*' At Gate A another fan '*met a dad with two small kids in tears and scared as they had been tear gassed.*'

A fan who had '*moved to Gate B as this appeared to be allowing fans into the stadium*' stated that access '*soon stopped and pepper spray was fired through the railings at the waiting fans for no apparent reason*'. He noted: '*Parents with children around the age of 3 & 4 had to quickly lift the children onto their shoulders to try and get them out of the firing line.*'

Another fan recounted how he joined an '*orderly queue at Gate B*' with his sister, nephew and school friends: '*The gates were shut. There were a few hundred in the queue. We watched locals climbing over fencing into the stadium. Around 8.45pm a gate was opened and locals rushed the entrance. The police responded with tear gas and moved along the fence line, inside the stadium, spraying all the LFC fans standing patiently in line behind locked gates. My 17 year old nephew was hit at short range. The rest of us were also hit, although not at point blank range. We staggered away from the fence line, my nephew vomiting and all of us crying. We stood terrified, scared of the police.*'

A fan arriving at Gate B with friends at approximately 9pm described how they were '*up against the gate about 7-8 rows of people back*': '*We then felt our eyes watering and a burning in our throats. It didn't feel like the tear gas was sprayed directly at us, but we still felt its effects. There were people there from ages 7-70 I would say. Husbands and wives, elderly fathers and grown sons, parents and kids. They were all coughing and rubbing their eyes. I was a bit disorientated for about 30-60 seconds. I was rubbing my eyes so I had my hands away from my pockets for that time. Once I*

came round again I felt my pocket and my phone was gone. I checked around the floor and some fans tried to help me, but I feel it was stolen rather than fallen. The crowd were getting more agitated at this time, but what may have been anger at not getting in before was now turning to fear after being exposed to tear gas. We felt we had done nothing wrong, and it felt like an over-reaction especially with kids in attendance.'

A fan was still in the Gate B queue at 9pm, the scheduled kick off time: *'We didn't see any Stewards or Police in this area at all', but 'Riot Police arrived only after [a group of] youths had scaled the fence. They deployed tear gas (it may have been pepper spray) and everyone in the queue got a dose. There were families - young children - and elderly. There was nowhere to escape it - we were penned in by a wall and fence on one side and a security barrier on the other.'*

Another fan, in a queue at Gate B, stated *'it starts to kickoff'* around 9pm: *'Stewards started to open a turnstile gate. A group of Liverpool supporters built up around the gate. Then about 10-15 local kids came from the opposite side of our line and made a huge push into the entryway. Whatever line the stewards were trying to maintain now broke. Several of those in the crowd started running into the stadium. The gate was now chaos with Liverpool supporters and locals on the floor after the turnstiles ... That's when we started to see people running away from the gate. First a few older fellas who I thought just had enough. Then a kid, no more than 14, red-eyed and holding his mouth running away from the turnstile. I heard someone ahead of me yell "gas" ... The riot police arrive and start battering anyone near the gate before closing it ... Riot police and stewards are tackling runners inside the gates ... There are people (not wearing Red), scaling the outside fences and jumping into the ground. A kid and his father are next to us crying and pouring water on their eyes.'*

Also in the Gate B queue, a fan stated: *'I wasn't at the head of the queue, at about 9pm, but I was close enough that I and the others around me got a full whack of pepper spray in our faces and several people, including a few kids, left the queue with eyes streaming.'*

A fan who *'went to Gate U to get in'* stated that it took *'about 30 mins to get in'*. He commented: *'I never saw any trouble but still got either tear gassed / pepper sprayed twice in this queue which was full of children/ women/ pensioners.'*

In a long queue at Gate X, a father attending with his 11 year old son, along with a friend and his son, *'noticed access through the turnstiles was being severely restricted'*. After hearing *'some commotion'* and seeing barriers being knocked over he noticed: *'a strange smell and I noticed my son had covered his face with his jacket and was rubbing his eyes. Others around us were coughing and covering their faces. I asked some French people in the queue if it was tear gas and they nodded.'*

He continued: *'Those in the queue were becoming extremely agitated and anxious, now desperate to get inside the stadium, but as a means to escape the situation at the gate rather than to see the match. We were genuinely fearing for our safety. A child behind us wearing Real Madrid colours was sat on his father's shoulders and was crying, visibly shaken by the tear gas and intimidating atmosphere. His father gestured to the Police officer to let him inside and he agreed. I pointed to my son and told him that I wanted him inside also. He asked if we had tickets and I showed him the ticket on my phone, which he glanced at and then became distracted by something happening*

around him. He accepted that we were coming over the gate and we took the opportunity for the 4 of us to get through and then helped the young Real Madrid supporter and his father.'

According to another fan, the gates were closed because *'local youths [were] storming the gate and jumping the fence'*. As the gates closed: *'Shouts then started and cries and screams followed. It was horrible to see. You could see kids and women being crushed and when lads were shouting "we need help" and started shaking the gate to alert authorities the armed guards then started to pepper spray fans, tear gas being thrown into the crowd. Men, women and children were crying, struggling to breathe.'*

A fan with his 18 year old son stated that he was *'a regular match-goer, with experience of plenty of semi-finals (including Hillsborough in 1989)'*. Together, they arrived at the stadium early and joined the Gate Y queue at 6.15pm. By the time they neared the entrance gates, *'the area was seriously over-crowded and at the point of being uncomfortable ... There were a lot of women and young children in the crowd. I checked on the wellbeing of a few women and children as I was concerned for their safety ... tear gas was deployed by stewards ... the first time I have experienced such an action and it was extremely uncomfortable; causing coughing, eyes-watering and extreme discomfort for a number of minutes thereafter. There were a number of young children within the crowd and their obvious distress was hugely concerning.'*

A father and his 14 year old son were locked outside Gate Y: *'The police were constantly spraying tear gas into the crowd through the gates, which was a horrible thing to cope with - especially when I had my young son with me and he was also experiencing this. Many other children were also in this crowd. There was no need for tear gas when they were stood behind steel fences and the fans had no way in.'*

Also at Gate Y, another father with his 9 year old son stated *'all but one gate was closed, which was closed shortly after we joined the queue'*. After forty-five minutes, they *'hadn't moved any closer to the turnstiles, which were still closed ... The fans were pleading through the gates to the police and stewards and the reaction was pepper spray/tear gas. This was horrific, my eyes and my son's eyes were streaming and we were coughing, as were many others. I swiftly left the queue and stood well back. My son has epilepsy and I was also scared he may have a fit. At this point I told my son it was unlikely we were getting in as kick off was approaching. He sobbed and was comforted by me and also a female fan next to me.'*

Having witnessed locals stealing fans tickets and intimidating others, he *'considered giving up and going back to our hotel but didn't know what risks I'd walk into if I left'*. However, he felt they would be *'safer with the crowd'*:

'At one point I asked a group of men if we could "hang around with them" to protect my son. They immediately brought us into the middle of their group to protect us. Just before the delayed kick off time, I heard "any kids" in a French accent and turned around to see a lone steward and an official pulling a kid and his dad from the queue. I shouted for their attention and pointed at my son, whom they couldn't see as I had him shielded in front of me. They beckoned me out.'

The father and son were scanned in and stood to watch the game. After the game they ran to the station, *'again tear gassed [by the police] just as we left the tunnel/underpass.'* He concluded: *'It is*

the most scared I've ever been, I genuinely feared for the safety of my son. It was easily the worst experience of my life.'

A fan who joined '*hundreds, if not thousands, just crowded outside*' Gate Y was tear gassed three times while waiting. Emphasising that, '*AT NO TIME DID THE FANS DO ANYTHING OTHER THAN WAIT CALMLY*', she stated: '*I saw children and elderly fans distraught as they had pepper spray in their eyes.*' Another fan stated: '*At gate Y, which was initially open, then closed, we were pepper sprayed again during a long wait ... The trauma in children's eyes was obvious.*'

Also waiting at Gate Y another fan witnessed the impact of tear gas: '*Suddenly a lot of fans came running from my left, shouting and holding their eyes, a number of police were spraying a substance and my eyes started burning so I also joined them in moving away from Y. Many fans were distressed, coughing and young kids were in tears.*'

A fan, while waiting in the queue at Gate Y, witnessed fans being '*subjected to constant threat of mugging and attacks by French yobs who had made it past the police*'. He continued: '*These same yobs caused issues with the police, aggravating them to unnecessarily use tear gas and pepper spray ... There was a young lad in front of me with his dad, can't have been older than 8-9, crying his eyes out in agony. A girl with her dad to my left against the stadium fence, can't have been much younger than myself, was absolutely terrified, I can still see her face now.*'

In another account, '*the police were struggling to deal with the locals and LFC fans took the brunt of that.*' There was '*constant unnecessary use of tear gas and a few fans (unsure if local or Red) were slammed to the ground by riot police in front of children and families. It felt more like a warzone than a football match.*'

A woman was waiting at Gate Y when: '*Suddenly, and with no warning, I found myself choking, eyes hurting and unable to breathe due to a chemical in the air. Everyone rushed away, people falling unable to breathe ... As I started to recover from this after a few minutes I looked around and saw a number of children suffering from the effects of the gas - they were screaming, crying and parents trying to protect them. Everyone was looking at each other in stunned shock. It continues to bring me to tears when I think about it. I have seen police brutality at football, people herded like cattle and batoned for no reason, but this was on another level. The police were doing this to a peaceful if unhappy crowd, from behind a fence and locked gates.*'

Another fan also joined the Gate Y queue approximately twenty yards from the gate. It closed and remained closed for forty-five to sixty minutes. On the concourse, locked out of the stadium, waiting fans were then '*targeted by local youths trying to steal from our pockets*'. Eventually, all three Gate Y gates reopened, but only for between five and ten minutes: '*This is when the police started to get nasty, initially using their batons to clear the space for the gates to be closed and then following that with at least 2 further tear gassings.*'

A small gate was re-opened: *'We started to be literally dragged through and thrown towards the turnstiles. Once I scanned my ticket I was again dragged through the turnstile and pushed towards a steward who was waiting to search me. All the time the French riot police were screaming and shouting at us all ... I've never experienced anything like this, anywhere. I spent the first half of the game in shock and am still feeling the effects of it now whilst writing this. Being surrounded by women and children crying their eyes out in sheer terror was horrific. As much as we tried to calm those around us, you could feel the uncertainty. I'm a 38 year old man and was with my two friends of the same age and the three of us felt genuinely at risk of being seriously hurt!'*

Also in the Gate Y queue another fan noted: *'Whilst we were waiting we saw men, women and children coming away from gate Y with red eyes streaming with tears. I wrongly assumed they had been denied access for ticket issues and were upset, only for it to become apparent that pepper spray was being used and they were fleeing from it. Tear gas was then released by the riot police into the concourse for no reason. I started coughing, sneezing and my eyes were stinging. I couldn't see temporarily and it was difficult to breathe. All around me people - including the elderly, parents and children - were crying, not only from tear gas but also from fear and shock. People were just in pure disbelief.'*

A woman in the same queue stated: *'In the confusion fans who were behaving were teargassed. I was choking and coughing. People were on the floor due to the gas and there were women and children running away.'*

A fan, also at Gate Y, was concerned there *'was no communication from the French authorities as to why the gates were being closed'*. He stated, *'Anyone who tried to ask any questions were being pepper sprayed, this included the elderly, women and children'*. Leaving the queue to walk to Gate C, he *'saw many people in floods of tears - grown men, women and children. In floods of tears because they were traumatised by what they had experienced - not getting in to the stadium and police brutality of the highest order. Those images will stay with me for the rest of my life.'*

A woman stated that at Gate Y: *'We started to taste gas in the air at this point and people were coughing and covering their eyes with their shirts. I was sneezing, a lot! ... Near the gate there seemed to be an altercation and more gas was used, although when it was discharged it looked like liquid. I put my jumper over my face and was carried in a crush towards the gate. I didn't want to lift my face out of my jumper because I could breathe in there, and I could hear people next to me coughing hard, but it was frightening not to be able to see. As I got near the gate I was spun 180 degrees in the crush and I was finding it hard to get air in, so I took the jumper down. There was a short couple in their 70s behind me and the man grabbed my hand to try and keep me calm because I was panicking. I somehow got through to the turnstile part and fell onto the floor. A man, who turned out to be the older couple's son ... gave me some water and helped me stop panicking ... I couldn't really concentrate on the game because I had a headache from the gas and I was pretty shellshocked.'*

At Gate Z, a fan who had queued for an hour stated that *'the crush was getting worse as more and more fans arrived'*. Feeling unsafe, he left the queue. Twenty minutes before kick-off he could *'see 1000s of Liverpool fans locked outside the stadium'*. He and a friend *'tried talking to stewards and police to find out what was happening' and none of them knew.* At this point, *'we saw a young*

family walk past us, all crying - 2 children, must of only been between 8-10 years old - and they had all been tear gassed just for being at the front of a queue to get through a closed gate.'

A fan who arrived at the stadium with his 16 year old son approximately three hours before kick-off stated that having been '*filtered very slowly through the checkpoint*' under the bridge, taking almost two hours, they were directed towards a large ramp to the stadium concourse. They '*noticed unusually long queues at Gates X, Y and Z*' and were '*surprised that the gates appeared to have not yet been opened*'. They walked beyond the long queues hoping to enter through the neighbouring Gate A area: '*Like the other gates, Gate A was locked, and the queue at that area (which was more of a tight mass of bodies than a queue) was even greater than the ones we'd already seen*'. They returned to Gate Z where, '*the atmosphere had become hostile. People were talking of being tear-gassed and there were women and children in obvious distress.*'

He continued: '*Looking back now I believe people were trying to escape being sprayed from both sides of Gate Z, and had quickly congregated near the turnstile area. Despite his young age [16], he is in triple figures for games attended and has travelled into Europe on previous occasions as well as visiting countless away grounds in England. He's not inexperienced in large crowds but he began to look very uncomfortable as the crowd tightened around us. There was a sudden panic around us, and people began to scream out. A man in a grey t-shirt managed to scale a temporary fence that was separating the turnstile area from the strip where all the TV vehicles were being kept and, standing on the roof of a van, was shouting for people to pass the children over to him. I believe his actions stopped a very bad situation from becoming a lot worse ... I then became aware that a man was shouting to all people who had escaped the crush "Get out, you are going to affect the broadcast."* This comment was met with more anger'. Eventually entering through Gate Z and arriving at their seats as the game kicked off, he '*was completely disengaged with the football and just wanted to be home ... The preceding events had made the match completely irrelevant.*'

Another fan recounted how '*there was a complete and dangerous blockage outside gate Z. People weren't moving but were keeping quite calm. We assumed things would improve quickly and we'd be able to start moving soon, but this was not happening and we realized that there was more problems at the front of the "queue" when a young lad in his 20s started lifting kids and elderly over a fence on to TV vans.*'

Also describing this situation, another fan stated: '*The area around turnstile Z became very busy. People were coming from both directions and the riot police kept people inside that area. People started to become scared, women and children were crying. One guy started helping them over a fence outside the inner circle of the ground. I tried to comfort some people and directed them to him. This is where I received my next full load of tear gas. This was much worse, hurt and stopped me from seeing properly. Thankfully one guy took care of me and washed my eyes out with a water bottle he was carrying.*'

A father with his 11 year old son described walking towards Gate Z, their entry point, where there was a '*huge queue*'. Fans told them '*that by then they had already been in this queue for over 2 hours and had not been told why the gates were still closed and no entry was possible.*' He, '*thought*

it best to ask a policeman where we should take our children to gain entry and showed him our tickets. The response from the policeman was so aggressive and [he] shouted not to touch him. I hadn't touched him at all. It was completely unprovoked and shockingly aggressive. My son became scared and asked why the police were acting like this.'

Outside gate Z a fan became separated from the three others in his group: *'I quickly realised I then couldn't move and was just stuck in a mass of people and we were starting to crush each other with the force of people coming from all directions.'* Eventually, he reached his seat but one of the group was missing. S/he *'turned up after KO [kick-off] clearly traumatised and had been pepper sprayed trying to save children from being crushed.'*

Another fan noted that Gates Y and Z were *'completely closed off'* at approximately 7.30pm: *'The next hour an half, was just a repeat of screams, shouts, people jumping over the fencing, police using tear gas. There didn't seem to be many people coming in. I went down closer as the gates were reopened a bit. There were kids coming through crying, screaming, holding their eyes. Horrific.'*

AFTER THE MATCH

Having endured queueing, tear-gassing, hostile policing and difficulties with ticket validation, for many fans the match – the reason that they had travelled and incurred great expense – became irrelevant:

'The atmosphere at the game was dead and heavy. It didn't feel like a European cup final at all. We lost and lost the European cup final – normally I would be distraught and shell shocked but not that night. I was numb. I felt sad at the events of the night. I felt sorry for my friends and my heart went out to all those who were caught up in that drama.'

'The game was just a blur and I spent most of the second half sitting with my head in my hands trying to get my mind around what had just gone on. We decided that we would leave the ground immediately upon the final whistle (win or lose). We were amazed to see riot police massing below the Liverpool fans prior to the end of the game! We left as soon as the final whistle blew, but as we tried to exit the ground there was only a single set of gates open and once again this was leading to a crushed congestion.'

The chaos fans had experienced entering the stadium was repeated on exiting:

'We made to leave quite soon after the final whistle. In attempting to leave through the steel perimeter fence, we were caught in a chaotic crowd all heading in different directions, which was disorientating. We eventually were swept along with one group and out into the concourse again.'

'No directions, no signs, no-one to direct us to the exits. Started just following the crowd. One narrow exit was already swarming with people. I have anxiety. We looked for another Exit. ALL THE EXITS WE SAW WERE CLOSED. Many more fans of both teams were now filtering out of the stadium. No-one knew where to go. Saw a ramp way with no gate, guarded by armed riot police, so no-one could go that way. Twenty metres further on, a plume of white smoke. I thought it was a flare, so we continued walking towards it, looking for an exit. It turns out it was tear gas. Also got the taste of pepper gas. Elderly people, children, women all moving away from it, telling people not to go that way because of the gas. Many were very upset, but in a controlled way: no panic.'

Riot police stood at the exits, funnelling fans through a narrow gap at the Liverpool end of the stadium: *'fans were heading back towards us having been tear gassed and hit with batons - women and children around us were visibly distressed.'*

A fan who remained in the stadium for *'10-15 minutes after full time'*, eventually followed Liverpool fans in the direction of the station: *'While waiting to go down the stairs a large crowd was there but everyone was calm. I then seen a container with green liquid fly through the air and hit me, covering me in this liquid. I was extremely worried as I did not know what this was. The crowd around me then began to run away and this left me extremely confused. I then noticed children around me no older than 8 years old crying and covering their eyes. That's when I realised the police had thrown tear gas at us and I noticed a strange smell and my eyes began to burn.'*

A father recounted the congestion experienced by him and his family after the match: *'outside the gate and all the way to the ramp that we had used to enter the concourse before the match, there was another Police blockage on the ramp stopping fans leaving the stadium grounds, we were being kettled again.'* Those around him were responsive to the needs of parents who were accompanied by children: *'the frustration of how we had been treated before and after the match greatly affected the mood but it was amazing that everyone remained so patient, there was no sign of any trouble and those around us were conscious that we had young children with us and gave us a little extra space.'*

A group of ten friends *'were herded on a route from the ground which took us under a road underpass, which was not lit up or policed. There were loads of local youths. They tried grabbing at bags and made it very uncomfortable ... Feel for anyone on their own or with children walking through that as it felt like we were prey to be picked off.'*

As the following statements demonstrate, at this point fans were left unprotected by the police:

'On the final whistle we left through clouds of tear gas & the route to the station was back down the underpass where the police vans still blocked the way, although now no police officers, just gangs of locals waiting like hyenas picking people off. Lone people were pounced on & their watches, phones etc taken. Once out of the underpass gangs waiting on street corners threw bottles at us.'

'We noticed a group of local people were around us then suddenly ran at us and grabbed me and my shoulder bag. They tried to take my bag and nearly pulled me over. We had to kick out and shouted for help before they fled ... they ran through the rest of the fans, pushing and grabbing anyone ... There were several incidents and many children crying.'

'Fans were bottled by local youths [who] tried to slash at Liverpool fans with knives and/or broken bottles as well as hurling bottles our way ... children [were] literally frozen still, crying in shock.'

'There were tens of locals trying to grab people's bags, pick pockets, and goad or fight fans including little children.'

The police, however, were waiting beyond the unlit subway:

'No lights and no signs for where to go as we left the Stade. That underpass was now in the dark. It was horrible as we walked into it and were kept in there. The Police kettled us in with their vans. What was going to happen now?! After a delay we were let through. Things could have gotten ugly. It's to the crowd's credit that it didn't.'

'There are riot police at the other end, in full gear. Why? The crowd is peaceful, moving nimbly, everyone keen to get to the station. Behind us, something goes off, having been thrown in. My eyes prick, the back of my throat feels painful - The word goes round - tear gas. Scarves and shirts are pulled up over eyes, I tell my son to do the same, and to stay close, keep hold of my shirt. Nothing was happening, nothing was being done to justify the use of tear gas. The crowd stops, blocked off by riot police and their vans, forcing us to stop, to stand where the tear gas has been thrown. No explanations. No announcements, no information ... Just as it feels things may kick off, the riot police part and let people through.'

'The barriers were set up to funnel people down to an impossibly narrow aperture for exiting. Police stood on the other side of the barrier, and we witnessed a policeman walk up and down the barrier pepper spraying indiscriminately, to try and move people back. This was obviously futile, however, due to the sheer amount of people pushing from the back.'

A fan described his journey from the stadium to the main station: *'As soon as we got outside the stadium gates the atmosphere felt really dark. The police disappeared and all along the side of the roads we could see locals who seemed to be trying to pick off our weaker fans ... At this point the most bizarre thing happened, some kind of missiles began exploding in the middle of our fans. I could see them crossing almost horizontally right in front of me, one missing me by about 2 feet. At first I thought they must be fireworks from locals but could see where they were coming from which was a road that was below us. I looked down and there was about 50 riot police relaxing, with 2 of them laughing as they fired gas grenades at men, women and children. It was only when I started to struggle to breathe and my eyes were pouring that we realised it was tear gas. We ran to the station, quite frankly like we were running for our lives.'*

Another fan stated: *'We managed to get through and made our way to the station. The station was chaos! There were gangs of French attacking Liverpool supporters and then running off with fans belongings. There wasn't a police man or steward to help people in sight.'*

A father recounted the *'frightening'* experiences confronting him and his 17 year old daughter: *'We headed towards a subway signposted to the train station. There was a path, a road in the middle, and another path. Police blocked the exit on the paths with riot vans & the road exit to the train station was also blocked with fencing and riot police. The crowd started to grow. Why did they need to stop us getting to the station? It doesn't make any sense. Then tear gas was thrown into the middle of us at the entrance to the subway - 2 or 3 canisters from our right, thrown over a wall. I thought it was a flare at first. Then my eyes were getting stung. It was like an ambush, I told [daughter] to cover her eyes but it was too late. It was like someone putting needles in your eyes. My only thought was for the safety of my daughter. After that attack they let us through. Gangs of locals were everywhere then, lots of them were waiting on the platform. When we got to the station we saw lots of fighting with local African immigrants. They were robbing loads of Reds. As we went to climb the stairs to the platform, you could hear shouting and obviously people were fighting. The police were nowhere to be seen. I didn't see this but someone on the train said people were getting slashed. I didn't use the stairs, we went back down and used the escalators. As we did they started spitting on us from above. Luckily a train was there waiting. People just got on it and didn't care where it was going. It was going to the airport. Everyone was shocked at what was happening.'*

Recounting their terrifying experience approaching the station, a father who was with his son stated: *'The police were forcing us to one side of the walkway, where there were large gangs of French locals just waiting for us. One man jumped out and tried to slash me with a machete, it was 1 inch away from my throat. Luckily I was able to jump backwards. I grabbed my son and ran as fast as we could. Then another 2 men jumped out and tried to slash me with knives, all the while shouting at us in a different language. I was holding my son to the right of me to keep him away from the locals and to the side which the riot police was on, as I instinctively thought that was going to be the safest place for him as we ran, only for the police to then tear gas my son right in the face from point blank range. He is 11 years old and they could see he was just a kid. It was like the police was feeding us to the lions. It genuinely felt like a game to them. So now we are running when I'm struggling to see, my son is struggling to breathe and he can't see at all. Despite being sprayed, he kept running. You can imagine how much fear he must have felt to do that. To know the police have just done this to him as we were trying to escape knife attacks. At this point we are obviously totally panicked and disorientated. As we ran we saw people who had been slashed trying to escape too, one man had a massive wound across his face. We saw at least 5 policemen all stood over a man kicking him repeatedly. We saw LFC fans helping injured fans to escape. There were young fans (possibly around 18) checking that my son was with someone and was okay as we got through the worst of it, trying their best to help others in the chaos.'*

A school headteacher viewed the situation as being *'like a 'warzone' - children and elderly crying and panicked, middle aged LFC fans drawn into fights with French youths, police acting with disregard for the safety of bonafide fans and French youths running riot.'*

As fans approached the tube station, *'loads of riot police barged in and stood with shields and batons for no reason whatsoever. Small children around me were in shock and tears.'* Another fan stated that as he and his friends walked to the train station after the game, *'Real Madrid*

supporters, including elderly people and children, were walking towards us crying. They had been attacked by tear gas. They were terrified.'

A retired Police Officer noted: *'As I got nearer the station I saw 4 blue police vans with blue lights flashing blocking the road on my left side. I then started coughing and spluttering and [my] eyes started to stream - the air was thick with tear gas ... On my right side I became aware of a group of black French lads throwing items, shouting and attacking us. In front of me I could see gas coming out of canisters and flash bangs going off. [At the station he] 'got the escalator to platforms 1 and 1B. I looked down on the carnage below. To my left I saw a group of black French youths attacking Liverpool fans - I saw Liverpool fans defending themselves, women and children were screaming.'*

Describing the scene at the station, another fan stated: *'The platforms are empty and there's a train due in - but the SNCF staff are not letting fans up, shouting angrily at their customers and ignoring pleas from parents whose kids are getting squashed - just as this threatens to become another major problem, the train doors open and fans are allowed to pour onto it.'*

A father accompanied by his 26 year old son:

'... My son and I left the stadium at the full time whistle and proceeded towards the hotel along Rue des Tremies. At the underpass to the A86, were met by hundreds of local people, confronting and intimidating us. They were videoing us on phones and 'getting in our faces'. I pushed one away and then a second came at me, took pepper spray out of his pocket and sprayed me continually in the face. I tried to fight him off but couldn't as I couldn't see or breathe. They attempted to pull my bag off and my left arm and stomach were slashed, leaving an eight centimetre gash on my arm and a minor superficial cut to my stomach. Thankfully I did not think it was deep, and thought I didn't need medical assistance.

At this point I realised I had lost my son and didn't know where he was. I found him further along the underpass and he had been pepper sprayed, assaulted, injured, and had his bag stolen. This contained, amongst other items, his passport and bank cards. Further along the underpass, near McDonalds, there was a police vehicle with about six police officers stood watching all of this unfold. They did not intervene at any point and simply stood there and watched us being pepper sprayed, slashed, assaulted, injured with knives and robbed. It felt lawless. Later we found out that my sons' credit and debit cards were used over six times, around 20km away. We have the addresses and times.

We made our way back towards the Liverpool fan zone and found somewhere to stay. Thankfully I still had my bank cards to be able to do this. On Sunday we contacted the British Consulate and started to arrange for an emergency passport for my son. We then attended the Central Police Station in Paris and reported the crime. The police officers were excellent and took a very detailed account. However, the copy of the statement provided was in French which we had to sign despite not knowing what had been recorded. Thankfully the British Consulate processed the application for an emergency passport very quickly and we were able to collect this on Monday lunchtime and flew home to Manchester Airport on Monday evening.

After having returned to England I needed to visit an NHS facility as the burns on my face from the pepper spray were severe and resulted in part of my beard falling out with my skin raw and peeling.

Afterwards, we both felt anxious, apprehensive and unsafe until we arrived home. Both of us have had nightmares about the whole incident since arriving home.

The whole trip cost, including the extra hotels, flights, and stolen items, in the region of almost £6,000 ... Safe to say it is highly unlikely we will be returning to Paris anytime soon.

Meanwhile, back in the City, fans watched the match in the Fan Park or in pubs. A fan stated: *'Heading from the bar where we watched the match back to the metro we got caught up in clashes between police and what looked like locals causing trouble. Trying to avoid it all we rushed past but my 15 year old son ... got struck by a copper with a truncheon across the chest. No provocation on our part just an overzealous cop.'*

A father and his son from the United States who were watching the match with friends in a pub having left the Fan Park heard *'glass smash outside and saw gangs with helmets ... My first thought was Paris Ultras. I grabbed my son and headed to the back of the pub ... I realised it was Parisian Police. We made sure our group was together as we had young children we wanted to protect. It is my belief that the kids being with us is the only reason the Police did not attack us as we had already seen them club an elderly woman right in front of us.'* They had *'entered the pub heavy handed and were indiscriminately hitting, grabbing and punching people who simply didn't get out of the way quick enough. It was chaos of which I've never been in view of before.'* He and his son left to find *'a safe sanctuary in the hope to watch the second half, but everywhere was either closed or packed to the rafters'*.

He continued, *'it seemed like every corner we turned, there were more and more groups of police dressed head to toe in riot gear and moving around aggressively and menacingly'*. Arriving at Place d'Italie at 10:55pm *'we met fans who had been pepper sprayed by police and robbed by locals and a family whose 10 year old son had clearly been pepper sprayed and was still suffering the effects.'*

A group of friends, not all of whom had match tickets, had separated. Some had remained in the Fan Park while those with tickets went to the stadium. After the match, those who had stayed in the Fan Park waited on their coach: *'My 5 friends ... met on the concourse and as they were about to walk down some steps a massive bomb like noise went off right in front of them ... They now think it may have been a stun grenade to disperse locals from attacking reds fans. Then they were pepper sprayed again as police with gas masks faced them, at this point they could see 2 people lying in the road. One was a big guy receiving CPR and another was lying in the gutter, they both looked in a bad way. This was a frightening scene as more locals were bouncing around shouting 'Madrid, Madrid' goading reds fans, wanting a fight. We don't know what happened to those 2 poor fans that lay on the ground but we know one man didn't make it back to our coach to come home with us. The coach was waiting at Port de Vincennes. After leaving the metro my friends eventually made it to our coach very shook up as they had more locals threatening them as they walked back to the coach. The main thought on our very sombre coach was get us out of here ASAP. We left at 3am.'*

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Many fans witnessed the distress experienced by children [under 12] and young people [13 -18] in various locations. They described children and young people being ‘agitated’, ‘upset’ and ‘scared’ as they were trapped in crowds of people.

In the Vicinity of the Stadium

One fan stated that, walking from the Metro to the stadium, his group of 8-10 friends ‘were hit with severe congestion of fans underneath a bridge. Police vans were parked blocking the route, and more and more fans were arriving. At the time the police were not letting fans use the road, only the very narrow passage under the bridge. After 20-30 mins of crushing, fans screaming for help, and children crying, police let fans jump over a low metal fence onto the road to try and ease the potentially fatal crushing of fans. The issue there was the police were not in agreement, one set let people use the road, the next set were screaming at fans to go back over the metal fencing and threatening force.’

A fan who attended with his 16 year old son stated that, when they eventually got to the front of the queue in the underpass, there was ‘Lots of shoving and pushing’ and his son ‘was hit in the eye by a policeman for no reason as we went through.’ This led to his son’s left eye being cut, bruised and swollen.

Having come out of the underpass heading towards the stadium, where they had spent an hour moving very slowly, another fan detailed her experience of going up the ramp as more fans arrived: ‘When the crush was getting too much some of the lads at the front helped people across the ramp wall, including children who were extremely upset. This was not just to get into the stadium, this was for the safety of people in a growing crush.’

A fan in the queue on the ramp leading to the stadium noted that as the crowd reached a barrier at the top of the ramp, ‘some people went through one of the barriers by the far right hand side of the slope ... it was not a significant number and it was certainly not a rush of people. There were some women and children amongst them. They were immediately met by the Police who sprayed tear gas to get them to move back. There was simply no need for them to do that, as it was clearly a manageable situation.’ Everyone standing in the vicinity was affected by the gas: ‘I had to lift my shirt up to cover my mouth, nose and eyes. It was a very uncomfortable few minutes.’

Arriving via taxi at the stadium around 6.45pm, a fan noted the ‘sense of confusion as to where we should be going or which direction we needed to head towards. Within a matter of minutes, more and more people began to join the crowds as we waited at the bottom of the bridge.’ Those in the crowd ‘began to plead with the French authorities to allow people to move in order to prevent the situation becoming more serious’ but were ignored and threatened with use of pepper spray by a French police officer: ‘No one communicated what was going on and when we persisted in asking, we were met with either threatening posturing or just completely ignored.’ Having finally entered

the outer zone of the stadium they headed for their entrance point where *'gates were open, then closed, then open, then closed etc. until they closed altogether and we were left wondering what was going on - concern for safety increasingly growing.'*

After another thirty minutes they realised the gate would not re-open so moved to the next gate in the vicinity: *'We spent the next 45-60 minutes kettled into the most horrendous situation I have ever faced at a sporting event, concert, gathering etc. We legitimately feared for our lives. What transpired during this period of time was abhorrent. We were crushed, ignored, laughed at and threatened.'* They went through the gate and made their way up the stairs towards the concourse: *'Once we arrived at this point, the members of our party began to cry. As we stood at the top of the stairs, this was a repeated scene that we witnessed. Men, women and children crying. Distraught and confused, but ultimately thankful to be alive.'*

Waiting to enter the stadium, a fan reported that *'queues started to get bigger. We were at the front [when] riot police arrived and without no warning started to spray supporters. Police and stewards were under no threat from Liverpool supporters. Men, women, children were all [tear] gassed...'*

Another fan, who arrived with his friend at the stadium around 6.45pm (2.25 hours before the kick off), was *'met with a wall of people'* as they approached the entrance. They joined what they assumed was a queue.

After an hour of *'hardly moving more than a few feet'*, he stated *'you could start to feel the pressure of what was more and more people joining the crowd from the back. At this point you now had no control over what direction you went. This is when it started to get scary.'* A *'line of around 10 riot police in full riot gear, with shields, came surging through the crowd knocking everyone - including women and children - out of the way. This created a huge surge and many people fell and were subsequently trampled on.'* He affirmed: *'Fans acted quickly and pulled up those that had fell. Many had cuts and bruises. At this point children were then put on parent's shoulders to avoid being crushed. This is not an exaggeration.'* Having eventually had their tickets checked, they joined *'another huge queue'* to have their tickets scanned at a turnstile. It took them almost three hours to get in, and over an hour to exit the stadium.

A fan who attended the game with his two sons, a friend, and the friend's three sons, joined the back of a queue at the ground. He stated: *'We felt a strong push that made us move back. Then the gas hit us, not too bad in the first instance. We all looked at each other, then looked around and you could feel the tension. To the left was a wall and ... it looked like about a 100 lads standing on it. They were very obviously local and looked like they meant business, as in ready to pounce on anyone who strayed their way. We gathered everyone together and me and [friend] told the kids to stay close and stay in the middle right so as not to get too close to them. At this point we thought the reason behind the push and gas was their presence. About 20 yards walk later I went up on my tip toes only to see the most violent attack on fans - women, kids and men - by the police hitting out with their sticks. This really scared me so I grabbed the gang and pushed them into the side door of something. Doing this meant we took the next tear gas attack full on. It was horrendous, very frightening. We had no idea what was happening. We were blinded but we still tried our best to help others who fell to the ground. One of our lads gave his scarf to a girl about 5 years of age to cover her face. We helped a young lad who lost his dad in the panic to the side. Again we re-grouped. Me and [friend] didn't know what to do. We looked at other ways in but the police were not having that - forward was the only option.'*

Having described his own experience of ‘*crushing*’ in an underpass and at a barrier to an entry point, plus being ‘*pepper sprayed on three occasions*’ while in the queue at Gate Y, a fan arrived at his seat ‘*about 5 minutes before halftime*’. He continued: ‘*I was beside a little boy who was about 6 or 7, who was blind and with his mum and dad - unbelievably they had been pepper sprayed and the little boy was just trembling.*’ He concluded: ‘*I appreciate that it’s obvious, but the police and match stewards were just not interested in public safety and had complete disregard for us as football fans. They could see people were getting crushed, that women and children were crying in the crush outside the concourse, and simply watched - if anyone approached the police, they were physically pushed away and threatened with a baton.*’

Another fan reported that she and her friend were crushed on a narrow path on the way to the stadium and at the security checkpoint. They were then targeted by locals and tear gassed by the police while in the queue at Gate Y. She wrote: ‘*Once inside we met fans with similar stories, including a blind child who had been sprayed with pepper spray and then crushed. He had been rescued by fans.*’

Witnessing the difficulties faced by children, fans intervened: ‘*There was a young girl, approximately 13/14 years old who was clinging on her dad’s shirt. She was getting further and further away so I stopped to let her get close to her dad again. Some smaller children were put on the shoulders of parents.*’

A Hillsborough survivor accompanied by his son also witnessed fans’ supportive interventions: ‘*We were gradually but inevitably being crushed and my fear was that my son would not be able to withstand the pressure. Keeping my 11 year old safe had become critical. This solid blockade lasted for nearly 2 hours under the tunnel and all the while the funnel was getting smaller and smaller. There were people shouting for help because they were having difficulty breathing and asking for help for my son as he was being squashed, dehydrated and scared for his life. I saw amazing, kind Liverpool fans above attempting to carry small kids out of this hellish congestion but very few could be helped in this way.*’

Another fan stated: ‘*Around us, small children are being passed over barriers and lifted onto shoulders to avoid the crushing. We joined up with two supporters to put a ring between the crowd and a family with a young daughter and son.*’

A fan who had flown to the game from Sydney, Australia, ‘*after getting tickets in the ballot*’, witnessed fans ‘*being drip fed in. Every 15 mins more police came through (from the fan side) which just made the crushing worse and seemed to serve no purpose or benefit. Kids were needing to go on their parents’ shoulders as the crushing built.*’

A QC attending with his 16 year old son, arrived at the stadium at 6pm, three hours before the scheduled kick off: ‘*As directed by the police ... we walked along the pavement of the N462, went under the A1/E19 flyover bridge, across the N1 and began to queue on the eastern pavement of the N1*’ alongside shops. He continued: ‘*We were stuck there for 2 hours 30 mins, in a crush. My son and I nearly went (fell) to the ground on numerous occasions. Sometimes the crush did not move at all for 30 or 40 mins. Sometimes it edged a few inches forwards ... Numerous children were hoisted up and passed over people’s heads to “safety”. At one point a wheelchair user tried*

to get through, plainly terrified of his situation ... I became separated from my son, and shouted to him that if the crowd went to the ground, to try to make sure that he pushed up to get above other people so that he was not at the bottom of the pile'.

A senior associate in a solicitors' firm, attending the match with her husband and son, detailed her experiences in a letter to UEFA. Crowded into what she termed a 'cage' - a tunnel without a roof on one side of the stadium - she stated: *'It was impossible to move backwards or forwards. Small children, elderly persons, and those such as me, not very tall, being squashed as the crowd continued to push forward against a seeming brick wall of what we now know were "riot police" brandishing arms and full riot gear. WHY? We detected no municipal police officers but were surrounded and hemmed in by riot police to the side and front. Worried for the children around me I spoke to a lady officer (expecting a degree of sympathy for the children) and advised her that we were being squashed and it was difficult to breathe and there were frightened young children and asked that they allow us to move forward. Met with a dismissive, arrogant shrug - indeed I would go so far as to say smirk - nothing was done to help. Despite having been hemmed into this Cage for at least 2 hours the crowd remained patient and jubilant though confused. There was absolutely no sign of any aggression from the crowd nor trouble, merely frustration and confusion. Patience was retained on the assumption that at some point we would be permitted to move towards the entrance gate.'*

Having arrived at the stadium, a fan described a crowd of thousands of people static on an access road: *'During this time I noticed how distressed people were getting. Children, some as young as 6, were in that swell of people'. After crossing the road and being 'funnelled into a tight space between a police van and a wall', he reached a checkpoint at the base of a ramp where 'there was another swell and people in front of me fell'. He witnessed 'a father ask for his daughter to be lifted over the barrier to safety behind the check point. They took his daughter but wouldn't let him through. His poor daughter, who must have been about 11 or so, was in bits. We lost [it] with them and started shouting to let him through. Things were getting even more heated and lots of people were very angry with each other, the police, the stewards.'*

Describing a 'stoppage' at Rue Henri Delaunay as fans walked towards the stadium, a fan estimated that for 'two hours' they were 'penned in the one spot'. There was 'No communication as to why' and 'people were trying to pass children who were scared or panicking to the riot police and they were being ignored. Every request was ignored. This attitude and lack of basic human empathy angered people.'

Another fan noted that *'near Rue Henri Delaunay, maybe 7.30, everyone stopped going anywhere. The ramp to the stadium was ... blocked by police vans/armed police ... After 15 mins it was dangerously crushed. Kids were crying in fear on shoulders and everyone was getting afraid. Space was being kept for those most upset or vulnerable, and messages were being passed to hold back and be patient.'*

Describing the same scene, another fan wrote: *'I got to outside the stadium before even walking up the ramp and it was absolutely packed. The crowd started to fill up as there was no way of getting up to the ground because the police had parked two vans blocking it. Kids were getting lifted over*

to avoid being involved in the crush. I started to get really anxious as people were packing in behind us.'

Another fan described how, on the ramp that allowed access to the stadium, three or four stewards were checking tickets. Yet, at this point, *'Kids, pregnant women and old people were being crushed. I had to lift a young lad no older than 10 on my shoulders, and his dad did the same with his younger brother. I feared for them, myself, my dad and other supporters. But as a fully grown man I could at least stand my ground and help the young kid who I was worried would get trampled. His dad was petrified. You could see it in his eyes.'*

Directed towards the Real Madrid entrance, a fan noted there was 'chaos' with *'two riot vans positioned in a way to bottle neck the crowd'*. Although he was able to move ahead of the thousands in the queue: *'Pushing continued to get through the bottle neck, kids crying, female fans shouting in fear as they were getting pushed away in a different direction to their groups, local youths pick pocketing and trying to get in with fake tickets.'* At entry points where stewards were checking tickets, he was conscious of *'kids crying around me, scared and frightened of the chaos.'*

A fan arriving at a stewards' pre-gate ticket check stated that he *'entered the mass of people and slowly started to near the front of the queue.'* His statement continues: *'At this point a commotion broke out and what appeared to be plain clothed security or police swooped on someone and all hell broke out, they very aggressively removed a young male. He had no team colours on so I won't and can't speculate [about] his nationality. At this point I noticed a woman who was extremely upset about the safety of her two young boys. I picked one young lad up and put him on my shoulders and gestured to, I'm assuming, her husband to do the same with the other boy which he did. This family all had Real Madrid shirts on but I'm not sure if they were Spanish or another nationality. I motioned them to stay with me and I kept shouting to the security that the kids were terrified. I caught the eye of a security guard who waved me forward. I had my ticket on my phone as an e ticket, which I showed, but he wouldn't let me past until he saw the ticket for the lad on my shoulders. Fair enough. I told the dad to get his tickets out, which were in an envelope. He got the envelope out and without even taking the tickets out of the envelope [the steward] allowed us in. The woman thanked me and gave a hug, the man shook my hand. We wished each other a good match and I walked up the ramp to the actual gate.'*

Chaos on the Concourse

Mentioning that *'They closed the gates and left thousands with nowhere to go'*, a fan stated: *'It was uncomfortable for me but for others it would of been unbearable. I seen the worry on a young girl's face stood with her dad, kids crying, men & women with the look of panic on their faces. We were all thinking the worst.'*

Noting that many gates had been closed, a fan watched *'media outlets interviewing people who had been crushed. There were children and old people in tears, someone hurt on the ground in tears, all being helped by fellow fans.'*

A fan joined the queue at Gate A, *'which was open but jam packed'*. He recalled that *'there were many in tears, one on crutches, a little lad screaming for his Dad and a Lad in his 20s that was struggling to breathe.'*

Another fan also joined the queue at Gate A and *'straight away was concerned of how busy it looked in front of me once the queuing zig zag had stopped'*. Also, *'there was a build-up of French youth all congregated to the right of the barrier'*. At 8:30pm, after an hour in the queue, *'it became even busier and a mild crush started. This brought a panic from young children and some women. It was very distressing as the queue was now bigger behind and as far as we could see the gate was not letting anyone through.'*

In the Gate A queue a woman, *'made the decision to leave, go back to the Fan Park and meet up with my friends, as I was scared'*. She described, *'Children crying frightened, the crowd trying to push back so no one was squashed. The Liverpool fans pushed me and parents and children behind them to stop us getting hurt.'*

A fan with two friends at Gate A stated *'even [if] it was tight and getting a little bit too packed, all of us experienced match goers kept each other calm and looked after each other ... There was a lad with a little girl in the queue, she was no older than 10. We had to form a ring around her to keep her safe, giving her chewing gum and keeping her spirits up, talking about the game and the Reds.'*

Having experienced intense crowd pressure while trying to scan his ticket at a Gate A, a fan was *'squeezed up against the barrier in the area of my stomach, and started to struggle to breathe'*. The scanner failed, the steward tried again and it worked: *'I was able to stumble through the turnstile'*. He walked 10 yards and *'sunk onto my haunches to get my breath back and to try to recover. I stayed like that for a minute or two.'* Aware of others who struggled to gain entry, he noted, *'a man with his son (aged about 10) standing close by who had just come through the gate, and the boy was in tears. I briefly tried to comfort him. He was clearly in a state of shock.'*

Aiming to enter Block A, a fan described the police *'directing everyone in the same direction (away from my stadium access point) regardless ... The atmosphere amongst the fans at this stage was one of surprise and a little frustration that our movement was so restricted. The situation grew progressively worse as we could see up ahead that all fans were expected to file through a very small checkpoint no more than 2-3 metres wide, corralled in by police vans and riot police. I was about 20 metres from this checkpoint and it took me 50 very uncomfortable minutes to get through it. I witnessed children upset and others suffering from the crush. As we reached the front anybody who complained was either ignored, pushed away or threatened with a baton.'*

At approximately 8.25pm outside Gate B, a fan noted that all entrance doors *'had been locked shut, and there was no system whatsoever in place to manage the crowd outside'*. The crowd intensified but *'there was absolutely no information being provided to us and no stewards or other assistance made available'*. Twenty minutes later *'several columns of heavily armoured police'* arrived. This created a *'noticeable change in atmosphere'*. There were *'increasing shouts towards stewards and security inside the Gate B area for information and help, including from people we saw holding young children, all either met with silence or waved away.'*

A fan at Gate G turnstiles reported two of four entry gates were *'inexplicably closed'*. Then, *'as time wore on and the crowd was not reducing, [people] began to push their way forward towards the turnstiles and subsequently created a crush'*. He recalled: *'I now found myself against the gate itself behind a Muslim woman, her husband and their two young girls. I immediately clung onto the gate with my right hand and lodged my right foot in the gap of the gate so I could anchor myself to it and not be forced into this woman and her children. I was now having terrifying visions in my head of a surge from behind throwing me into this young family and what might happen to these frightened children. I was shouting back over the crowd that there were kids at the front'*

Another fan joined Madrid and Liverpool fans in a queue at 'Access Point R': *'Eventually, as I got to the front, they opened the gate. In front of me there was a man with a young child on his shoulders and holding the hand of a slightly older child, probably around 6 years old. The crowd naturally surged as the gate opened, as kick off was fast approaching. I held onto the gate with one hand and the dad's shoulder with my other hand, shielding the six year old directly in front of me to stop him getting crushed in the surge. I saw them through safely and then I went through a couple of people later.'*

Another fan noted that there was a *'large crowd, in a semi-circular shape around the turnstiles at Gate U, not managed or co-ordinated in any way, it is a 'free for all'. A family with 2 young children (approximately 9-12 years) are next to me and the two children look very frightened as the crowd pushes towards the gate.'*

In the crush at Gate Z, a fan *'got someone's arms wedged in my back but I couldn't move and it was difficult to breath'*. He then *'saw what had been behind me in X gate - kids and women were crying on the floor, having panic attacks after struggling for breath. There was a woman behind the barriers (around 60) who was having a panic attack and we carried her over the barrier. We went over to some police to ask what was going on in broken French, but they just laughed at us.'*

Another fan who joined the queue at Gate Y noted: *'There were young children in the disorganised queue, they had to be hoisted onto parents' shoulders as the group became more and more compact. Girls around me were visibly in discomfort and we tried to settle them by reassuring them things were fine. I knew they weren't. We had been queuing for what felt like hours without moving and things were uncomfortable ... Things started getting tense as young girls were now crying, begging for people to move back, which started to worry me as I'd tried to remain relatively calm up until then. All gates were now closed in front of us and we were tightly bunched together with no way of easing the congestion. Everyone moved back as much as they could and things eased slightly.'*

With *'a lot of other fans behind, trying to get to (Gate) Y'*, a fan watched an *'LFC fan on fence to left, pulling kids in the crush up and out, this intensified as anxiety rose.'* Another fan, trying to reach Gate Y became trapped in a bottleneck caused by media vans: *'Everyone was trying their best to stay calm. People had to climb the fences by the media vans (away from the stadium) to get themselves to safety. Children who were crying had to get on people's shoulders to avoid being crushed.'*

A fan, described a *'bottleneck ... where the pen test or invisible ink test [on tickets] was happening'*. As a consequence *'space continued to get more compact ... There was one Liverpool fan (who*

had two kids) who was getting increasingly and vocally angry telling people to "stop pushing". The pushing was from locals trying to get to the front but also get into the middle of the crowd to pick pocket. I've been in other crowd surges and it was up there with the worst ... The fan with his kids got more angry and told people to "Stop pushing as there's kids present". There was about 5 locals who had made their way from behind me all the way to the middle. They just ignored the shouts and continued to push. It was clear they were trying to steam through the security check. There was another mass push and I ended up next to a pregnant woman and her partner who was getting increasingly concerned for her safety. I tried to push back to give her more space but there was just so much pressure from behind ... the stewards seemed to be waiting on the 20 or so police behind them to give them the go ahead to let fans go through ... People visibly were shouting at them. I shouted a few angry words at them telling them there was kids and pregnant women present. A kid was crying to the left of me. I found the pregnant woman and asked if she was OK. She seemed visibly shaken and her partner seemed very angry.'

A fan who had queued outside Gate Y, 'for at least 2.5 hours', stated: 'During this time, some locals were attempting to steal tickets, antagonise fans into violence and attempting to climb gates. We also got tear gassed 3+ times for absolutely no reason; I assume it was used to deter the local gangs who were causing mayhem, but the police evidently didn't care who else it may have affected. Children and pensioners were badly affected by this and we had to rely on journalists handing water through the gates to wash their eyes and clear their throats.'

A similar account was provided by a fan who, accompanied by her sister, had attempted to move from Gate Z, where they had 'started to worry for our safety' as the 'crowd got bigger [and] the pressure on those of us near the front became greater' to Gate Y: 'As we turned we soon realised we were in greater trouble. Fans from gate Y were now running towards the crowd as they had been sprayed with tear gas. The crushing became unbearable and men climbed onto the TV broadcast vans parked along the perimeter and began pulling women and children out of the crush onto the roof. Broadcasters were helping by handing out water to fans to pour into eyes and drink to get rid of the effects of tear gas.'

Describing the crush on the concourse between Gates Y and Z, a fan stated: 'The crush became frightening! A couple of LFC fans managed to scale some temporary metal fencing, separating the concourse from rows of parked TV Crew vans. One fan did an excellent job of pointing out children in the crush, and fans began getting parents with children slowly and carefully towards the metal fence. Various children were lifted clear of the crush. Some children & adults were visibly upset, because of the crush. They were passed up onto and over the fence or, if light enough, onto the roof of adjacent vans, carefully assisted by adults who had clambered up to escape the crush & assist the children.'

In the Gate Z queue: 'People were becoming very frustrated and the situation was getting very dangerous with kids and elderly people being pushed and shoved, tear gas been fired at everyone including kids. Kids being pulled out of very congested areas.'

Also at Gate Z a fan in a group that included two other fathers and four children, recounted an exchange with a steward 'who was contemplating opening a small side gate between gate Z and Y.' He continued: '[The steward] told me to get the dads and the small kids and bring them here

in order to help us. I ran back over and brought my son over with the others. In front of us was an oldish man holding a breathing apparatus and tubes coming from his nose. As the gate opened slightly, a number of fans thought they were finally being helped and as that happened, my son lost his grip on my hand and was effectively sucked in through the gate. The fact that it was opened took people by surprise. We trusted he [the steward] was doing something that was official. In that moment I leaned forward and grabbed my son by the front of his t-shirt and managed to save him mid-air and brought him back towards me. The others with me had seen this and moved backwards to steer away from the danger with their own children.'

The group waited for another hour without gaining entry and left: *'We accepted after kick-off that we were not going to be allowed in, so decided to leave the stadium grounds and head safely back towards our hotel after such a devastating and awful experience. We started to walk away and saw so many more locals running towards our direction. We ensured that the children were tight against us. To stop the danger, I ordered an Uber van to pick us up at the nearest public area to take us away which we did.'*

Describing how some children became separated from their parents when people rushed the turnstile, a woman queuing with her husband stated that stewards closed the gate: *'One father had just come through but his 8-year-old was on the other side shut out. The dad was running up and down frantic and his son was holding onto the bars crying his eyes out. Fans started screaming at staff to let the child in but they wouldn't. A French fan went to the dad, asked what help he needed and got the police to let his son in.'*

A fan who *'jumped a fence into the media compound to leave the crush'* at Gate Z stated that he *'saw kids crying being separated from parents.'* Another fan stated that she had filmed *'footage of fans peacefully coming in once they did open the gates, however children were getting separated from parents and [were] searched without supervision.'*

While enduring intimidation from local youths at several turnstiles, a father with his 11 year old son was told by stewards that his genuine tickets were forgeries: *'The crowds started getting much worse now as nobody could get into the ground but, as it was so congested, we also couldn't move away from the turnstiles. French locals started jumping over barriers and fences and running in. It now became very scary. There were large gangs of French locals starting to blatantly mug Liverpool fans, men/women/kids - they didn't care who it was, they would just grab someone and drag them into their group while they stripped them of their possessions.'*

Another father stated that while queuing at a Gate Y turnstile with his 9 year old son, *'Locals were everywhere ... They were running around, and also mingling in the queues. A fan near us got robbed of his ticket, he was covered in blood and was shouting, "They've took my ticket". My son was very scared, as was I by this point. The locals appeared to be working in small groups and at one point gathered in what I can only describe as a gang of, say, 30-40. They worked their way along asking vulnerable people if they had tickets, women, older people. At this point I was very scared and my son actually wet himself.'*

A father with two children, aged 16 and 13:

'...We were almost immediately hit by huge queues and a "kettling" process even before we could walk towards the underpass below the bridge over the motorway ... No communication was forthcoming. No stewards with megafones. No water being offered. No attempt to keep the crowd humour jovial. All the while my children and I were kettled in the late evening sunshine in hot, humid and scary conditions....'

This "kettling" process lasted up to an hour and caused my daughter to have an anxiety attack. She is about 1.6m tall and was struggling to breathe properly and take in enough oxygen. When we emerged up the ramp she was comforted by Liverpool's fans from Merseyside, who commented that "she should not have had to have gone through that"...

When they reached Gate Z, '... The queue built up and a slow forming, uncomfortable "crush" developed which was deeply unpleasant, leaving my children fearing what would come next. I was forced after a period of time to make a binary decision to protect them and risk not securing access to the stadium or risk their health and life and stay in the queue in case the gates opened again....'

They decided to move to Gate A, where 'We could feel the breeze and we felt safer'. However, 'Within ten minutes of being there, there was a surge at Gate B and around 30 people rushed in to the stadium. This was the cue for 15 men to climb the fencing at Gate A. I only saw one red shirt in these events and none looked like they were from the UK or traditional Liverpool fans. French riot police then launched tear gas and pepper spray indiscriminately across both gates as a means to subdue other efforts to gain false entry to the stadium. My children and I were caught up in this. No warning was given. No communication was provided at any point by tannoy announcement or by megaphone....'

They walked to the corner of the concourse, where they met some school friends in the queue from Gate B 'one of whom [a 17 year old] was violently vomiting having consumed large amounts of pepper spray'. Whilst deliberating their options, 'we noticed that the Gate B queues were reducing quickly, and we joined our friends in gaining access to the stadium at 9.33pm local time. My children and I took our places in our seats just in time for kick off, with seconds to spare. There were still empty seats around us. Our section (Z08) did not look over crowded and we finally felt safe among our fans...'

They left after the final whistle: 'The stairs existing at Gate Z are straight in nature and cover several flights. I consider them a safety risk. We were met by several local Parisians and residents of Saint Denis who were trying to push past the crowds of Liverpool fans exiting the stadium. This created mayhem as the exit gates were insufficiently wide to allow for safe exit. My children and I linked arms to ensure our safety...'

'We walked briskly to the Stade De France station via the tunnel and avoided the ensuing mayhem, mugging and attacks which took place. Lighting was poor, police were invisible, signage was non-existent all of which allowed an atmosphere of dark mistrust to build. Fortunately, the platform had a train waiting to go to Gare De Lyon and we made our way to our hotel. We ran to the final carriage and avoided the pick pockets in other carriages. We were held for five minutes and were soon joined by other fans describing mugging and various attacks...'

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

A significant advance claimed by football authorities is that the rise in popularity of women's football, its gradual professionalisation and the expansion of girls' participation, has resulted in a significant increase in the attendance of women and girls at all matches. What follows is based on women's testimonies or other witnesses' accounts.

At the Stadium

Having arrived at the underpass at 6.20pm, a fan described the situation: *'initially the crowd was 25 metres wide but was quickly bottlenecked into 5 metres because of the way police vans were parked. After 45 mins in this it was getting extremely tight and my anxiety, which I have never had problems with in going to home and away matches in 13 years, was unbelievable. Women were crying and had to be carried out by the men. Kids crying. Grown men saying they're struggling to breathe.'*

Describing the *'dangerously crowded'* situation on a narrow path moving up to the stadium concourse, another woman stated: *'At this point we had been joined by locals and Algerians who were desperately trying to steal from us. They were pushing us forward to cause confusion and trouble and then stealing from us. I was crushed and became upset, which drew attention to them. They immediately backed off and tried to hug me and stroke my hair. They were trying to steal from me but everything I had was buried at the bottom of a backpack and I had drawn attention to myself so they moved on.'*

A fan stated: *'Liverpool fans didn't all crowd the turnstiles at once. Despite the desperation to get in ... Men held back the crowd to let crying women and children get through the single turnstile that was eventually opened. The tear stricken face of the woman I let through in front of me is still etched in my brain, I hope she's okay.'*

Describing congestion in the queue leading to Gate A, and the slow process of ticket scanning at the three open turnstiles, another fan stated: *'The pressure of the crowd started to increase. I shouted back a few times to tell people to stop pushing. I began to feel rather concerned for my safety and that of those around me. There was a young lady directly in front of me (aged about 30 and wearing a Real Madrid top). She became really distressed and started to cry. I, along with another man on my right, tried to protect her from the crowd pressure, but it was difficult. Panic was beginning to set in ... [At the ticket scan] the pressure from behind was intense. The young lady became trapped against a metal fence to the right of the machine. She could not move, and a steward then had to pull her up and over the fence before she became injured. He managed to do that just in time.'*

A woman stated: *'I have travelled alone to Kyiv and Madrid but in Paris felt very vulnerable'. She described herself as 'a lone female who tagged onto a friend and his friends to the ground', having messaged her husband at home to let him know that she had arrived. As noted previously, at Gate Y, there was a lengthy queue, 'We were told that there were forged tickets and the ground was full. I cried all the more believing someone was sat in my seat (all our seats). I was crying and we did not know what to do. In the confusion of fans who were behaving, we were teargassed. I was choking and coughing.'*

A woman who had been separated from her boyfriend and friend tried to gain entry into the stadium. She recounted how she narrowly escaped having her phone stolen: *'A French local was sitting on the wall and asked me can I take a picture of him. I said yeah, and then he left the wall and approached me and said "I want to take a picture of you on your phone" and put his hand out to take my phone. I quickly realised he was trying to take my phone and ran away.'* She reached Gate Y, which was *'completely shut'*.

She continued, *'They opened it again and then a gang of around 100 French locals stormed the gate and it got shut. The police sprayed tear gas right by me. I couldn't see, I couldn't breathe. It was at the back of my throat and I was sneezing. It was generally scary. I seen old people crying. I was generally worried as I was on my own because I had lost everyone.'* After trying to enter via another gate, she returned to Y: *'I met a lovely lady and her husband and said can I stand with them because I was scared.'*

Thirty to forty minutes after the kick-off she was admitted into the stadium: *'I couldn't even enjoy the match, the atmosphere was weird. It didn't feel right. Nobody was up for it ... My first European Cup final turned into a disaster because of the police, UEFA, French authorities and French locals. What was meant to be an enjoyable time turned into carnage and the fear of being in a crush and getting tear gassed became a reality. As Liverpool fans we were treated like cattle. Animals get treated better than what we were treated.'*

A woman recounted that, after taking *'around 45 minutes to get through the underpass'* she *'was tear gassed twice and stuck in the queue for around 3 hours'* at Gate Y. She *'eventually made it into the ground just before half time'* but *'Once the game kicked off I couldn't enjoy it and my only thought was "how do I get out without being caught in any of the madness after the game?"'* Consequently, she *'left with around 10 minutes to go, only seeing just over half an hour of the match.'*

She described how, *'After leaving the stadium, I was attacked by a gang of local men. There were about 4 of them. They tried to rob my bag by yanking it off my neck. Luckily I managed to keep hold of my bag but I was punched, groped and my hair pulled. I kept hold of my bag but they managed to get a small purse out of my pocket with money in it. I kicked the main attacker and then ran for my life ... a fellow Liverpool fan looked after me and I made it to the nearest station.'*

A woman in her fifties commented: *'My experience was not as bad as others but was enough to terrify me and question whether I ever want to attend another away [Champions League Final]. I have attended 4 including this one.'* At approximately 7pm her and her friend: *'Arrived near the*

stadium but no idea where to go - no stewards or signage. Lots of young lads hanging around and I felt threatened. Tried to climb some steps but there were riot police at the top, stopping us but not telling us where to go. We turned up the next side street which had a mix of locals and LFC, felt moody. People telling us to watch for tear gas which had been previously launched. Things suddenly changed and our radars went off and we ran for it. Back onto a main road and still no idea where to go. Saw an LFC sign on a placard and thought that was some corporates so to follow that as they would be looked after. It stopped near a small side street - still no signage. We went up and it was the first cordon and our tickets were checked.'

Having then walked to Gate Z, which was 'totally shut', they 'decided to try gate A which was very busy. I am 5'3" and so struggle to see in a crowd. We got in the queue. Very good natured. The crowd got bigger and tighter and I think I had a panic attack as we were squeezed in closer. I know I cried, which is very rare. A lovely bloke decided to protect me and make me his project and I am so very thankful. He sort of formed a human shield around me ... He was incredibly sweet and without him I think I would have lost it. People were very kind and could see I was in a state and managed to squeeze me through. When we got to the front I was shaking so hard I could not hold my ticket straight to use the machine. A girl fainted once we had got through. We got to our seats at about 9.15 and the game seemed irrelevant ... Terrible and terrifying.'

As a 'woman travelling alone', another woman stated: 'I was already a little bit nervous about traveling back to the hotel late at night by myself. The delayed kick off meant it would be a later finish than anticipated which increased my nervousness. Then, having heard horror stories from other fans about tear gas, pepper spray and gangs of locals lurking outside, I spent the whole match feeling super anxious ... I was particularly worried at the prospect of being ambushed by the gangs of criminals hanging around outside. I did not realise at the time but my anxiety must have been off the scale as I don't recall many details of the match, it's as though I was there in body but my mind was elsewhere ... Once through the gate I felt a fleeting sense of relief to be out of the crowd. However, it was short lived as the next thing we encountered were large numbers of locals charging towards us. Although some of them ran past towards the stadium, many more were beginning to mingle into the crowd. I was really frightened as they were goading us, taunting us and spitting at people. Some Liverpool fans were urging us to stick together and make sure nobody got isolated. They tried to make sure women and children were protected by keeping us in the middle of the Liverpool group. I am so grateful to them for this because by now I was petrified. The walk back to the metro station was unbelievably distressing. I felt in grave danger of being attacked or injured.'

As she reached the steps down into the Metro station: 'They were throwing stuff like bottles, stones, coins, debris etc into the stairwell ... I was hit a couple of times but thankfully only by plastic bottles so I wasn't physically injured. Under my feet I could feel the crunch of glass, the floor seemed to be littered with broken glass. I saw a couple of fans bleeding, I don't know what happened to them, I suspect they got hit by glass as we were pelted with all sorts. It was truly terrifying. Still no sign of any police. I hopped on the first train I could. Liverpool fans were checking in with one another to see which station everyone was travelling to so that we could stick in groups as we exited the metro. I am so grateful to two London-based Reds that got off at the same stop as me and insisted on walking me back to the hotel even though it was only right across the road from the metro exit.'

Another woman, who left before the end of the match with her friend to ensure they could find a taxi, was directed to an exit which took them across a bridge. She stated that they 'managed to get down to the road,' where: 'There were gangs/ individuals with flares waiting and chanting aggressively at LFC supporters who were up on the bridge/ us who were now on the same level

as them. At this point the gang started coming towards us, but at the same time the police had started throwing tear gas, mainly at the supporters above. It's a bit of a blur in terms of how the canisters ended up around us - whether it be via the police with bad aims and coming from above, or whether it was from police who I think were just around the corner on our level. But essentially we ended up in a situation with 3 cans of tear gas around us, some of the gang members who hadn't scarpered and nobody else it felt like. It basically made us sitting ducks and whilst both my friend and I (who had been very slightly separated by the tear gas) began to try and clean our eyes out, one of the guys ran up behind me, pushed me and tried to grab my bag. I pulled back, but he pulled again harder and this time I lost my balance as the strap of the bag broke, dragging me to the floor as the guy ran off with my bag. There were no police around to help us as they were too busy trying to gas the LFC supporters above. My friend was busy cleaning his eyes and too far away to try and catch the guy. My bag contained my passport (which we had been advised to bring with us - something that definitely should be re-evaluated going forward), my debit card and some sunglasses. We managed to find an uber and get back to the hotel. The next morning I cancelled my debit card and applied for emergency travel docs, which thankfully got approved yesterday morning. Aside from the odd graze, my knee is swollen and I have a sprained finger, but it really could have been much worse. I met a guy at the embassy when I collected my docs (there were 5 of us there to collect emergency docs) yesterday that had been hit over the head and essentially looted while he was unconscious.'

After the match, travelling on the Metro, a woman 'noticed two locals congregating around me. I held my bag, looked at them and they walked off. At the next stop I turn around and a woman is stood in disbelief. Her handbag was taken. Those two locals had disappeared out of the exit with it. Our fans were consoling her and hugging her. She was stood there crying.'

Another fan recounted: 'On the train, some ladies started shouting "Watch your pockets, they're pickpocketing". One of these 3 'local' lads had apparently tried to take a purse out of a bag. People let the ladies sit away from them. The lads accused denied all knowledge but didn't speak English. Before the train stopped, one of the ladies started to cry and said they'd continued to threaten with hand signals suggesting they'd 'slit her throat' - a load of fans reacted. As soon as the train stopped, the lads jumped through people and ran off the train.'

Sexual Assault

A woman with a female friend, both in their fifties, went to Gate Z to escape the tear gas at Gate Y. She stated: 'Eventually we found ourselves at the front of the queue. We had been looked after and guided forward by fellow supporters, who were protective of us as women. I went through first and was told to move to the left. I thought this was where females were being searched. A male steward told me to stand next to him to be searched. I asked him where the women were and he said "no women" and he began to give me a rub down. I was shocked to be searched by a male steward, but just stood there with my arms out. All I wanted to do was to get into the stadium as quickly as possible. My friend told the steward that she was not willing to be touched by a man but he physically pulled her towards him and began rubbing her down. She refused to lift her arms, but this didn't stop him. She protested throughout. I just stood there and watched, stunned.'

The following statement confirms this situation: *'My friend went through first and I then saw she was being searched by a male steward. I protested but he carried on and afterwards she told me that she had been in so much shock and was so glad to be in that she just let him do it. He then tried to search me and I told him "no" and asked for a woman. He said "no" and grabbed at my arms and legs, running his hands over me (including inner thighs) despite my protests.'*

Another woman described a search by a steward at Gate A: *'We were allowed to approach the ticket barrier at around 18:10 where we scanned the QR codes on our tickets and gained entry. We were then met by a line of stewards standing next to big bins. These stewards spoke no English, which made the next experience unpleasant. The female steward kept shouting at me "Take off, take off" so I untied my jumper and coat. She continued shouting "Take off, take off" and was pointing to my waist so I took off the concealed pouch belt from under my t-shirt which left me standing holding a coat, jumper, belt, ticket and mobile phone in my two hands. She then motioned for me to put my arms out and then began the most intrusive search of my body that I've ever experienced. She frisked down both of my legs from the crotch and both arms from the armpits, then between my breasts, all without telling me what she was going to do. I was a little annoyed about this but decided that if it meant we were safe inside the ground because people couldn't bring anything dangerous in with them then so be it.'*

A fourth woman stated: *'I was frisked and I mean frisked! It was more like sexual assault! Hands literally down the front of my pants. The boys in our group had their scrotums felt for stashed contraband!'*

Assaults on women were not confined to the stewards. A fan reported that their girlfriend *'told me she has been getting groped and sexually harassed by the people in the crowd.'* In the underpass a fan and his son, *'had an interaction with a non-English speaking male who was groping a young woman, he carried on moving against her as the crowd moved. Myself and a few other Liverpoolians prevented him following her. She was visibly distressed.'*

A woman with a friend and her friend's mother:

'With the police letting minimal people up the ramp and more fans arriving, we were getting crushed. People started to panic, including my friend's mum who is 71. I'm not sure we would have gotten through everything without the fans around us. One lad protected me and kept talking to me to make sure I was calm ... The lads at the front pulled us through the crowd to safety, lifting us over the ramp wall to where there was more space. In doing so I scraped all down my left arm but was extremely thankful this wasn't much worse. I am unsure what would have happened if they didn't help to get so many people to safety.'

At Gate B: *'There were no signs or clearly marked barriers to queue for the gate and no stewards in sight, we had to ask fans whether it was the correct gate. We were then informed that the gates were closed, and they haven't been letting fans in for a while. There were no stewards or police about, not one person told us what was going on. We stood patiently waiting for nearly one hour. A fan in front of the queue said that a steward had told him that they were awaiting the police, who eventually arrived with their riot shields which was extremely intimidating when everyone was queuing peacefully.'*

The steward and police opened the gate to let people through, but the turnstiles weren't even there for people to put their tickets in, and this caused a rush through the gate with fans not even being able to show their tickets to anyone. My friend and her mum got pushed through and, although I was right behind them, the police stepped right across us with their riot shields and were pushing us back to close the gate again. They were pushing me back into a full crowd of people, squashing me with their shield and I ended up being pushed around into the gate.

I begged the police to let me through, showing them our 3 tickets and stating that I would be left on my own, but I was just barged further with one of the shields. My friend and her mum were begging the police on the other side to let me through. One of the policemen seemed shell shocked, so I begged him not to let me be on my own and he pulled me through their wall and threw me towards my friend. At this point I couldn't breathe with relief and couldn't stop crying. We were all very shaken up.'

The match went by, and I couldn't tell you too much of what happened. All I can honestly say is that for the first time in my life I didn't care what the result was, I was just glad we had made it into the stadium safely ... I have never felt so unsafe in all my life. All 3 of us felt so vulnerable and we felt that the only thing that saved us from further police brutality was that we were female ... I came home with scrapes, painful ribs and lost possessions, along with unhappy memories.'

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, MOBILITY DIFFICULTIES OR LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

In a national stadium hosting the most significant UEFA club soccer match it is to be expected that the stadium approach, entry and egress points, and accommodation inside, will be designed appropriately to maximise access. This is not a choice but a fundamental human right, underpinned by internationally agreed rights standards.

Wheelchair Users

A fan who attended the game with her brother, an electric wheelchair user, waited in a queue for some time: 'It was horrendous to get to the stadium but the police treated us like VIP, lifting the chair with 4 police getting us in front of crowds. But then, at stadium, no disabled access to get in. A lady who was with us rang the LDSA TEAM AT LIVERPOOL. They came out in shock to see us outside stressed. The stewards from France came [but] brought the wrong keys to open the caged area ... the pepper spray further on brought all men [and] kids to us sobbing in pain ... [the] police wasn't going to let us in with our disabled family'.

A fan, attending with his 16 year old son, arrived at the stadium at 6pm: 'We were stuck there for 2 hours 30 mins, in a crush ... At one point a wheelchair user tried to get through, plainly terrified of his situation.' Another fan stated: 'we were met by a wall of people - this was caused by the fact that there was a stair case (which was narrower than the pavement we were on - thus causing congestion) leading down to a tunnel. There was a lady in a wheelchair by us who couldn't access the stairs - she turned back and God knows how she got to the ground (if she did).'

At the underpass where two Police vans were parked diagonally across the road, fans were funnelled through a narrow passageway against a concrete wall: *'Two disabled supporters in wheelchairs to our left are stuck before our supporters clear a path for them ahead.'*

A fan and his two friends queued at Gate B for an hour. At 8:55pm gates were still locked *'and people were now starting to get desperate - worried that they were going to miss out on seeing the game after paying hundreds, if not thousands, for a ticket (even with the delayed kick off). There was a guy in a wheelchair that we were worried about and tried to get him to the front, but he didn't feel comfortable and left the crowd.'*

The following statements are taken from fans' accounts of their interactions with wheel-chair users:

'There was a fan in a wheelchair we let through ahead of us. However turnstiles at gate B aren't wheelchair-friendly so they had to lift him from the wheelchair and through turnstiles, while his wheelchair was carried over turnstiles.'

'After the delayed kick off a disabled fan sat next to me and told me how it had taken over 2 hours to get in and then they were pepper-sprayed.'

Recounting problems experienced by wheelchair users in the stadium, one woman stated: *'Throughout the game, all the wheelchair bays behind us were empty and lots of fans stood there meaning the wheelchair users on the raised platform behind this couldn't see the game. There were no stewards on the concourse or steps to move these fans and it was supporters who stepped in to ask people to move to make sure the wheelchair users could see.'*

On leaving the stadium, a fan and his friends walked to the bridge to access the Metro: *'It was terrifying. We were met with a sea of broken bottles and upturned bins and wave after wave of local youths rushing towards the approaching fans. We quickly moved to the side of the bridge to stay clear. The armed police were either standing in formation doing nothing, or charging forward creating panic. Young locals were robbing and attacking people, screams would be heard as they rushed in a pack to ambush random fans. There was no protection from the police at all and any fan who took umbrage at being robbed, shoved or hurt was pounced upon ... There is an overriding image I cannot get out of my head. On the middle of the bridge was a wheelchair user in a Liverpool shirt, her hands covering her face, screaming in fear whilst her carer attempted to shield her. They were stuck in amongst the carnage and unable to move ... I regret not pushing through and helping her get out of there.'*

Contrary to other statements, a female fan who arrived at the ground at 5pm, stated: *'At the underpass security check point, we had our tickets squiggled and bags checked. We entered the stadium at 18.45 ... There were no queues at Gate C at that time, just a steady flow of people accessing the stadium and the stewards moved the railings/fences (I'm a wheelchair user) so I could get through.'*

Mobility Impaired Fans

A fan who stated he is *'slightly mobility impaired and use a walking stick'* recounted how *'There was no facility for people with disabilities. In the queue my condition was not recognised and I was crushed against the counter.'* He then *'found I had been pickpocketed in the crush and my ticket had gone.'* Having been directed by a steward at Gate B to Gate D, and from there to a senior steward at Gate G, he was *'advised to go to a ticket office opposite Gate X'* although he had difficulty walking. Like those whose mobile phones or paper tickets had been stolen, he experienced difficulties being issued with a replacement ticket until *'in a fit of anger almost, one of the male staff tore off three tickets from a pile of complimentaries in Block E Upper and gave them to [three people, including him]. Thus I was able to hobble round in time for the opening ceremony.'*

He continued: *'Once at Gate E I cannot speak too highly of a number of stewards who recognised my disability and state of exhaustion (3 hours and more without a drink or toilet break), took me straight through the turnstiles and escorted me to an aisle seat next to an entrance where I could remain seated to view the match without obstruction from standing fans ... After the match I was so exhausted and disheartened that I broke the habit of a lifetime at sports finals in which LFC or Lancashire have been playing and left before the presentations rather than expressing respect to Real Madrid as I would normally have done.'*

A fan who *'entered the turnstile check at 6pm when the stadium opened at Gate Z'*, stated: *'We witnessed one Liverpool fan having to beg the stadium official to let him in with his crutches as he had recently had surgery.'*

Fans with Long-term Medical Conditions

A fan attended the game with his father, *'who's health continues to deteriorate due to Pulmonary Fibrosis and secondary heart failure'*. He recounted their experiences, having arrived at the ground three hours before kick-off: *'We were escorted like cattle into a tunnel. After spending 1 hour 45 minutes queuing and packed in like sardines, my father started to struggle for breath. We gained the attention of stewards who took us up to the ground ... My Father's oxygen levels continued to drop, and the security called medics who were treating my dad with oxygen through the fences - it felt like we were in a prison, as they wouldn't let us into the ground. His oxygen concentrator had stopped working and after standing there for a further 45 minutes we were eventually escorted into the ground by riot police and my dad was taken to their A&E room. He spent an hour in here and we missed kick off but the game by this point was irrelevant.'*

While waiting at Gate Y a fan watched as the: *'... fan in front of me was half way through the gate when he was stopped and pepper sprayed with the spray hitting me as well. As I suffer from Asthma the spray affected me badly and I fell to the ground. The Police dragged me in, choking, and I was put in a wheelchair by 2 medics. The ticket I was holding in my hand ready to present at the gate was lost in the confusion. The medic, who spoke good English, used my inhaler to bring me round. When I said that my ticket had gone he said it would be OK and he would take me up in the lift. He gave me some water and assured me I would be OK. At that point another fan was*

attacked with pepper spray and baton by a policeman and the medic left me to go to his aid. I was once again choking with the pepper spray.'

A woman accompanied by her husband and two sons stated: *'We are a family of 4 LFC fans who queued in the underpass to enter the stadium concourse at the Mail de l'Ellipse at 6:48pm. We had the most traumatic and terrifying experience and feared for our lives. We got trapped in the underpass and the situation became very dangerous. My husband and son both have asthma and were struggling to breath - we were starting to panic.'*

When tear gas was used at Gate B, *'the sounds of women and children screaming is still haunting me, seeing one woman crushed up against a gate saying she is asthmatic.'*

A 74 year old, who attended with his 45 year old son, described the impact of tear gas outside Gate Y: *'Riot police could be seen operating inside the stadium perimeter fence using teargas and pepper spray for no apparent reason. Whilst teargas and pepper spray were not directed at me and my son, the gas/spray drifted towards the general queue and fans were badly affected by it. I suffered coughing and sore eyes but my son was affected more severely. He suffers from asthma and unfortunately had left his inhaler in the hotel room. He really struggled to breathe but, thankfully, the fans in the queue asked if anybody had an inhaler. A young lady came to the rescue and gave my son her inhaler, which alleviated the problem.'*

A woman in her fifties, who had been diagnosed with MS three years previously, considered *'this was my last chance to go to a European final due to worsening mobility'*. She joined the queue for turnstile Y at 6.45pm, which was *'huge even then'*. As time went on it *'was getting very tightly packed. At about 8.30 with the gate still closed I asked some lads to lift me out, intending to wait until the chaos died down and go in late. There were 2 stampedes when fans ran away from being tear gassed. We had no idea the game had been delayed, no communication at all and zero stewards. When things didn't improve I decided to leave.'*

A fan who *'had a stroke 2 years ago and still have weakness on my left side'*, was queuing at Gate Z *'feeling very tired and fatigued. Not had a drink for hours'*. Having decided to leave the queue, he *'had to climb over a small barrier and squeeze past people to get out ... Never been more scared, and that includes when I had my stroke.'*

One fan stated that, while they were waiting at Gate Y, *'a surge of locals came running past and I noticed a funny taste in my mouth which I didn't know what it was but then realised it was tear gas. We were pinned up against the fence between the locals and the riot police, we had nowhere to go. That happened 3 times and I was tear gassed on each occasion. It was so frightening; there was screaming and I saw people splattered with other people's blood. I saw a father with his young son who appeared to have learning difficulties, the son was so distraught that both him and his father left.'*

Visually Impaired Fans

A fan who is 'registered ... severely visibly impaired' decided that they would 'battle all my anxieties knowing my son was there to protect me'. They watched the match in the City: 'We got to the fan zone early and got very close to the entrance. There was no disability access, we had to congregate with thousands of Liverpool fans waiting to go in. We thought the police were going to move the vans and dustbins which were blocking the entrance in order to get in. But this did not happen. They moved the bins and we had to go through a narrow gap in twos and be searched. The thousands at the back, not realising what was happening, were surging towards the gap. And I was in fear of going over. The people around me were amazing, seeing my white cane and protecting me ... The atmosphere for the event was amazing and the fans were in great spirits.'

The fan continued: 'My anxieties eased as the day unfolded ... The final whistle had blown ... I was standing on the edge of the fan park, by the big screen near the stage, when I heard people choking and yelling "tear gas". I am unable to run, the fan park is on a street full of kerbs and steps. Then the gas got to me. Never experienced this before. I lost all vision and was rubbing my eyes and choking. They felt on fire. I heard a couple of people asking me if I was all right. All I could think of was my son and then I felt his hand on my shoulder. He calmed me down and led me away ... I was hoping not to fall over and get trampled on or baton charged. These were my new anxieties. But thanks to all Liverpool fans and especially my son for taking care of me. The Parisian people I have the utmost respect for. And the Liverpool fans were amazing. The only people I feared that night was the police. I saw nothing after this as my eyes were still smarting from the [tear] gas.'

Another fan described how, at approximately 7.30pm, the ramp to the stadium 'was already packed and pressure was building behind. There was no info, no guidance, no reassurance, no queuing barriers or system, just a wall of police vans with menacing gendarmes behind. It got uncomfortable, kids in a family behind us were getting upset'. He noted: 'An old blind man was guided up steps towards a closed side gate, I guess by his carer, but they were summarily dismissed.'

Describing the situation at the entrance to Gate Y, another fan stated: 'It was mayhem ... The crushing was horrible. I could see fans at the front being hit by Police and sprayed with gas. When I made it to the front a blind man who was with his two sons was next in line. He was searched and they opened the single gate and pushed him through. The sons realised that their father had all three tickets. They tried to tell the police but were aggressively pushed back and shouted at. I then tried to ask the officer in French, explaining their father had the tickets, and received the same response. The two boys of about 14 were crying their eyes out but were pushed outside to be alone. They were their father's eyes and, with him being partially sighted, explain what is going on and escort him. The Police were inhumane.'

Another fan waiting in the queue at Gate Z recounted: 'The gate was closed, but people were still arriving, therefore a dangerous crush developed across the concourse as people fled what we learned later was tear gas attacks behind us, whilst people returned from Gate A which was also shut, creating a crush from both sides – this led to people climbing onto the media vans to escape the crush, and then subsequently dragging people up onto safety ... a blind man was also lifted out of the crowd. There was no police presence.'

A woman with her husband, who is blind:

'... It was my sole responsibility to guide him to and from the stadium and, having seen the northern suburbs the day beforehand and staying in Villepinte, I made sure we were in very early and travelling very light (no bags, just one debit card, phones and tickets all hidden in a body belt). We purposely made sure we were not dressed as to identify ourselves as LFC supporters because we had noticed gangs of French Albanians hanging round the fan zones and it just didn't feel right. I had practised the metro run the day before the game but on the day of the game, the RER B was not running because there were strikes on so I knew the only way in would be taxi. Our hotel knew a local driver and, with my husband being blind, they insisted she take us and collect us.'

At the stadium: 'With no disabled entrance like there usually is, I found an LFC steward who took us to the barrier where they let us bypass the queue and go straight in the turnstile ... Staff wouldn't give me the audio description radio for my husband to be able to listen to the match without photo ID ... They wanted our passports or a bank card to be left with them. We had not been told this beforehand, nor ever had to leave documents before. All stadia provide AD radios for VI [visually impaired] supporters. I wouldn't have been comfortable leaving my passport with them, or our one bank card, so we refused and asked for a manager. We eventually got the radio with the help of an LFC steward...'

'Two minutes before final whistle I got my husband out the stadium to avoid the crowds. He was linking me and had his white cane and we tried to half run to get out first. The only way out was through the concrete tunnel we had entered in through. As we approached, police had batons out and tear gas canisters ready. Locals were in gangs around us and bottles started flying. We ran for the tunnel.'

There was a central path and two side paths through this tunnel which were flanked with concrete pillars and at the sides, concrete walls. It was a small enclosed space. We were already in a crowd under the tunnel going down the middle when we heard a gun fire and the crowd surged forward. My husband told me to get to the side and stay against the wall, which I did. We made our way to the front only to find the police had blocked the side exits of the tunnel with metal barriers and their van and we were trapped. The crowd behind started pushing and we were stuck against the metal barrier with around eight others next to us. The police ran over and shouted at us to exit through the middle space (about 3m wide) but we were stuck against the barrier with the weight of the crowd behind. One fan started shouting that we were getting crushed and they were going to get us killed. I shouted in French that we were trapped and the police shook their heads and waved their arms in a 'no' gesture. One policeman stood in front and I was screaming in French to let my husband out because he couldn't see. I just didn't stop screaming and repeating myself and the barrier was digging right into us at this point. Fans were trying to move it and the police were holding onto it. A man kept pointing to my husband and the police hesitated for a second. This was enough for the 4 men next to me to shove the barrier forwards enough to create about a foot width gap between the barrier and the wall and the eight or so of us stuck against it managed to edge out sideways, followed by other fans.'

My husband then linked me and we just ran away from the crowd as we could see gangs of locals all waiting round. I ran down the side road we had been dropped at, ignoring the police trying to stop me and got back to the end of Av. Du Stade de France. The police were pushing me to go back up to where the fans were but, thankfully, one saw how upset I was and asked me if I was English. I explained what had happened, that my husband couldn't see, and that we were getting picked up here by taxi. He nodded, spoke to the other police there and he let us wait by their police car until our taxi could get through to us.'

STRESSES ON PARENTS AND OLDER PEOPLE

Expressing her anger and shock, a senior solicitor attending the match with her husband and son, stated: *'Paris was horrendous ... The scenes were unbelievable and had I not been there, witnessed it myself, I would not have believed it ... We have been kettled in, crushed against metal barriers, tear gassed and pepper sprayed and threatened with batons and drawn guns by those whose jobs are to protect us. We were caged in for almost 3 hours, denied access to the stadium and treated like nothing more than animals - women, small children, elderly and even a blind couple alike.'*

Another fan wrote: *'I am a 41 year old man, and I felt very intimidated, I can't imagine what it must have been like for children, ladies, or the elderly in our fanbase.'* Describing lack of communication to 'mass crowds' at closed gates, and a 'large amount of local youths trying to push from the side', a fan stated: *'There were kids, pensioners, and disabled fans all lost and vulnerable, it was an absolute disgrace how we were treated.'*

A fan who had experienced 'no issues going through my gate (C05)' arrived in his seat at approximately 6.50pm. When it was announced that the match was delayed, he went to find some water in the open concourse. There he met *'fans walking in with cuts on their heads, covering their faces - women, children, older folk with shock on their faces.'*

Another fan, who had entered through Gate Y and was waiting at the entrance stairs inside the stadium for his cousin who had gone to Gate Z, stated: *'Young children and elderly came through and I'll never ever forget the look on their faces.'*

At Gates Z and Y, *'As panicked and scared [as] most Liverpool fans were, the absolute majority were doing everything they could to follow the rules, queuing up at gates that were closed in the hope they'd open, and did their best to look out for each other - especially the old, disabled and children.'*

A woman queuing with her family at Gate Y described the 'dangerous' situation evolving and *'decided to leave fearing [for] our own safety'*. She noted: *'There were people in wheelchairs, young children and old people around us too.'* Also at Gate Y another fan noted *'bunched queuing near the turnstiles'*. One of the large gates closed and the queue grew. It consisted of: *'several women, elderly persons and children and I had seen 2 people in wheelchairs.'*

A woman who, after being tear gassed, decided to leave and return with her son to their hotel 'for our own safety' stated: *'It felt as though the police were only focused on the Liverpool fans and acted completely unnecessarily in their actions with no concern that women, children, disabled people were being affected. The Liverpool fans acted impeccably. The police treated us like animals.'*

Describing how *'the authorities had lost all control over the situation'*, a fan stated that *'good', 'sensible'* Liverpool fans *'stepped in to play the roles of safety officers and counsellors, helping each other out, placating worried kids and pensioners, intervening in arguments when frustration turned to anger.'*

A CEO of a large Irish travel business concluded his statement as follows: *'I have never in my 52 years come to the attention of any police force. I do not drink alcohol and the recollections above are completely accurate. I have never witnessed first-hand such inhumanity towards other humans, football fans, young children, elderly people and wheelchair users, by a police force. Thankfully, the social and professional media could capture these horrific events as they occurred.'*

At the end of his statement, one fan who had flown to the game from Sydney wrote: *'I send this message to the French police - hang your heads in shame. Your lack of compassion for the children, elderly and less mobile was sickening. You are a disgrace to your profession.'*

Parents

Given the significance of the Champions League Final many parents attended with their children. They witnessed the anxiety, fear and distress suffered by their children before and after the match. Forced to wait for long periods, both at the stadium access points and on the concourse at the gates, crushing was severe for many children and young people.

One fan described his experiences involving a *'group of 16 Liverpool fans with 7 kids aged between 7 and 16 who arrived at the Stade de France 2 hours before kick off'*. The relatively short walk to the stadium took thirty minutes *'as the police were kettling us round an industrial estate'*. Then they were in a queue for forty-five minutes, before being *'patted down by the police'*. He explained that fans *'were getting agitated and jostling but were in the main good spirited. The younger members of the group were on our shoulders to keep them safe.'*

Queues at the turnstiles *'were enormous and no one seemed to be getting in'*. While waiting he *'spent the time placating the kids that everything will be ok'*. When the turnstile eventually opened, *'there was a mini crush so I pulled the kids back, telling them we will wait and go in in 5 minutes'*. In response to *'local French youths climbing the fences to get in'*, the police reaction was *'to use pepper spray indiscriminately. We caught the tail end of the spray. My 14 year old daughter was having a panic attack and I knew I had to get out of there'*.

They went to a nearby bar to wait: *'The older kids were desperate to get in but I knew I couldn't take that responsibility'*. Consequently, he and his friends decided to leave. Their walk to the station, however, *'was just as scary'* with *'loads of French locals lining the streets, approaching us and trying to intimidate us. I was one man with a 14 year old girl, my 16 year old son and 19 year old nephew. I was pretty helpless but I was fuming. Police were stood around doing nothing at all and I let them know what I thought of them'*. Other *'like-minded fans'* had also left: *'Most had kids and came to the same conclusion as me. Some had had worse experiences and been roughed up by the police.'* Relieved *'to have got out of there'*, eventually they met their friends at a bar where

they watched the second half of the game. He stated: *'We were all numb. Even the kids were not bothered by the game.'*

Another fan had taken his two sons, aged 13 and 8, to the game. His younger son *'suffers with dyspraxia, oral dyspraxia and autism'*. Having arrived at the Liverpool end of the stadium at 6.40pm, they *'were squashed and [the 8 year old] was starting to become lost in between the crowd'*. Seeking *'urgent help from police'* they *'were told to climb over a fence onto [the] road then enter via the Madrid end'*. Here they were *'squashed against a police van'*. The fan asked police for help which was refused outright. He stated: *'5 minutes later the crush was critical'*. He returned to the same police officer who escorted them to the first entrance point where fans' tickets were being checked.

They then walked to Gate Z but *'the queues were massive and [his son] couldn't queue anymore - he was struggling and really upset.'* Having asked a steward for assistance, the steward *'said "No you must queue". He did say [the 8-year old] could go into the stadium on his own and I could queue. [His son] burst into tears and the steward just said "Go on".'* They climbed a barrier and entered via Gate Z. Leaving the match, only one gate was open and *'again a crush happened'*. They were then *'attacked by PSG ultras with bottles, punches, smoke bombs with loud bangs. This carried on into the train station. PSG fans were then attacking fans in the station. The bangs were awful, like bombs. It was dreadful not knowing where we could run to.'*

Another fan, in his fifties, was accompanied by his son. He stated: *'The tear gas was horrific. I've never experienced it before. I have to admit, I was terrified but I could tell [son] was also scared and I wanted to try and keep him both calm and safe. We stayed put, covered our mouths as best we could, with our eyes streaming and chests tightened.'*

Having arrived well before kick-off at 5.40pm and at Gate Z *'just as it opened at 6pm'*, a mother insisted that her family should leave immediately after the end of the game. She described a *'narrow exit via gate Z onto an upper walkway. Riot police in tunnel beyond (diagonal vans again) stopping us leaving but locals under the walkway throwing glass & bottles up onto the leaving LFC supporters. We had nowhere to go. People were getting hurt. Eventually the police started letting small numbers through their barricade to run the gauntlet of local gangs ...'* She concluded: *'Absolutely horrific, especially to experience it with my children. How no one was killed is a miracle.'*

A woman with her husband and 12 year old son stated that they *'did not experience anything overtly negative'* and accessed their seats at 7.15pm. She stated: *'On an emotional level, this was the trip of a lifetime for our son and in the current Klopp regime the club firmly promotes family and togetherness, which our children very much feel a part of. I am outraged at the way our fans were treated and those poor innocent children who were caught up could very easily have been my child.'*

Although the appalling situation was not of their making, parents understandably expressed anxiety and guilt as those responsible for the safety, welfare and protection of their children. A fan concluded his statement apologising for its length: *'but it's helping me to process something I never*

expected to feel at a football match again, fear, and also I'd taken my son somewhere dangerous which no parent would knowingly want to do.'

Another father commented: *'My 14 year old son had to witness scenes that no one should have to witness or go through ... I remember thinking I need to get my lad away and forget the game for his safety. This could have easily turned into another disaster and another set of wreaths at our amazing stadium [Anfield].'*

At the match with his 17 year old daughter a father stated: *'[Daughter]'s and my eyes were still sore the following day. As a father I was scared, I'm not meant to get scared. But I feared for our safety on Saturday night. It was awful. All I wanted to do was get [Daughter] home safe.'*

Crushed on two separate occasions, threatened by both riot police and local gangs while leaving the stadium, another fan reflected: *'I'm just so thankful I decided against taking my 7 year old with me as having to witness him go through that would have broken me completely.'* A doctor who attended with her husband concluded her statement: *'I thank God that we never had our children with us.'* A fan stated simply: *'I'm glad that my wife and kids weren't with me.'* Describing the large crowds at the entrance gate where *'it looks chaotic and disorganised'*, a fan wrote: *'I see lots of families, women and children. I am glad that my 8 year old daughter (a match going fan) is not with me.'* Another concluded his statement: *'Before I went to Paris I was sick I couldn't get a ticket for my 11 year old to come with me. After this experience I was glad I hadn't as I wouldn't have been able to protect him.'*

Some parents stated that their experiences in Paris would inhibit them attending matches in the future with their children. A fan commented: *'This has made me reflect about attending football matches in future and especially about taking my children to one.'* Another fan concluded her statement stating: *'We have a young son at home and for that reason alone, we won't ever go to a CL [Champions League] final again together. I personally don't want to go again - that was my first and only time. My husband has been to 3 - this was the worst he'd experienced. We can only hope that, whatever comes of this, no fan ever goes to a game like that again.'*

At the match with his son, a father commented that his son *'is surprisingly keen to go again. At 11 I guess he really doesn't understand what happened, he just held my hand tight throughout and trusted that I would keep him safe. Thankfully I managed to do so but I certainly won't be exposing him to such risks again any time soon.'*

Older People

Regarding health and fitness it is self-evident that age is a relative concept. In their statements, however, people recounted their experiences as 'elderly' fans and others stated they attended the match with older friends or relatives and expected the stadium to accommodate fans of all ages.

A 74 year old fan, at the match with his son, was tear gassed while waiting in the Gate Y queue: *'As I went into the gate, I got my ticket out to show it to the stewards when it was ripped out of my hand from behind. I saw who took it (a French man aged about 25-30 of North African descent) and ran after him. A scuffle ensued where I was knocked to the floor and my son sorted the thief out. The thief was able to escape ... due to the intervention of, what I think, was the rest of his gang who shielded him from us to enable him to flee. Whilst this was happening, there were a few policemen stood about 10 metres away who ignored what was going on and did absolutely nothing. With no ticket, I could not enter the stadium. I told my son to go into the ground and I would go back to the hotel. He refused, saying it was too dangerous because of the local gangs who were mugging [and] assaulting innocent fans and stealing their tickets, wallets, phones etc. We headed to the metro and had to walk through some very intimidating riot police from whom we felt in great danger. We arrived back in our hotel bruised and in a state of shock after what had happened. I still can't believe what happened and that, at the age of 74 and my son 45, we were involved in a fight.'*

Having described 'awful scenes' at Gate B, where riot police had sprayed fans with tear gas and locals had 'forced their way into the ground', a fan at the match with his father, stated: *'My dad is 64 years old. Thank god he's still mobile enough that we navigated our way through the crush, ran from the [tear] gas and were able to stay together. Truthfully, at this point the only reason we didn't leave the concourse [to] go back to the city centre was because we were too afraid we'd get picked off by locals on the way back to the station.'*

A fan in his thirties was with his 68 year old uncle, *'who has angina, had hip replacements, knee replacements and problems with his heart'*. He stated that they had *'suffered one of the worst and scariest moments while attending the Champions League.'*

Describing the impact of queuing outside the stadium, a fan stated: *'An elderly man next to me had to be removed from the crush.'* In a crowd of thousands of people on an access road, another fan observed *'Madrid supporters who were well over 60 struggling to keep their feet as the crowd moved.'*

A woman recounted how, while waiting to have their tickets checked, *'some of the youths who had been sat on the steps attempted to push to the front of the queue. The police then began to indiscriminately pepper spray a packed crowd including young children and elderly folk. This caused extreme crushing as people dispersed to escape the effects. The crowd began to panic. An elderly woman next to me was in extreme distress and the Liverpool fans attempted to allow her, her husband and me (as one of the only females) to get to the steward.'*

A fan inside Gate A stated: *'an old man behind me is being carried to the fence opposite the gate. He had fallen and been injured and looked like he had broken his arm. When we tried to get a policeman to call for some medical attention, he looked at the man and then back at us and just walked away back to his group.'*

At the match with her husband and son, a woman was close to the front of the queue at Gate B: *'As I tried to turn around an elderly gentleman fell at my feet. My husband managed to get hold of me and dragged me backwards away from the railing and wall. We tried to pick up the elderly gentleman whilst fans trampled on and police officers and stewards watched. My husband*

sustained a black eye trying to help. I sustained bruising to my arm and shoulder.'

A fan described how a small number of entry points at Gate Y constantly opened and closed, leaving fans trapped in the queue. Then, without provocation, the police used tear gas: *'We were coughing and [our] faces stung. The gate shut again. An older couple were next to us. The lady was crying, I was trying to comfort her despite feeling scared and upset myself.'*

A woman recalled being scared while waiting in a queue and then meeting her son who was working in the stadium: *'[We] went to the media compound of LFC.TV who had rescued an elderly couple - the lady was 89 and had been on Twitter earlier enjoying herself. I felt so sorry for her.'*

A fan stated: *'An elderly man came in 40 mins into the match and sat in the row behind us with eyes red raw and streaming from being tear gassed'. Another fan witnessed 'the police pepper spray an older fan after he complained on his way out.'*

After the match, a fan described: *'lines of riot police who were all funnelling the fans back toward the motorway underpass, and down the Av. Stade de France'. In the underpass: 'One of the people pepper sprayed was an old man, perhaps 60-65 years old, who had glasses on and a walking stick, and who was clearly trying to use the barrier as support against the crowds behind him. He faltered and stumbled and took his glasses off, shouting that he "couldn't see" and crying out for help. We had just reached him as this happened, and so I grabbed him and reassured him that I could help him and guide him through. My dad saw what had happened and used his body as a shield to try and create some space for the old man against the crowds. I found his walking stick and passed it to him, then helped him down the next curb, which was dangerously high for anybody, let alone this gentleman. As I did so, a set of fans behind us attempted to move the barrier to allow the elderly gentleman through to the safety zone next to the police. One fan was beat back by a policeman, whilst the others were threatened with pepper spray and shouted at very aggressively to move back. As I tried to get their attention, to indicate the distress of the old man, the same threats were levelled at me. I let go of the barrier at this point, which was the only thing keeping me near to the elderly gentleman. I began to be swept away by the crowd and couldn't get back to the man, who was clinging to the barrier and being shouted at by police, still unable to see. I eventually managed to get the attention of a policeman further along, who came to hear what I had to say. I told him and gestured that the old man over there can't see, and the policeman's response was "go and help him then". I went to climb the barrier, taking this as permission to get back to the elderly man, but the policeman shouted at me to stay where I was. I tried to explain again and he laughed and said "you go and guide him". There was evidently no more that I could do, and so I was swept away with the crowds toward the funnel point.'*

A fan who attended the game with members of her family stated: *'Relieved to get back on our coach, we learned that a 70 year old lady who came with us got mugged and didn't make the coach back home. Another girl with us was robbed on the metro.'*

Another fan recounted: *'Due to the chaotic nature of getting into the stadium we lost one of our group, who is in his sixties. After the game we couldn't get hold of him and we were incredibly worried. It took us about 30-45 minutes to locate him as his phone died. It turned out he had been trampled while entering the stadium. A fellow Liverpool supporter had helped him up*

and he had been in the medical tent for most of the game. He was in the Leppings Lane end at Hillsborough and he said it had brought it all back. He was covered with bruises the next day and suffered a concussion. He has said he will never attend another European away game, which is incredibly sad.'

HILLSBOROUGH LEGACY

Context: The Hillsborough Disaster

On 15 April 1989 the FA Cup Semi-Final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest was held at the Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, England. Failures in policing and stewarding led to a fatal crush on the standing terraces. Ninety-seven men, women and children were killed, hundreds physically injured and thousands traumatised. Many involved directly or indirectly have not worked since and others' lives have ended prematurely, the longer-term consequences of post-traumatic stress. The initial inquest concluded that the deaths were accidental.

Allegations by those in authority, politicians and journalists persisted that thousands of Liverpool fans arrived late, without tickets and were violent. In-depth research, however, demonstrated conclusively that fan behaviour in no way contributed to the tragedy.¹⁷ Campaigns led by the Hillsborough Family Support Group and Hillsborough survivors eventually led to the appointment of the Hillsborough Independent Panel to research the many thousands of documents held by the authorities.

In 2012 the detailed Hillsborough Independent Panel Report exonerated the fans and held the authorities, particularly the police, responsible.¹⁸ Four years later new inquests, the longest in legal history, concluded that the fans had been killed unlawfully. The detailed verdict attributed much of the responsibility to the South Yorkshire Police but also to the authorities involved and the owners of the stadium.¹⁹

Many Liverpool fans who survived Hillsborough have campaigned relentlessly for crowd safety and fans' involvement with clubs. They have also carried the psychological burden of survival. The events in Paris, from the debacle on the stadium approach and at the entry gates through to the hostile policing and negligent stewarding, revived experiences of Hillsborough. A recurrent theme in the statements is that a tragedy was avoided because of fans' understanding of the dangers they faced.

¹⁷ Scraton, P 1999/2016 *Hillsborough: The Truth* Mainstream/ Penguin: Harmondsworth

¹⁸ Hillsborough Independent Panel 2012 *Hillsborough* HMSO: London

¹⁹ See: Scraton, P 2016 *ibid.*

‘Not Again’: Being Re-traumatised

A 45 year old fan, who attended the match with his 11 year old son, stated: *‘I am a Hillsborough disaster survivor, season ticket holder and part of a wonderful family all of whom have followed the beloved LFC for many years. We have been fortunate enough to have been present at hundreds of matches Liverpool have been involved in, including 5 Champions League finals in recent years amongst many more ... Not only have we lost thousands of pounds for this dreadful experience, we still have our tickets in hand, we were lucky to have come out of this alive. The sheer determination to keep breathing and focused in such an extreme situation was what kept us going. We are traumatised and dealing with it now. I am very reluctant to stir up memories of Hillsborough. However I was afraid for my life and thought I would lose my son to the crush.’*

A woman fan commented: *‘After Heysel and Hillsborough, I never thought that I would again be petrified for my life at a match. I gave evidence to the Taylor report after Hillsborough. One of my concerns last Saturday was staying on my feet. I knew if I fell, I could be trampled on. I was overheating, scared that I would have my ticket snatched or handbag grabbed in the crush.’*

A fan who *‘was pulled out of pen 3 at Hillsborough’* concluded, *‘Apart from Hillsborough, this was the most terrifying experience of my life and I just know this whole experience was down to poor planning by UEFA and over-the-top policing.’* Others stated:

‘As a Hillsborough survivor this has all been quite difficult for me.’

‘Having been through Hillsborough as a 13 year old boy this was the most harrowing experience since then at a football game.’

‘I was at Hillsborough and Athens and this was similar. I am utterly, utterly disgusted by the behaviour of the French Police; they have wives and kids and parents so should know where the line is.’

‘Paris was Hillsborough and possibly Heysel rolled into one. It is sheer luck that nobody died.’

‘Paris was the nearest I’ve come to that level of disaster. It is a miracle nobody died ... Was only the good natured and calm conduct of the fans of both sides that prevented another disaster ... Nothing could be worse than Hillsborough for me, but this was the second most traumatic thing.’

Arrival at the Stadium

A fan who arrived by train stated: *‘Making our way closer to the Stadium, the atmosphere suddenly changed. The Police were in their thousands, all attired in Full Riot gear and very threatening.’*

Having attended both Heysel and Hillsborough I could sense, organisationally, things were not as they should be.'

A fan with his wife, son and 8 year old grandson described being in the 'crush' at the underpass for almost an hour before reaching the ramp to the stadium: *'It was most unpleasant and, being in an underpass, claustrophobic. I was at Hillsborough and it brought back bad memories.'*

Another fan, also trapped in the underpass, stated: *'As a Hillsborough survivor I am very wary of tunnels, and this was an example of anxiety starting to take hold. I thought we were going to get stuck in the tunnel as the crowd in front had slowed right down... but we did manage to get through it.'*

Describing the tunnel a fan stated: *'Once you reached the tunnel it was frightening - it was a narrow tunnel that was a few 100m in length and people were packed in like sardines. I and many others became stressed by this and many were likening it to Hillsborough in respect to the closeness of people and the fear of the unknown.'*

A woman with her visually impaired husband stated: *'What I can't get past is that crush in the tunnel and how that was ever even allowed to happen, given the Hillsborough tragedy. I honestly thought we wouldn't get out of there and I have never been so frightened in my life.'*

A fan and his uncle were *'stuck in the tunnel for around 45 minutes to 1 hour. Whilst in this tunnel we were crushed numerous times'*. When they reached the ramp to the stadium, *'my uncle was not feeling too well as being in the tunnel for the amount of time reminded him of being in Hillsborough, seeing fans being crushed against vans and little kids being pulled up from the stand above.'*

A young woman with her father described emerging from the tunnel: *'the crowd had nowhere to move but it kept getting more and more cramped. It was really hot and I kept having to stand on my toes to get air. Some people starting climbing over the barrier onto the road because it was scary and hard to breathe. At this point we were squashed up against a car that was parked next to the ramp up to the stadium. It started to feel like there was going to be a crush, I was trying not to get squashed into the man in front who was old with a walking stick. I started to become worried as people started to mutter about Hillsborough, it was in everyone's thoughts at this point, it felt scarily relatable. The fans knew to remain as calm as possible. However it was the most scared I have ever been...'*

At the Gates

At the match with his 12 year old son and some friends, a fan recounted navigating the 'crush' in the underpass/ tunnel then joining the Gate Z queue which, *'clearly wasn't moving. A man inside shouted "They've locked the gate". I said to my son "Let's get out of here" as I feared something*

wasn't right as I seen people scaling the fence, clearly not football or Liverpool supporters ... I was at Hillsborough in '89, my son is now the same age I was [then].'

Arriving at a ramp up to the stadium concourse stewards were checking tickets: 'The flow was incredibly slow and as more people arrived the crowd got tighter and more tense. Hillsborough 2.0 was unfolding in front of our eyes and the police did nothing despite many crying for help.'

A woman and her father arrived at the ramp which, 'was packed width ways (10 meters maybe?) and about 100 rows deep. My dad helped me climb onto the wall next to the ramp out of the crowd, to spot our friend and see what was happening. I felt really anxious; more people were arriving at the ramp. The people sat next to me were calm but clearly not fans so I feared they'd pick pocket plus there was a 10 foot drop behind me ... Five minutes later a cloud of tear gas sprayed over us and a stampede of people running back. My dad (a Hillsborough survivor) kept my legs against the wall knowing if I jumped down I'd be crushed. I held my scarf over my face to stop the sting ... Shortly I was sucked into a fast moving crowd, a mix of locals and LFC fans around me. My dad pulled me out and into an alcove. "We are not dying at a football match, I've seen it happen in front of me before. If we don't get in, we don't get in". Harrowing words to hear.'

As they headed towards their gate, another fan commented: 'the congestion started to build and quickly became an unbearable crush; distraught children were crying, fans started to climb out of the crush and tried to pull children out of danger; everyone around me was ashen faced. I thought of Hillsborough, panic started to set in, the fear that I might not get home to my family was real and became overwhelming, I couldn't breathe. I don't know how our fans kept their nerve; I certainly didn't. I have never been so scared in my life.'

A director of the Hillsborough Survivors Support Alliance stated that 'after being stuck in a queue for 90 minutes', fans were 'informed that the gates to Area Z were not going to open and that we had to move to area A to gain access to the ground ... Once more, the stewards and Police were hostile toward us. I was worried that they had lost control and that there would be a crush, similar to Hillsborough in 1989 of which I am a pen 4 survivor.'

Another fan, whose first away game as a season ticket holder had been at Hillsborough, stated that an hour before kick-off he and two others arrived at Gate A, where it was 'busy but still calm'. He 'slowly zig-zagged through barriers, but noticed the queue behind increased quickly. Tension and distress started to grow in the crowd as it became more compressed. Had Hillsborough flashbacks. Concerned for family groups with small children. Got to entrance point just as it felt that order was being lost'.

Having been 'quite crushed' waiting for ninety minutes before accessing the stadium concourse, a woman arrived at Gate Y: 'There were so many fans already outside gate Y and, as more fans arrived, I started to feel nervous as there seemed to be too many fans yet no-one was moving. I then realised the gates were closed and nobody was getting through and I started to feel crushed. Fans started to shout out to open the gate and let us in. At times fans were shouting to move back which then made it clear to me the crush was getting worse, which was terrifying having been

at Hillsborough. My eyes then started stinging and were in a lot of pain, and I started coughing. I didn't know what was happening and someone then said "They're tear gassing us". This happened twice. The fireworks started, which indicated the pre-match celebrations were starting, yet the one and only gate was still closed. I said to a fella next to me I was scared that when they opened the gate there might be a surge forward and I was terrified I would get crushed. I was eventually let through the gate as kick-off took place, had my ticket scanned once and then found my seat. At this point I was in tears and the first half passed me by as I was in such shock.'

Also at Gate Y, another woman stated: *'As I reached the gate, I started to have a panic attack. [Partner] was at my side; a Liverpool fan at the other side asked me if I was ok. I started to retch with anxiety. I'd been here before at Heysel and in the crush at the turnstiles at Leppings Lane, Hillsborough, and I knew how this could end.'* She and her partner were pulled through the gate by a steward who had witnessed her distress.

Describing his reaction to being *'trapped'* at locked turnstiles at Gate Y, a fan stated: *'I'm a little fella. I survived the crush in the central pens at Hillsborough. What worked for me in 1989 kicked in. I remained very calm and focussed, and I raised my arms up to ensure I wasn't trapped with my arms down by my side, so whatever came next I would have some form of control over my movement. I told our lads to do the same ... I was reassured to see that my son was OK. So was [his friend's son]. We stayed close by each other, but hardly had any choice. We were very restrained ... Gradually the pressure behind me eased. The gate was eventually opened again, and we were allowed the contradiction of forming a queue from within a crushed crowd to go through the gate in single file onto the turnstiles. At this point I realised that my self-preservation instinct of 'arms up' had allowed me to be pick-pocketed for the first time in my life. Fortunately I still had my phone, passport and match ticket. But my wallet was gone, with two debit cards, my driving licence, my Merseyrail pass, and a very personal family photo which my [partner] had put in my wallet on the day that I went to Warrington for the Hillsborough Inquests Verdicts, so that my family was with me as I was in Court on the day our Campaign was Vindicated to the world.'*

Describing how *'Suddenly, the external concourse between Gates Y and Z became very congested, rapidly turning into a crush type scenario'* another fan stated: *'I asked LFC fans heading in the opposite direction, towards Gate Z, where they were all going? Apparently, they'd been informed by Stewards that Gate U was closed, head to Gate Y and Z. I became alarmed at the crush intensity, it occurred extremely rapidly. (I was present at Hillsborough, Leppings Lane Central Pens, 1988 & 1989).'* Another fan stated, *'People who were sprayed came in the ground saying it was like being at Hillsborough again. (I was at Hillsborough).'*

A father who had survived Hillsborough as a boy with his father, attended the Paris match with his 10 year old son: *'Once it was announced that the game was delayed we went to the toilets. I looked over and could see the chaos in front of me! I could see panic, people getting pepper sprayed and hit with batons. I was 8 years old when I went to Hillsborough with my dad. My lasting memory was when we went to the toilet a few minutes before kick off, my dad could see out of a window and said "Wow, there's no chance they will all get in here before kick off". I asked could I see and he lifted me up and I could see all the people outside looking panicked. My son was asking me what was happening and I genuinely thought we were living through a similar hell! Thank god I was wrong.'*

A fan and his father, a Hillsborough survivor *'who knows very well what danger in football matches looks like ... heard the announcement that kick off was delayed due to "the late arrival of fans"'. The connotations of this statement should be obvious. I hope it is also obvious how distressing this was for my Dad.* What followed was *'mayhem'; 'armed police with riot shields initiating a crush', 'several gates closed with supporters stuck on the other side', 'police pepper spraying and tear gassing crowds'*. After the match they were confronted by *'groups of men waiting with knives, other weapons and many wearing motorcycle helmets ... people were being mugged, attacked and stabbed. We somehow made it back safe but remain traumatised and shaken.'*

At Gate Y a woman described being tear gassed three times: *'I saw grown men, some Hillsborough survivors, panicking at the thought of it happening again.'* Also at Gate Y another fan witnessed, *'An older guy next to me clearly having a panic attack. I imagined him at Hillsborough 33 years previously and the flashbacks he was having. I remember making a feeble attempt to generate a few centimetres of space in front of him to give him some semblance of space. I then spoke to him as calmly as I could and used my mental health first aid training to guide him to moderate his breathing. I don't know if it helped him.'*

Another fan at Gate Y realised: *'The crowd became increasingly dense and dangerous. A man struggled past me, crying, saying he could not go through this again after Hillsborough. Varying shouts from the crowd to tell the fan to get some space and to catch his breath.'*

Relaying the late arrival to her seat of a friend, one woman stated: *'My friend arrived at her seat 21:14 having ... been tear gassed and beaten by police for no reason ... the police even tear gassed the disabled supporters in the queue. She said the Liverpool stewards who had travelled with the club witnessed all of this but offered no help. 'It was', she said, 'like Hillsborough, where her ... cousin had died. She was very shaken and we were all very upset by what she had been through and [were] scared to leave the ground.'*

A fan described a small entry point at Gate A where there was: *'a crowd surge ... and it was very crushed. The police then closed the gate after about 20 seconds and sprayed tear gas at the crowd. It caused the crowd to move back and there was a lot of anger and distress. At this point or shortly afterwards I started to have a panic attack. I got severe cramp in my abdomen. There was an older guy next to me and he made space for me. Memories of my families' stories of 1989 came flooding back.'*

A fan noted that at Gate G two of the four gates at the turnstiles *'were inexplicably closed'*. He continued: *'The Hillsborough disaster was obviously at the forefront of my mind at this point and, as dramatic as it sounds, I was honestly unsure whether I would make it out of that crush unscathed or not.'*

Observing that *'security staff use excessive force almost for fun'*, a fan stated: *'I saw people pressed against the gates outside the stadium concourse in a way which was frighteningly similar to the horrifying images witnessed at Hillsborough 33 years ago.'*

On the concourse a fan was 'trying to get round the Liverpool end to Block B': 'It was then that the situation (for me at least) became truly dangerous ... It was scarily squashed and people around me ... were crying. There were obviously children stuck in there too, and you could hear people saying the word "Hillsborough". At this point, inexplicably, riot Police came charging through, banging people out of the way with their shields. The whole experience was genuinely terrifying, and I had momentary thoughts that I might never get out.'

A fan at Gate Y noted: 'The gate occasionally opened and shut but no fans were allowed in. There was no clarity, no explanation at all about what was happening. The crowd got bigger and a crush almost started to happen. My mum and girlfriend were terrified that we wouldn't make it out alive and I put my arms around them to protect them as much as possible. I heard fans around me talking about being at Hillsborough and thinking it could happen again.'

A woman at Gate Z stated: 'I am a Police Officer in Liverpool - I am thrown into the worst situations head on and I am expected to deal with it and I know I am good at doing so. I should NOT have felt fearful for my life in a situation like this, but I did. Everyone was getting increasingly angry and rightly so - no one told us anything and there was no one around to even speak to. People were comparing it to Hillsborough, the way we were so tightly packed against this 10ft metal fence. It was horrible and I was that panicked I don't remember the next few minutes.'

Also in the queue at Gate Z, another fan commented: "Thousands of fans with genuine tickets had been locked out the ground ... No one was on hand to explain what was happening. People were becoming very frustrated and the situation was getting very dangerous with kids and elderly people being pushed and shoved, tear gas been fired at everyone including kids. Kids being pulled out of very congested areas. When I seen this, all that was on my mind was previous images I would have seen from Hillsborough in the past.'

A fan, who recently had recovered from a stroke, was at Gate Z feeling extremely tired, fatigued and thirsty: 'The crush was getting unbearable, and all I could think of was I had to get away from the gate as there is going to be "another Hillsborough". I feared if they did open the gate there would be a massive surge.'

As stated previously, there was concern about the build-up of fans at Gate Z turnstiles as, inexplicably, the gates had been closed: 'I stayed outside on the stadium concourse, my feeling was that I was about to witness another Hillsborough. I was watching as the crowd outside was becoming more and more crushed, people at the turnstile fence having less and less room.'

Another fan who had 'entered the ground early, just before they closed the gates' was in Block Z. He 'watched what was happening from the middle tier ... People were locked outside and more and more of them were turning up with nowhere to go. This was going on for some time. I started to get anxious, Hillsborough started to resurface. I felt anger, fear and helplessness.'

Observing the expanding queue and closed entry gates from the upper tier, inside the stadium, a fan stated: *'As time moved on and the crowds grew in number, I started to panic. I could see fans climbing onto TV vans at the back of the concourse to escape the crush of the queue. I could hear the panic in the voices from genuine fans pleading for the gates to be opened. I felt like history was repeating itself. I watched Liverpool fans who had already got into the stadium plead with stewards and police to "do something". But they just stood by as the crowd grew and grew and still they let no one in. It felt like Hillsborough part 2. I felt sick and scared. I watched none of the build up to the game. I had stopped thinking about football. I wasn't comfortable doing so – but I started to record what was happening. I knew this was going to escalate and I wanted to record the facts, the truth, that Liverpool fans (bar a few who bunked in) were behaving impeccably.'*

After the match *'everyone exiting the stadium from both the west stands and the south (Liverpool) stands [was] using a single exit gangway... The crowd was tightly packed and moving very slowly. There was a very calm hush amongst all supporters. I think everyone was thinking the same ... what if there's a bit of panic, what if somebody tripped ... I had instant powerful flashbacks to Hillsborough, and still am!'*

It is evident from the following statements that awareness of Hillsborough contributed to fans' appeals for calm, ensuring the safety of the most vulnerable:

'The official response from stewards and Police was to create a wall of steel and watch the crushes become ever more dangerous to the edge of deadly consequences. The crowd crush became so terrifying people were screaming "Remember Hillsborough" and fans were desperately picking up those who fell under. I feared for my life and couldn't do anything about it, but the police could.'

'The thought of Hillsborough was in my mind and I'm sure most people's there. The exceptional behaviour of LFC fans was the only thing that kept disaster at bay. A disaster that UEFA and the French Police invited at every opportunity.'

'I will never forget the countless supporters saying "Easy! Calm! Steady! We don't need this again", countless times.'

'... we were pepper sprayed again during a long wait. The calmness of fans was amazing - lots of talking about "remember the past, stay calm".'

'Older heads around us are bellowing to the crowd "Easy! Easy! Calm!"'

Having described a *'dangerously busy'* crowd queuing at the gates, subjected to tear gas by the police, the resilience and support shown by fans was remarkable:

'Luckily the crowd of fans dealt with the situation brilliantly by helping each other out and avoiding pushing ... There was no communication about what was going on and we were not told the game'

had been delayed so we were getting increasingly desperate. Still the crowd remained calm, partly from shock and fear but also with the memory of Hillsborough in the back of their minds.'

'If it hadn't been for our fans and the restraint they showed with the obvious history we have in mind, people would have died, I am certain (and am upset thinking about it).'

'...that without doubt was a huge scale disaster avoided by pure luck, and how nobody was killed by the 'locals' I have no idea. Now, clearly I have an amount of respect for Hillsborough victims, the families, the survivors and anyone associated with that day on levels that I do not have words to express. But after being in that mini crush, for a small amount of time, I have no idea how the survivors have battled the establishment for all that time to uncover the truth. It is truly awe inspiring and they are the very, very, very best of humanity.'

The immediate response by the organisers was to place responsibility on Liverpool fans for the problems outside the stadium and at the Gates, announcing that the kick-off had been delayed using the unsubstantiated allegation that fans had arrived late at the stadium. Instantly fans identified the deceit that previously had been used at Hillsborough:

'When the match was inevitably delayed, the French Football Federation and UEFA posted a message on the stadium screens saying that fans arrived late. This was a shameful lie evocative of The Sun's Hillsborough slurs. There was a total failure of effective communication, stewarding and safe queue management compounded by the gendarmerie's use of dangerous pinch points.'

*'Then the scoreboard flashed up THAT message of late arrivals. I said at the time, "That's UEFA setting their narrative". It instantly brought back memories of that front page of the S*n after Hillsborough. And from the understandable negative reaction of the Madrid fans, it was potentially quite inciteful.'*

'Then they started with the lies. LFC fans arriving late. I was thinking, "This is Hillsborough again, even the lies match"'

'Please don't just accept the UEFA narrative that it was just "Liverpool FC fans again". It wasn't. I was there. The treatment dished out to us tonight by the French Police and UEFA.com was an utter disgrace. We were kettled several times, crushed, tear gassed, pepper sprayed and had dogs snapping at us.'

A woman at the match with her father stated: *'What made this situation even more scary for us was that my father is a Hillsborough survivor who suffers with PTSD as a result. The events of Saturday 28th May at Stade De France were far too close to home. My father was terrified, as was I. Blaming fans for late arrival and causing crushes by the opening and closing of gates is a terrifying parallel to the Hillsborough disaster.'*

Another Hillsborough survivor, in Paris with his stepson, stated: *‘What happened with the police, the stewards, and the lack of organisation but the speed to apportion blame to the Liverpool fans sickens me and the similarities to Hillsborough are unerring. Fortunately, through good luck and nothing else, nobody lost their lives, but it has set me back.’*

A fan, who had *‘been to a significant number of games all over the world with Liverpool including Walsall (wall collapse), Hillsborough, Heysel, Athens’*, stated: *‘I never thought I would see anything as bad, if not worse, than I have seen on Saturday night. But for the grace of god NO ONE was killed in Paris ... And just like over 30 years ago the smear campaign & the narrative started within minutes of actual issues outside and have continued since Saturday evening.’*

Several fans drew parallels with Hillsborough:

‘I have no doubt this was Hillsborough mark2 - on 4 occasions they created pinch points and crush scenarios that were unfit for the numbers and logistics they had planned. We arrived at the stadium RER station with over 3hrs to spare and yet still did not make it into the stadium until half time. I am also disgusted with the attempts to smear my name and that of fellow supporters.’

‘I don’t like to mention Hillsborough in this context as I feel it to be disrespectful to the shocking events on that day. But the closing and opening of gates; the blaming of fans; the lack of communication - how are these same things still happening 33 years later?’

‘It is surreal to be able to say without hyperbole that this could have been another Hillsborough.’

‘I personally am deeply angered and upset by the events of Saturday night. When you know people who were at Hillsborough and people who lost relatives and friends there as well as people who were at Heysel it’s very hard to digest. I genuinely feel like we’ve all had the biggest close call since those dark tragic events. Nobody should go to a football match, especially the biggest game on the planet, and experience scenes like that. It’s 2022 and still the same issues from the past are present.’

Fans were acutely aware of the impact on Hillsborough bereaved, survivors, their families and friends:

‘... there will be Hillsborough survivors who will have had to relive and be traumatised by an experience that they probably never thought they would see again.’

‘The crushing was scary enough for people, especially for Liverpool fans who have had to live with Hillsborough their whole lives. I can’t begin to understand how they would have felt.’

Others concluded that three decades after Hillsborough recommendations to overhaul all aspects of stadium conditions, and implement appropriate methods to manage the crowd and facilitate

access, had not been implemented at the Stade de France. A woman whose childhood friend was killed at Hillsborough stated that she *'thought that was meant to be a turning point for fans' safety across the globe'*.

Another fan commented: *'During the game the aisle next to me continued to fill up. I told myself that these were just people who had been caught up in the delays and had just come to the nearest block to see the game and would go to their allocated seats at half time. After half time it was worse. It felt overcrowded. It felt like bad things could happen. I could tell these people next to me were not Liverpool fans. When chances were created they did not react like Liverpool fans. The overcrowding was very uncomfortable for me. Again, following Hillsborough and the introduction of all seater stadia this should not happen.'*

IMPACT and CONSEQUENCES

Taken exclusively from fans' testimonies, this part of the report considers the impact and consequences on the lives of those who endured the events before, during and after the match at the Stade de France. That impact is a combination of personal survival, witnessing harms inflicted on others, financial loss and future attendance at football matches.

PERSONAL IMPACT

At the Stadium

Walking to the ground, a fan was *'forced into a bottle neck and people were getting crushed'*. Escaping the crush he jumped a fence and *'severely twisted my knee but pulled myself back up and battled on'*. He was in the stadium before kick-off, but *'by then the football didn't matter!'* After the match he *'hobbled out'* and found his way back, *'up and down stairs and escalators, walking over 3 miles on the rough streets of Paris!'* Arriving home the next evening, he went to hospital where he was diagnosed with *'a fracture and severe ligament damage'*.

Another fan left the stadium *'straight after the game'* to face the police, *'local youths and all kinds of gas inclusive of canisters and fireworks. I climbed a wall to get down to the roadside n completely misjudged it. Doctor said, half an inch lower and I'd have bled to death in minutes. Heavy stuff.'*

Compressed in crushes at the gates a woman suffered bruises *'all [along] the left side of my ribs.'* Another woman was pressed *'sideways on the gates on my left ... up against the metal bars leaving me with large bruises on my left hip and thigh.'*

A fan moved from Gate B, which was closed and where he and his friend were tear gassed ‘*which affected our eyes and throat*’, to Gate D where a smaller number of fans were queueing: ‘*Once in the queue there was a surge of fans from the back pushing and shoving everyone forward. These appear to have been local people ... Once they started to surge forward, the stewards tried to close the gates but the surge was so great ... the stewards just moved out of the way. I was trampled over and succumbed to cuts, abrasions and bruising on my right leg and top of my left foot ... As I headed into the ground I was shaken up and my friend took me to the First Aid post at Gate D in the ground. There I had the wounds on my leg and foot cleaned and bandaged. The nurse could see from my eyes being very badly bloodshot that I had suffered the effects of tear gas and they were treated with numerous doses of saline.*’

A fan climbed a small section of temporary fence to avoid the ‘*crush*’ on the concourse between Gates Y and Z: ‘*A lady noticed my jacket, which I was hand carrying, was covered in blood. I then realised I had cut both my hands and my right wrist on the metal fence. My wrist was continually bleeding.*’

Stewards were aggressive, barring access to the stadium: ‘*Without ever looking at me, one steward in particular manhandled me. I was not shouting. I caused no hassle and caused no offence. I had nowhere to go ... I wish I had [evidence of] how I was manhandled on video, as it would bring home to people what it was like for us. [They] had no apparent plan, certainly no communication, and certainly no respect. Pushing my face, my chest, and my throat, with no concept of what things were like for me, just pressing me backwards into a crowd I could not possibly control, and which should never have been allowed to build up in this way.*’

At Gate X ‘*security and police were very physical, almost assaulting us whilst trying to shut the gate. We were given no explanation as to why the gates were shutting and, even though we showed our tickets, we were given no word as to how we could enter the stadium.*’

A fan who moved from Gate B when it was closed to another queue stated, ‘*we were pushed tight to the turnstiles because of the number of local youths who had forced their way into the queue. It was jam packed, and the steward had his hand on my chest pushing me back. I shouted that it wasn’t me, I was being pushed. I had my hands in the air, and he shouted “I don’t care I don’t care!”*’

Fans also received injuries as a consequence of police using batons or riot shields at ‘*various police bottleneck checkpoints*’. A fan stated: ‘*I had no control over myself, with my arms pinned to the side of my body. I became crushed up against two police officers demanding my ticket, one of them threatening me with his spray whilst the other was deliberately sticking his elbow into my throat. Luckily a senior officer heard my pleas that my ticket was in my pocket and told them to let me through. When I got through I just broke down sobbing (don’t think I’ve ever done this before in my life and I’m 54 yrs old) and had to be comforted by 2 stewards.*’

A fan in the crush at Gate Y was assaulted by the police: ‘*The crowd were pushing me into the riot police blocking our way. I tried to stop myself as I feared being hit. The police were yelling and I was punched in my right hand side ribs and pepper sprayed in the face. I am a 59 year old man. I*

go to football to watch football and enjoy social time with my friends. I was shocked I was hit for no reason at all. At this point, crying from the gas with my nose running, I was ushered through the turnstile. After scanning my ticket I was in. I found a quiet corner and sobbed. I had no tissues so used my hands to try to blow my nose and clean myself up.'

Another fan who entered through Gate Z stated: '... following a gang of local youths who ran into the crowd from the direction of Gate Y, the police battered into us with their riot shields causing a domino effect. I fell to my right and thought I was about to get trampled when I managed to catch myself on a metal barrier. I was covered in bruises the next day.'

A fan who 'managed to get near the sloped incline towards gate 'X' where there was a handful of stewards trying to conduct ticket checks ... There were fans getting pushed over a concrete wall into an already packed area due to police forcing fans off the road, and I too was pushed backwards over a wall scratching my back.' With a friend he went to Gate Z which had closed with 'thousands of fans already lined up. There was 0 communication at the time. As frustrations grew ... anyone who questioned police who were on the Stadium side of the fencing were pepper sprayed through the fence. Police were actively taunting fans by laughing and waving pepper spray canisters in the air as a form of game.'

Noting the ongoing impact others stated:

'3 days later my eyes were still sore and I booked an eye appointment to check I haven't suffered any damage.'

'3 days on my eyes are terrible & throat sore, I keep waking with flashbacks. The more people I speak to the more I realise we were 'lucky'?''

Fans were also under attack from local gangs:

'I was previously a serving Police Constable and I have never felt so vulnerable in my life. I felt the young lads, whom I presume are French nationals, were looking to attack, mug me or anyone else.'

'I remember looking up and seeing some of the local youths climbing over the top of us and laughing ... One of them deliberately swung his elbow into my face giving me a couple of minor black eyes. My nose is still bruised but not broken. My ribs are also bruised.'

'A fan in front of me was ... pepper sprayed full in the face. He collapsed to the ground and as he did a local grabbed his ticket out of his pocket. I jumped on him and managed to get the ticket back ... I was kicked while doing this. I've just got bruising down my side. Same thing happened to another fan behind me. He tried to get his ticket back but got his nose broken. Blood all over him.'

Walking back to their rented apartment a fan, his brother and mother, *'reached a bridge which seemed to be the only way to make our way to our apartment ... My mum alerted me that two youths were looking at my brother suspiciously ... They attempted to take his phone out of his hand whilst dragging him to the floor. I attempted to run over to help but found myself being pushed down the stairs on the bridge by another individual, injuring my arms and ankle. My mum rushed over to help my brother but was slashed across her hand with a knife. More helpful locals then appeared on the bridge and the individuals who attempted the mugging ran away ... An ambulance was called and we were taken to hospital in Paris ... both my brother and I have a fractured ankle. My mum has had the wound to her hand treated and has broken two fingers.'*

On streets close to the stadium a fan with his wife and son were lost, their vision impaired by tear gas: *'I pulled my phone out to get directions. I remember a hand trying to grab my phone. Then I am on the floor with locals trying to pull my watch off my arm. I can hear my wife screaming for help (she later told me there were 6 or 7 on top of me). My son managed to help. I managed to force my way up off the road. Head, arms and legs bleeding, we fought them off. I heard my wife screaming again and around 30 locals were hiding in the bushes. Some ran to my wife [and] were trying to grab her hair and pull her towards the bushes. At this point I remember 5 or 6 supporters ran over to help, but we were now surrounded by about 60-70 men under another bridge. We feared for our lives, expecting to be stabbed or slashed. I then heard police sirens and 5 motorcycle officers pulled up. This scared off the gang up the side of the bridge. I begged the police for help, the reply was constant "We cannot help you". We walked further along the road and at the next junction there was 2 female and 1 male officers all in plain clothes. I had to sit down due to concussion and to clear the blood from my face; they remained with us for around 20 mins. I took a photo of my head to see how bad the cut is. I looked at this photo yesterday on my phone and noticed we were sitting opposite a police station.'*

The impact of violent attacks by the police and locals was overwhelming: *'I returned to my hotel at 1am, shaken and upset. I didn't care about the game. I just sat on my bed and wept. I was one of the lucky ones.'*

Another fan stated: *'Later that night, I had to take a number of buses across town to get to the airport. That feeling of tension and unease hadn't left me. At each bus stop I waited at, I felt exhausted and fearful, the city felt extremely unsafe. Once I was finally on the plane home, I tried to get some sleep. Each time I drifted back into consciousness I would feel stressed and panicky, wondering where I was, if I was on the right bus, if I was in a safe place, before opening my eyes and breathing a sigh of relief knowing I was finally on the way home ... I felt really shaken for the next 48 hours or so.'*

Still in Paris another fan, *'couldn't sleep that night. Sadness, anger and frustration rushing through my body. Why were the police so heavy handed? Why did local youths not get blocked off from coming close to the stadium, knowing that the area is a notoriously dangerous area? Why the lies from UEFA? Why the cover up from UEFA and the French police? Why blame Liverpool fans for being ticketless? Why was tear gas used so freely and openly, and why were the fans treated like animals?'*

A mother described the impact on her and her 10 year old son:

'... As we got near the stadium ... I don't even know how to describe it. We got squashed, people were pushing because it was that many of us, literally we didn't have space to breath. [Child] started to panic. First time in my life I was scared for my son's life. For our lives. I didn't know what to do. I felt so useless, felt like I have no control over protecting my son and that's my job as a mum. I was trying so hard to hold back the tears so [Child] didn't see me upset and panic even more. I asked him to keep breathing through his nose and out his mouth. Other Liverpool fans seen him struggling and kept talking to him, asking him questions about other matches he's been to, just to take his mind of everything. I felt numb. I was terrified but had to stay strong for my son!...'

Once their tickets had been checked by the police and they were able to walk to their turnstile, she thought 'we're OK now'. However, *'The queue for Y was massive! There was absolutely no one to ask for help, I have not seen a single steward! It was 8:20pm and I remember [Child] said to me, "we won't miss the match will we mum?" I just said to him to don't worry about it, we will be fine. But people started to scream, we got pushed towards the barriers, [Child] got hurt, started to panic even more and I honestly thought at that particular point "That's it, how on earth will we get out of here!?! How?!" I couldn't calm him. People around us were screaming, some people were helping me to shout for the stewards at the front to get their attention but no one even looked at us, no one bothered to help. One Liverpool fan asked me to pour water on [Child], which we did. I was talking to him constantly, other people did too. It was 8:55pm when we finally made it to the front of the turnstile where we had to scan our tickets. [Child] passed out then. Someone helped me to move him to the side, I don't even remember who it was. I didn't know what to do, I never felt so scared in my life! Never! Eventually he opened his eyes and burst into tears.*

I managed to walk him in to our seats but he was just so exhausted. He hardly remembers the match. Something that was supposed to be the time of his life was the biggest nightmare of his life. Our life. My son is the most passionate boy! He loves Liverpool, he never stops singing, he never stops cheering. But there he was, just sat with his head in his hands. My heart was broken.

After the game it wasn't any better. There was no police outside to make us feel safe. We were chased by young French gangs who were throwing fireworks at us. I felt so scared and so uncomfortable. We were running away from the stadium and tried so hard to call an Uber but it was constantly cancelled. I finally managed to get one and returned to our coach.

My son now is scarred for life. He can't stop thinking about what's happened and why this happened to us. And how can I explain to him what's happened when I don't know myself? How it was allowed [that we were] treated like this? How?

Missing the Match

As mentioned previously, some fans were so traumatised by what happened before the match that they left before kick-off while others who entered the stadium were emotionally drained and physically in pain.

One fan stated: *'My son and his 7 and 15 year old sons with 10 of his friends were so traumatised that, even though they paid a fortune for the trip and tickets, they left and just wanted to get home.'*

Another fan wrote that, while waiting at Gate Y, he got *'caught in tear gas that had been let off at local youths. Wearing contact lenses I had to remove them and someone gave me a bottle of water to pour on my eyes. That was game over for me as my specs were back at my hotel. I had also lost sight of my son and friends and decided to leave the area, heading back to the station running a gauntlet of local youths before eventually getting back to my hotel. Out of 5 of us with tickets from the club only 2 got in!'*

Having queued at a number of different turnstiles where gates were closed and they endured threats of tear gassing, a fan described how events led him, his nephew and brother-in-law, to leave the stadium: *'It was at this point my nephew had his ticket snatched by a local male. The game had already started, all the gates were shut and it was extremely threatening outside with lots of local men wanting to cause trouble with us. We felt vulnerable and threatened so got a taxi to the airport. We missed the entire game. I feel lucky that we were unharmed and did get home safely the next day but I feel let down by the authorities and UEFA who organized the match.'*

A young woman who was with her father was crushed in the tunnel on the approach to the stadium: *'I thought I was going to die, it was getting to a point where I thought the compactness of the crowd was going to push me over. I knew if I went down that there was probably no way back up ... I started to cry to my Dad saying I no longer wanted to go the game as it felt too dangerous. He agreed and said life is bigger than a football game.'* Then they queued at Gate Y: *'... we were all tear gassed and couldn't breathe. People were running towards us screaming in panic, these people were older women, Liverpool fans. I don't know what had happened but they were running in fear screaming that they couldn't breathe. We left the area to escape the tear gas and didn't get into the stadium at all, despite having official tickets from the LFC staff ballot and the LFC members ballot.'*

A fan who previously had suffered a stroke, decided to leave the queue at the gate. Meeting a friend whose gate had been closed, they *'made the decision that it wasn't safe and headed to a bar near our coach'* to watch the second half: *'Neither of us got to use our tickets, but at least now we were safe.'*

Another recounted how *'The old man next to me told me he had to leave or he would miss his flight and left the game ... earlier he had told me he had a hotel and a flight the next day. Clearly he just felt uncomfortable and decided he could take no more.'*

A fan who was due to pick up his paper ticket at the stadium began to panic as *'the situation deteriorated, with locals giving me the evils, some coming up & sticking middle finger right in my face for no reason. I did have a Liverpool jacket & red turban on. I saw the fireworks go off as kick off was approaching & ticket still didn't come through. So I decided for safety [to go] back to [the] apartment I was staying at with one of the limousine/executive car drivers. This was 5 minutes after the game kicked off.'*

Returning Home

A Hillsborough survivor stated that their son: *'texted me from work on the Monday "I don't know about you but my head is chocker" he said. He couldn't focus. What happened at The Stade took us to a dark place. Comparing notes for this account, [a friend's son] told me that it was only after we all got home that he started to get flashbacks, and truly realise how lucky we all were. We have our families and we have each other. We got home safe and sound in spite of those who had been responsible for our welfare.'*

Others recognised that the emotional impact would be longer term, particularly for those previously affected by Hillsborough. A senior NHS worker who had been at Hillsborough concluded: *'My memory of Paris should have been a wonderful family occasion ... Instead I'm upset, shocked and frightened. How could this happen? ... This has left me with feelings of anxiety I've never experienced.'*

Another Hillsborough survivor stated: *'It's been eight days since the match and I've been on holiday in the south of France since last Sunday. I haven't slept, I'm tired, I'm angry, anxiety levels are high - just thoughts of what happened to me at Hillsborough against what happened to us at the Stade de France in my mind all the time. Despite overcoming the PTSD from Hillsborough after therapy, I feel I will have to talk to somebody about my experience. I keep thinking that if my son had not of been there, I could have been in serious trouble ... he realised that I was feeling anxious. He realised that memories of Hillsborough would be coming back to haunt me. He kept reassuring me and on the evening he was my rock.'*

A fan whose father died at Hillsborough and who was in Paris with his 17 year old daughter, stated, *'I've been terrible since I got back. Horrible memories of Paris and unfortunately listening to accounts of others brings up Hillsborough again.'*

Fans realised that their experiences in Paris were having a profound impact on their mental health:

'Unfortunately, what should have been a dream trip has turned into a nightmare that I think will take me a long time to recover from.'

'The fact that nobody died at this match is a miracle. Each individual within our party of match attendees has been deeply affected by this whole event.'

'I have been breaking down in tears recounting our experience to friends. We were victims of violent police and locals.'

'I feel scarred by the experience. I will never forget the feeling of breathlessness by the overcrowding that never seemed to stop and the worry it would get worse. I will never forget the children standing frozen still while bottles rained through the air and I could see locals slashing at Liverpool fans. I will never forget my life flashing before my eyes as the [tear gas] explosions happened outside the railway station. I will never forget the guy grabbing me by the throat and his friends standing there smirking, knowing I was outnumbered ... I will always feel hurt by this. I will also feel shame for feeling this way, knowing that a lot of other people had so much worse experiences than I did. I am having trouble sleeping. When I do sleep I am having constant nightmares which my wife has to soothe me from. I am speaking about these events in my sleep.'

The following statement from a woman, who attended the match with her partner, demonstrates the trauma of survival: *'We were so shaken and terrified that we decided to leave France first thing in the morning, removing all traces of us being football fans just in case we came across any French police. Our return boat was booked for Tuesday 31st May from Dunkirk at 12:00 but we no longer felt safe in France so my partner and I decided to drive straight to Belgium, where we stayed until we could get our boat back. Those two days were not good. We have just felt awful since the game. We are both traumatised. I have taken some sick leave from work because I need some time to process what happened to us and to try and recover from the trauma. I also feel like I need to spend time with my family because I honestly thought we were not going to make it home from the Stade de France. I have no idea how people weren't seriously injured or killed.'*

For those who took children to the match there was additional trauma. A father and his 11 year old son were attacked by local youths, tear gassed by the police, missed their coach back to Liverpool and had to remain overnight in a Paris hotel: *'We finally managed to get home around 12:30am Monday morning. We've both struggled to sleep since. My son doesn't want to talk about anything that happened and understandably has been upset to see the news reports. I have struggled to speak about it as I feel like everywhere I look somebody is commenting on it.'*

In addition to reporting a range of physical reactions, a woman fan felt *'overwhelming guilt as I relied on a person who was a stranger to me up until that day. I feel bad because he was struggling after his experiences of Hillsborough and Heysel and then coping with me.'*

Another fan stated: *'This experience really shook me and my son was in shock for hours after, not saying a word. At many times we made a decision to leave and not bother about the game, as it was secondary to what we had experienced. All our joy and excitement was snatched away by very poor management of the event. We felt for all the Liverpool supporters who had to experience what we had all gone through - many in tears, having had their belongings stolen, some beaten, bloodied and bruised, separated from their families and friends. This should not have happened.'*

During the match a fan *'spent time thinking about how I am due to become a Dad for the first time in 8 weeks and that maybe Football was not for me anymore. I never thought I'd say or think those words ... I continue to have nightmares about the anxiety I felt at the time.'*

His feelings were echoed by several others whose detailed accounts demonstrate starkly the cumulative impact of their experiences:

'Once back in my hotel room, I sat down and burst into tears. I felt so angry and upset, my hands were shaking, I felt physically sick and emotionally drained. Over the last couple of days, I realise that I must be somewhat traumatised. I haven't slept properly and my mind keeps taking me back to situations where I felt vulnerable and afraid. I know other fans had it much worse both into and out of the stadium. Nonetheless, I feel lucky that I got out unscathed physically; emotionally I need a bit of time to recover.'

'I was left seriously considering never going to a football match again. To be treated in that way has had a massive negative impact on my wellbeing. I've not experienced nightmares since I was a child but the last two nights I've woken in sweats, feeling anxious and short of breath!!'

'Since I got home on Sunday afternoon, I had 24 hours where I kept breaking down in tears. Since then, I cannot focus on anything for any period of time without seeing that poor young woman beaten to the ground or the dad protecting his daughter (this may be because I have 2 young daughters myself). I think I'm a pretty laid back guy who is positive in most situations and like a laugh, but this has affected me really badly. I've become short tempered with my wife (who has been amazing) and I feel like when I talk, people think I'm exaggerating or they're not listening.'

'I have been deeply affected by the events of Saturday night. At first I was fine but I now feel extremely angry and upset. My main thoughts regard would could have been. What if there was a surge at Gate G and I did crush those little girls? What if the exit gates had remained closed a little longer? What if one of those French lads running under the turnstile after the game had a weapon or a bomb strapped to him as was the case in November 2013? What if a barrier or gate had collapsed in the crush at Gate G? The shock has now wore off and the enormity of the situation has dawned on me. I feel that if I am not angry at the minute then I will most certainly break down and the emotions will be uncontrollable.'

Another fan concluded his statement: *'I fear it'll affect me forever. I know many that are still suffering from Hillsborough. I genuinely fear I'm mentally distraught for life ... I'm now jaded, tired ... I start weeping when I think of Saturday. I may need to talk to a professional and soon. I find therapy in friends and family, but am also aware they're not the best people to talk to at the moment, despite the show of love'.*

Following their experiences in Paris, some fans discussed their reticence to enter crowded spaces. This included the much anticipated celebratory parade by the Liverpool team through the City on Sunday 29th May:

'I am truly shocked that no one was killed. I did not attend the long awaited Liverpool FC parade yesterday for this reason and I will not be attending a UEFA final again. My partner collected me from the train station after the long journey home and I burst into tears as I was so happy to be

home safely. I then woke up in the middle of the night after an awful nightmare and was in tears again. This makes me incredibly sad as football is my passion.'

'We didn't go to the [LFC] parade on Sunday as I couldn't face being in a crowd so soon. Two days later my head is still banging [from the tear gas] and the enormity of what we experienced is still soaking in. And ... I think we were lucky just missing the worst of it either side of the game.'

'I planned my whole trip to arrive back in Liverpool ahead of the parade hitting town. But on Sunday, being in another large crowd and celebrating was the last thing I wanted to do. I just wanted to go back home and hug my kids.'

'I was out shopping this past Bank Holiday weekend, I couldn't cope - the queues and business of the shops scared me and I had to leave. This was the worst experience of my life.'

IMPACT ON OTHERS

Fans expressed concerns about the short and long-term impacts on others, particularly those who were seriously ill and/or injured yet had not received medical treatment.

Crushing, Police Violence and Tear Gas

At Gate A, 'a man was pulled from the gate clutching his chest and was clearly in a lot of pain and discomfort. From the way he was moving and behaving, it looked like he was having a heart attack. He was just left by a policeman slumped against the wall, no medical attention given towards him.'

Watching from inside the stadium 'about an hour before kick off' a fan observed that, 'suddenly, a non entrance gate was broken open and about 3 people got in. They were grabbed and the gate shut but one man must have annoyed security as he was thrown to the ground and whilst one security knelt on his back another kept kicking his head over and over whilst others were punching him. It took armed guards to push the security off him. They picked his body up and it was lifeless.'

A fan who left with friends 'very soon after the final whistle' stated they 'came out of the stadium to chaos. Groups of youths hurling rocks and what seemed to be stun grenades/flash bangs at one another. We witnessed one boy get hit and lying on the floor on Rue de Tremis. There did not seem to be any police intervening.'

A woman fan detailed the injuries to her friends: 'one was crushed against a fence as the police had closed their gate. Another suffered a sprained ankle as a result of a crush. Various friends of mine were tear gassed. Another friend was traumatised by the enormous congestion and fear of being crushed.'

A father and his 16 year old son were crushed at Gate Z. He stated, *'It happened so quickly and was that intense that, after seeing [son] be pulled to safety, I vomited where I was standing. [Son] suffered cuts to his legs being pulled over the fence, but I was relieved to see him make it over ... There was panic and fear all around and people were crying and falling to the floor. I managed to lift a woman over the fence, and I'm certain she will have also suffered some flesh wounds off the fence. When the crushing eased off I climbed over the fence to find my son. He was on the floor in tears near a TV van, and another man was helping him. I picked him up and once again I vomited.'*

Another fan outside Gate Z commented: *'The crush moved towards some Harris fencing that was about 7 feet high, people started to climb this to escape the crush and climb on what seemed news/TV vans. A lady next to me was struggling and couldn't climb and cut her hand, people were starting to panic and the crush worsened.'*

Injuries were inflicted by riot police using batons and shields as weapons. A woman fan stated: *'The police were heavy handed from the start of the day - riot police moving fans from bars where we were trying to eat food, have a drink, sat being quiet. They moved us to the entrance of a fan zone where we had to queue for 2 hours to be herded through the smallest opening. The police were in riot gear from the beginning with water cannons placed in the side street! What on earth were they expecting????? I was scared, couldn't breathe and couldn't leave to go the toilet due to the way we had been herded. Having worked in slaughterhouses it's fair to say the cows are treated better!'*

In the underpass approach to the stadium a fan and his friend *'were grabbed, forcibly, by police at the very front, as they formed the cordon again blocking us in ... My friend was bruised on her arms from the grab and push by the police.'*

A young woman described how her and her father decided to escape the underpass by jumping a barrier onto the road. She stated: *'The police started to force the LFC fans back so me and my Dad jumped back into the crowd ... This is when I started to see the police becoming violent with fans, hitting them with batons and crushing them with riot shields. Fans were shouting "Open the gates" and trying to explain to the police it was a crush.'*

Another fan described an incident when *'a young woman ... came through the turnstiles and, for no reason I saw, was dragged about 10 metres to the side by a police woman. A man ... who I assume was her boyfriend/husband or relative saw this as he followed her through the turnstile. He became anxious as to what was happening ... so started to head towards her. As he went towards her, a French police officer grabbed him by his t-shirt collar and yanked him back about 3 feet and pepper sprayed him ... she screamed and went to run towards him. As she did, she was hit on the back of her head/neck and fell to the ground, looking unconscious.'*

Another woman at the match with her visually impaired husband noted that at 6.20pm: *'A fan broke through the turnstile and ran with security and police chasing. Anyone in the way of the chase was hit or knocked to the floor if they were unfortunate enough to be in the way. One man hurt his leg, another was knocked backwards and hit his head and was out cold. When he came*

to, he was lifted up and sat against a wall where he was clutching his chest and couldn't breathe. Paramedics came for him.'

A fan stated that his 'son was pepper sprayed and hit with a baton repeatedly on his lower leg. His crime was standing patiently in a queue.' Another fan noted: 'The police were swinging batons indiscriminately and I saw young kids hit for no reason. Suddenly the crowd surged backwards and my eyes and throat started to burn. Realising we'd been tear gassed, I moved away quickly and found some water from a vendor to wash my face.'

Fans felt helpless to assist those assaulted by the police: 'I witnessed a young man lying in the road with a silver heat blanket wrapped around him being attended to by a police officer ... one of our party had witnessed this person in the road being hit over the head by a policeman wielding a baton.'

Walking from the stadium with his family a fan stated: 'I heard some screams and looked up over my right shoulder and I could see tear gas being fired into the crowd. Now people start to panic (me included). I wrapped our scarfs around my wife's head. We were forced into an area that appeared to be under a bridge. But the gates were locked and now it was becoming even more compacted with our eyes burning and still struggling to breathe normally ... As we walked out, I could see the riot police just laying into supporters with batons. In fact, a female officer walking backwards fell into me, turned with her baton raised to strike me but noticed I had my arms around my wife, she stopped.' Unprotected, the family was then attacked by locals.

As discussed previously tear gas caused physical harm and psychological distress:

'My overriding memory of the night ... is that of tear gas being used against ordinary men women and children who had done nothing more than pay to see a football match. This is a completely disproportionate and disgraceful use of chemical weapons against a defenceless group of fans. Their crime – legitimately paying to see the team they support in the so-called pinnacle event of world club football.'

'It was evident that the kids, women, and men ahead of us had suffered more severe effects of the pepper spray. With lots being physically sick and struggling to see or breathe, including children and 2 wheel-chair bound supporters.'

'All of a sudden I became aware of screams as police had begun pepper spraying the crowd indiscriminately. I saw a lady with a Real Madrid scarf being sick after the tear gassing / pepper spray had been used on her. That caused a degree of panic amongst the supporters.'

'The images of innocent women, children and the elderly all bent double around the concourse, after being pepper sprayed and tear gassed, were harrowing to say the least.'

'There was many women, children, and a lot of elderly Liverpool fans who all suffered with the effects from the pepper spray. I was struggling to breathe, my eyes streaming and constant sneezing.'

The following statements are from fans at Gates Y and Z where the police *'were indiscriminately setting off tear gas right in the area of queuing fans'*:

'I was struggling to breathe from the mixture of the tear gas and the crush. It was then that we first saw pepper spray being used by police, who were moving along the fence spraying it indiscriminately ...'

'I witnessed many distressed Liverpool fans. People were in tears – men, women, and children all shocked.'

'There were families, young children and elderly. There was nowhere to escape it - we were penned in by a wall and fence on one side and a security barrier on the other.'

'Another fan who was at Hillsborough was in tears and said it brought it all back. I have never known him to cry and I have known him my whole life ... One of my friends who was tear gassed now has to have an inhaler as it brought back his asthma that he hasn't had for a decade.'

'I thought I had been hit bad with it until I seen 2 of my friends again. They had been hit by the tear gas full force. Both had lost almost all their senses for a good 10-15 minutes. It has now been a week since the final and one has had to go see his doctor and both are still suffering the effects of that tear gas.'

Stewards' Violence

A fan who arrived at the Gate Y entrance at 9.45pm observed, *'Some people being ejected by stewards and violently being pushed out of the gate into the queue. Other people were being pepper sprayed just inside the gate.'* Another fan noted that among friends who met up having come through the ticket check, *'One woman was under a lot of stress as the ticket checker forcibly pushed her.'*

Fans were concerned about the aggressive behaviour of stewards, including body searches on children: *'we felt like animals in the zoo stuck between barriers with nowhere to go ... We eventually got through at 9.25 after being caught in the pepper spray mist on numerous occasions. We then got rubbed down, even my 8 year old grandson who had a football kit on with no pockets!'*

A fan, who is a police inspector, stated that he was *'was alarmed at a steward's insistence that he searched my 11-year-old, who was wearing shorts and a t-shirt and clearly not secreting any items on him.'*

Inside the stadium a woman left her family to find a toilet. She phoned her husband to tell him she was not being allowed to return to her seat. He stated: *'I went up and found that security had locked the gates preventing supporters getting in or out to the toilet area. My wife was stood there with 6 males all trying to get back in with tickets in hand. At this point the main security guard started throwing punches at supporters between the bars of the gate. I stopped him by grabbing his arm and told him "my wife is coming back in". I tried my best to force the gate and it opened, my wife got back in. We returned to our seats and watched the game.'*

Assaults by Local Youths

A fan stated that his *'friend's 17 year old son was with us and around 7pm he went off to get something to eat inside the fan park. He was surrounded by French youths and only just managed to get away but ended up with a cut hand and ripped pants where they were grabbing him - I assume trying to get into his pockets to see what they could steal. When he finally got back to us he was crying his eyes out at what had happened ... he tried to run over to the police but as he did they assumed he was causing trouble and motioned like they were going to attack him, so he just kept running until he was safe.'*

This statement reflects many fans' accounts of being unprotected by police, left at the mercy of local gangs of young men intent on robbery and violent assault:

'Friend's son was battered by a French gang & is having his jaw & arm pinned.'

'Post game we walked back to our hotel ... It was like running a gauntlet. Lots of local youths taunting, aggressive ... we saw attacks and robberies en route. It was a horrible experience. Policing was extremely poor and dismissive of fans. Friends were tear gassed in the fan zone and had to try and escape groups of local youths waving knives, coshes and razor blades. Local gangs of youths were running wild.'

'After match it was like a gauntlet; witnessed numerous attacks and muggings while police stood idly by, swathes of local thugs with knives everywhere. Genuinely feared for my life.'

'I'll never forget what greeted us when we got outside the ground. It reminded me of wolves waiting for their prey. We stuck with some other Liverpool fans, who knew the way to the metro, we ran together down the middle of the road, gangs everywhere, fights breaking out all around us, I have never seen anything like it before.'

'As I went over a road I saw a massive gang of locals who appeared to be running, attacking people and cars. I started walking fast, I could hear fans being assaulted, Police turning a blind eye.'

'Probably the worst part of the experience was after the match trying to get away from the stadium, groups of young French lads mugging unsuspecting fans all around the stadium with the police presence virtually Zero.'

Having left the stadium via the underpass a fan stated: *'... we witnessed gangs of French youths in their tens, no more than 10-15 feet away from the police, grabbing people and taking things from them, threatening them at knifepoint, or straight up attacking people. People were being pulled out of the crowds to be robbed or attacked. We ran past them and mercifully made it through.'*

Another fan, *'witnessed 3 separate attacks by the locals on a few Liverpool fans, they were more running battles and punches were being thrown, but the gangs were targeting smaller groups or individuals that were straggling a bit.'*

Noting that the *'walk back to the station was extremely dangerous'*, a fan wrote: *'I witnessed numerous fights from locals attempting to steal phones, and we were getting reports of stabbings, assaults and attacks by groups of youth. There was no police presence between the bridge that we were kettled under, and the station. It's scary to think how many got hurt in that walk, and I know how lucky I am to be unharmed.'*

Walking from the stadium, a fan saw three friends. He and his group went to the right, *'heading for the station'* but *'they went to the left and within a few minutes of that happening, one ... had been slashed by a gang of locals.'*

Another fan commented that he and his friends witnessed *'local youths ... in numbers sprinting around picking people off. The sky was filled with smoke and missiles etc. It felt like a warzone ... had to run to the station dodging these people. There was no help ... My 63 year old father with multiple health issues running from fear is not something I ever expected.'* At the Metro *'many of these youths were around us still shouting abuse. We managed to get on the metro and met a fan who had a big gash on his face where someone had dragged his necklace off.'*

A fan described travelling back to the City: *'Police held back the crowd for five mins at a time and allowed fans to board trains to Gare du Nord. All trains terminated there to get more fans away from this area. It was quite moody and the police had full riot gear with visors down, batons drawn and shields up, pushing people back. It was ready to kick off ... As we were walking down, groups of local youths were rushing fans, pushing and attacking people and robbing items including phones and wallets. This continued into the station. Saw one old fella get rushed and his wallet robbed. They just disappeared into the crowd ... The police just watched and didn't intervene. At Gare du Nord this continued. One fella was slashed on his neck and another had his phone stolen while holding it in his hand. Again, the police stood by and didn't do anything.'*

Their experience is consistent with the following account: *‘We managed to get an overland train to Gard Du Nord ... At Gard du Nord, more chaos and gangs of youths roaming round with no police presence whatsoever. We got the Metro back to Liege station. However, again the atmosphere was very threatening with gangs of youths roaming the Metro. At Place de la Clichy there were about 12 police on the platform. At the next station there was blood all over the platform floor and a bloke who had been badly beaten up outside the ticket office. There were no police whatsoever.’*

On reaching their hotel, a fan described being *‘shocked to find another fan covered in blood - he had just been mugged.’* Yet it was not only people who were damaged: *‘We left as soon as we could after the whistle, just wanting to get away from the stadium. On returning to our vehicle we found the driver’s side window had been smashed. The only one done and the only one with UK plates. The locals were horrible, unfriendly and intimidating. A day to forget and a long, cold drive home.’*

Longer Term Harm

A headteacher stated that he *‘felt lucky to be alive, uninjured and intact’* but he anticipated that children would be *‘mentally scarred for life and possibly will not attend a football match again.’*

A fan concluded: *‘Thankfully all our friends got in at various times during the game ... None were physically injured but mentally and emotionally who knows ... When people talk about mental health, the people in Paris who experienced this should be examined and helped. Some will be fine, some will need counselling and support. The club and others should provide it.’*

A Director of the Hillsborough Survivors Support Alliance stated, *‘I hope that I have the strength to overcome the events of this appalling shambles. I know that many of our members are currently struggling with the events of the Champions League Final’.* Detailing the similarities with Hillsborough he commented: *‘I hope that there are not too many affected by these events and that for those that have been and need support, that we can reach them in time.’*

FINANCIAL IMPACT

As previously noted, expensive ticket prices, international travel and massively inflated accommodation and living costs in one of Europe’s most expensive capital cities together amounted to a costly event, especially for families. Many describe it as a ‘once in a lifetime’ experience. For those injured or otherwise delayed in returning home, there were added costs of accommodation, travel and missed days in work. As a fan noted: *‘The Champions League final in Paris, 2022 ... has left us scarred both financially and more important emotionally.’*

A fan who attended the game with his wife stated: *‘We had spent around £2,000 each on tickets and travel and hotel for what is supposed to be a sporting pinnacle in terms of the “football family” and I was sitting there thinking this is 2022 and this is happening all over again!’*

Another fan commented: *'Myself and many other thousands of people, who had paid rather a lot of money to get to Paris, were deprived of the experience of a European Cup Final by a complete lack of organisation and failure of policing and stewarding the match correctly. Without doubt it was one of the worst experiences of my life.'*

Fans were clear that not only had the trip been expensive but the experience had been *'absolutely horrendous'*:

'I've spent a lot of money on my ticket, travel, hotel and spends. In return for that I have missed nearly half the game and felt unsafe on multiple occasions.'

'For this trip I had to use holidays in work. I spent £360.00 on my flight, £68.00 on a hotel and £125.00 on my ticket for the match. I am just a normal working class person who doesn't have a lot of money and I spend most of my money on Liverpool and to be treated in this way was disgusting and scary.'

'My ticket was 100% genuine, recorded delivery direct from LFC. Paid £414 to get treated like an animal.'

'I'm furious with UEFA for their lack of staff and stewards and I lined their pockets to the tune of 490 euros for a face value ticket only to partake in a dangerous shambles.'

'I remarked to my brother-in-law that, in spite of my ticket being a 490 Euro ticket, "we are being treated like animals".'

'We paid nearly £850 each for our flight and tickets all through official channels. For what - 50 minutes of football and mental and physical scars for life?'

'I had a real ticket, valued at €690, just for a seat for 90 minutes.'

'It cost us about £2000 for the whole trip including tickets through LFC. We didn't even get in the ground.'

'This entire trip cost me £1000 and my match ticket alone was £125. We got to watch no football and worse still came home to read reports and see interviews somehow blaming us for this mess?!! It's disgusting.'

'We paid £358.00 for our tickets x 3 – over £1000.00.'

Travelling from California, a fan arrived at the match with his girlfriend: *'We had paid over \$3500 for this trip, including the tickets.'* Another made the trip from Guernsey, *'for my brother and I cost more than GBP £2,300, before calculating costs for the annual leave from work.'* A fan, travelling with his wife, son and grandson estimated their costs: *'£10,000 acquiring tickets, hotel, ferry crossing, tolls and fuel.'*

Clearly, for many fans it was a special occasion and, for some, a *'one-off opportunity'*:

'I went to the game with my brother who I hadn't seen for 3 years because of the pandemic. We're both from the Wirral, huge Reds fans, but I live in San Francisco now and my brother in Ireland. We had no chance of getting tickets in the ballot and so I decided to stump up for hospitality tickets (which ended up being about £8k). This is more money than I'd ever think about spending, but decided to do it for a "once in a lifetime experience".'

'I flew to the game from Sydney after getting tickets in the ballot – in what was supposed to be an "experience of a lifetime".'

'I came to the game from Australia after being successful in the UEFA ballot.'

'I moved to Perth, Australia 16 years ago and honestly miss it so much. I made the decision to go to Paris and acquired a ticket via UEFA - not cheap - but just needed to go to see and soak up with the Liverpool FAMILY.'

In addition to the massively inflated costs of accommodation in Paris, fans were exploited by retail outlets and taxi drivers:

'While the rest of our time at the fan park was enjoyable it was clear that we had our food and soft drinks taken [confiscated] so that we could be fleeced inside the fenced off fan park. Food and drink was sold at an extortionate price. I paid €15 for a hot dog and chips while pints of beer were sold for €9 each.'

A group who had endured hours in queues and been tear gassed, left before the match kicked-off: *'We couldn't get away quickly enough. We headed to the safety of a bar just to get our breath and try and recover from the effects of the pepper spray and then got a taxi away from the chaos and back to our coach 8 miles away at an exorbitant charge of €80!'*

'A taxi driver happened to pull over ... We approached him and told him we needed a lift to our hotel, which was near the airport. Sensing our fear he demanded 120 euros. It's a 20 minute drive. I paid it without thinking twice as all I could think of at that time was my wife and kids back home.'

IMPACT ON FUTURE ATTENDANCE AT MATCHES

Following the severity of the experiences endured by fans, some doubted whether they would be able to attend another football match:

'Still today (Tuesday), I am unsure whether I will ever go to a match again. I will never ever go to Paris again, there is no doubt in that!'

'I LOVE football, but I don't know if I will ever go to a game again.'

'I'm not sure I will ever go to a football match again, certainly not one in Europe.'

'This has made me reflect about attending football matches in future and especially about taking my children to one.'

Reflecting on the experience of her 24 year old son, his mother stated: *'he's really quite traumatised by it and said he never wants to go to another game. Which is a shame because he is a huge football fan.'*

Other fans doubted that they would travel again to away matches, especially in Europe. To emphasise the depth and extent of fans' responses the following quotes require no commentary:

'Never will I travel to any game away again.'

'This past weekend has made me rethink - I don't think I would feel safe going to another away match in the future.'

'I doubt I will ever attend another football match outside the UK again, and right now I'm even unsure about how I feel about returning to Anfield or any other place with large crowds.'

'This will be last trip abroad following Liverpool.'

'I've travelled the world watching my team. I love Liverpool so much. But I will never travel abroad again to watch them. My son says the same. I will never enter France again either.'

'It is highly unlikely I will ever go abroad to watch Liverpool again.'

'I never want to have that fear again so will not be attending any future finals abroad. I have loved my football since I was a nipper with my dad, but nothing is worth violence and fear from authorities whose job is to maintain law and order.'

'My first European away with the club and I never want to go to another one!'

'This was my first European final and I fear it could be my last as this set a standard of fear I've never felt before.'

'I'm 26 years old & I was with my Dad. It was my first European Cup final and my first time travelling abroad to watch Liverpool. It will probably be my last.'

'Absolutely woeful and, as it stands, puts me off future European trips with the Reds.'

'My Dad, after going to European away matches for 40 years, will never go to another. Our family don't want us to either.'

'I am currently considering if I will ever attend a European away again. Paid hundreds of pounds to be there and I ended up fearing for my physical safety.'

'This has made me question going to any away game to watch Liverpool in Europe again as the foreign authorities clearly have disdain for football fans and treat us like animals - our safety didn't seem to be of any concern to anyone in charge at any point during the evening.'

'Given the sheer embarrassment of the organisation of this event I have pretty much vowed to myself that I will never go to a European game again.'

'I am not sure I would ever travel to a European away game again unless LFC can provide security for fans. This was my worst experience of attending a game ever.'

'I will think twice before travelling to watch Liverpool and my stepson is considering giving it up altogether ... he will never travel to another European final.'

'From the jubilation of being drawn in the ballot to the trauma of the stadium experience - I am not sure I will attend a European game again.'

'I will never attend another European game again. I spent a lot of money on tickets, flights, hotels and did not even get in to the stadium to watch the game - and to then be criticised by the authorities is an absolute disgrace.'

'I have been to 7 European Finals but sadly, after this experience, it will be my last.'

'I'm 60 years of age in September this year and this is my 7th European Cup Final. [After] what I went through before the game it will definitely be my last European adventure.'

'I decided am never travelling to a European game again. Was at Hillsborough and this just brought back all my fears and emotions, just didn't feel safe.'

A key theme running through many of the statements concerns UEFA's responsibilities:

'We love travelling to Europe to watch Liverpool; some of our greatest times have been at CL Finals. But after Paris 2022, can LFC or UEFA guarantee that we can safely attend another match in Europe?'

'I doubt I will ever trust UEFA, the French authorities and the Stade de France with my safety at an event ever again. I think this was my last European Final.'

'I have done 7 European finals and UEFA have their wish now, I'm not going again - they don't want fans at the game they want the moneyball fans.'

'I would class myself as an experienced match goer. I attend most away games, plus the odd European game. Saturday was my 49th game of the season and my 5th European Cup final ... This experience will live with me for a very long time. I'm not sure if I will ever do another Champions League final, which is a very sad thought.'

'I will never attend another Champions League final unless UEFA can guarantee the fans' safety going forward.'

'The Champions League final should have been a dream trip for us. It turned out to be a living nightmare. As it happens it was a once in a lifetime trip for me as there is not a chance on the planet I will ever go to a Champions League final again.'

IMPACT ON VISITS TO PARIS AND FRANCE

Many fans vowed never to return to Paris or to France:

'We left Paris as planned the following day on Eurostar. For as long as I live I will never set foot in that city again.'

'I will not return to Paris. St Denis in particular was a lawless, dangerous and violent place.'

'I will NEVER go to Paris again, let alone to watch a football match - even if I am lucky enough to get tickets for the final again.'

'We will never go to Paris again, not for a football match nor as tourist. We may never go abroad again to watch our team.'

'I will never step foot in Paris again and I will make sure everyone I know stays away.'

'I can honestly say I won't be returning to Paris, for football or pleasure, ever again.'

'I have no intention to go back to Paris in the future for any sport or with the family.'

'I'll never visit that stadium ever again. In fact I will never visit the City of Paris again, even for a city break!'

'I'm 50 years of age. I'm not a trouble maker, I just love the atmosphere of the red army. This has put me off, God knows what it done to the 14 year old lad with us and I definitely will never return to France/Paris ever again.'

'I will never go to Paris or France again.'

'A total shitshow and I doubt I'll ever go back to France again.'

'Watched Liverpool across Europe but would never do France again.'

'I will never return to France again.'

'Following the night at Stade de Paris I can safely say I won't be attending a game in France ever again. I feared for mine and my mum's safety throughout the night; what started off as a fantastic day soon turned into an anxious and dangerous night and I couldn't wait for it to be over.'

'This was the most scariest situation we have experienced in our life and I will probably never go back to France. The authorities let us down and threatened our lives in how they handled the event.'

'For 100% certainty I will never go to France again for a game.'

'It was awful, so much so that I will never go to a football game in France again and I've travelled home and away for over 20 years.'

'Following the events in Paris, I will never, EVER go there again to watch a football match and probably will never return to that city again in my life ... I will think twice before travelling to watch Liverpool.'

'I'm doubtful if I'll ever go to France again. I feel terrified of the French authorities and completely let down by UEFA.'

'I will never get into that situation again and will never visit France again.'

'I'll never go back to France for a sporting event again.'

'I would never go to France for a game again and would think twice about going to any game abroad as I don't trust foreign police anymore.'

'I have cancelled my trips to Paris for the rugby and the Olympics. I do not need to endanger my life.'

'We are not sure, if given the opportunity again, [we would] go to a game in France, or other parts of Europe.'

'For certain, I cannot see myself visiting France again for the foreseeable, let alone the hell hole that was Paris.'

ACTING ON FANS' TESTIMONIES

Providing extensive accounts so soon after enduring physical and psychological harm, Paris survivors have been generous in revisiting what many state was the most damaging sequence of events in their lives. As the testimonies demonstrate, fans have submitted statements not only in the expectation that they will contribute to holding organisations and their senior personnel to account but also that national and local government, stadium owners and those involved with ensuring safety at venues, will learn from the Paris debacle.

Ensuring Public Accountability

Full compliance with safety regulations regarding access, accommodation and egress at sport, music and cultural venues is the responsibility of the owners and local government agencies. Those hiring venues have a duty of care - accountable in law - for ensuring the facilities are fit for purpose for *all* people attending. Owners, hirers, managers, stewards and police are obliged to ensure crowd safety. The use of force directed against attendees in any circumstances must be a last resort and then in response to immediate danger. The testimonies presented here demonstrate that there was multiple institutional failure in the duty of care.

In their testimonies fans demanded accountability for the harms they suffered in Paris:

'The French government, police force and UEFA must be held accountable.'

'UEFA and the French authorities need to be held to account.'

'... the attempts to deflect blame by the French authorities and UEFA is beyond disappointing.'

'I must fight. I cannot let UEFA, the French government or the French police get away with allowing this and blaming us for it. There will not be another cover up in my lifetime.'

'I hope the relevant authorities take responsibility rather than trying to blame the fans (though I see the narrative).'

'I'm not a legal expert, but some form of Collective Action, Group Litigation, Group Litigation Order could potentially be explored? For me personally, in an ideal world, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin, French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera, and Gendarmerie Director General Christian Rodriguez, should all face criminal prosecution legal proceedings for overseeing a complete shambles, which had the potential to end in multiple fatalities, and then completely and continually lying - apportioning blame, instead of at least holding their hands up, doing the decent thing, admitting mistakes were made, vowing to learn lessons.'

'The assertions by the French authorities and UEFA that Liverpool fans were at fault is a blatant attempt to deflect blame and free themselves of responsibility for the recipe for disaster that they oversaw. They need to be held to account, we (both sets of fans) deserve an unreserved apology and measures must be taken to ensure that no fans are ever put through an experience like that again.'

'I hope this investigation not only holds to account those who made May 28th a horrible and nearly deadly experience, but also leads to changes in how football supporters are policed in general, both home and abroad ... Please clear our name and hold UEFA, who seem unfit to lead, and the French government, who seem unfit to host sporting events, to account.'

Experiences of five UK police officers:

'I genuinely think those riot police would have been looking forward to the event as an opportunity to use unnecessary force/ behave aggressively without any fear of reprisal.'

A woman police officer from England: *'I should not have been fearing for my own life on Saturday due to the actions of the French Police force. I know what rough fans look like, I deal with some of the worst incidents every day. Yet on Saturday I thought I wasn't going to come out in one piece ... My professional understanding is that it was not all tear gas, the fans who came off worse will probably have been subject to PAVA like we use here [in England] or CS gas, an airborne substance. Here, PAVA is a last resort for a specific individual/small group, where we are expected to then give those individuals at least 15 minutes after-care providing water to wash the spray out of their eyes and helping them to calm down from the effects. Whatever the French Police used was causing people to not be able to see and have breathing issues along with any injuries they received from the crushing ... What has stuck with me the most was the genuine fear for my life and those around me, and kids crying saying they don't want to go to the football anymore because of this. Grown men crying because they are scared. It is a disgrace.'*

'UEFA have a lot to answer for but more than that the brutality of the French police to innocent people needs stopping. I see the treatment as a direct contradiction of Article 5 of the Human Rights Act. As a UK law enforcement officer everything I do has to be legal, justified, proportionate and necessary. On top of this, any use of force has to be recorded and explained. I just don't feel that this was the case with the French police. Basic training teaches you to defend yourself when necessary but never be the aggressor. There can be no justification for torturing innocent people with nowhere to go from behind a fence.'

A retired police officer stated that, at the station: *'In the distance to my right side I saw at least 3 riot police attacking Liverpool fans with batons - I cannot say if the fans had done anything wrong - but strange why they were not trying to stop the black French lads who were attacking us. In my police service I have been assaulted several times and have been in many very serious situations. This incident was truly frightening.'*

Concluding his statement another fan who described himself as *'an Inspector in Merseyside Police, trained in National Police public order tactics at Level 1 and Level 2. I have 17 years of experience policing football matches and other public order situations'*, wrote: *'Despite my experience of public order situations, I feared for our safety throughout this event and had no confidence in the police to keep fans safe. There were several tactics that would have been deployed in the UK to safeguard fans, however my impression was that the police were unprofessional and abandoned their duties.'*

Creation of a 'Blame' Narrative

In their testimonies fans were determined to defend the behaviour of those assaulted and tear-gassed, challenging the falsehoods immediately broadcast in the stadium and in international media broadcasts.

In a detailed statement a Hillsborough survivor who was in Paris with a friend, also a survivor, concluded: *'I hope that this account of my experiences from Saturday night will be of some assistance in ensuring that the narrative being developed by the French authorities and UEFA does not hold good - although as I write I am hearing that an Independent Inquiry has been launched. Having experienced a crippling burden of guilt from being accused of charging Gate C at Hillsborough, I would not want other spectators - be they LFC or Real Madrid - to find themselves similarly scapegoated by institutions seeking to disguise their own failings and duplicity.'*

Another fan stated: *'Compounding all these issues is the decision by the authorities to lie about fans turning up late ... Thankfully the press, journalists and football players' families were involved as victims and therefore we might just get believed, as opposed to the narrative of the French authorities attempting to cover up their disgraceful behaviour leaving people not only scarred from the events, but now also fighting for the truth to be told.'*

As had been the experience at Hillsborough, fans were aware that a 'blame narrative' had been established immediately. Yet again, it was based on unfounded propositions about the late arrival of Liverpool fans and negative assumptions about their behaviour. First was the proposition, broadcast on the stadium's screens, that the game had to be delayed because of their late arrival:

'The game is delayed and the stadium announcer and big screen tell us this is due to fans arriving late. Boos ring out from the Liverpool end in response to this lie and I am staggered at how quickly UEFA moved to control the narrative.'

'There is anger when the stadium screen and PA announce that kick off will be delayed to the "late arrival of fans", as we know that this a lie – a lie that has history with LFC and I am in disbelief at the sense of injustice.'

'The general mood of everyone around me was of concern. Then, when that message went up on the screen that the game was delayed due to the late arrival of fans, there was a lot of anger and frustration around. It was clear our fans were there from early, but couldn't access the ground. I didn't enjoy the game at all, regardless of the result. I spent a lot of my time just thinking "Why am I actually here? To be slurred again for bad behaviour that hasn't happened?" It just felt all wrong.'

'The announcement of the game being delayed by "late arrival of fans" was greeted with fury by our end as it was obvious UEFA and the authorities were taking the narrative.'

'The game was delayed and the announcement was blaming fans for their late arrival. This is a complete lie and I fear the start of a cover up which unfortunately we have seen before. The match itself felt insignificant. A prestige sporting event that was policed in the most horrendous manner was completely ruined.'

'I would question why UEFA put the message they did up in the stadium (kick off delayed due to fans arriving late) when the world could see it wasn't true - the only advantage they get by doing that is that their version of events is out in the wider public domain first!!!!'

Reinforcing negative assumptions about the troublesome behaviour of Liverpool fans, riot police were deployed 'at Liverpool end just before full-time':

'In ground no issues, until the end when the armoured police formed a line in front of us, I was in block Y. Developing narrative that we were troublemakers.'

'The end of the match demonstrated the contempt the French police held us in with them being deployed only to the LFC end of the ground and not the Real Madrid end. This can only be viewed as an attempt to bolster their false narrative (which we are now seeing) that it was only LFC disorder which needed to be policed.'

'In the final minutes of the game, riot police form a line in front of the Liverpool end. I am angered that this not happening at the Madrid end too – it continues to feel like we are being targeted with aggression.'

'... when they rolled out the riot police in front of our end (not at their end) on 85 mins I felt, like many around me, that the narrative was already being written by UEFA and the French police for all the world to see: "Those Liverpool fans again causing trouble". Except we weren't, we were just there to watch our team, like I've done for 30 years.'

'This was in my opinion designed to incite the crowd and spin a narrative that it was our behaviour that had caused it. Once again the fans' behaviour was exemplary and, bar one or two individuals, nobody did any wrong doing.'

'The way the riot police lined up behind the goal in front of Liverpool supporters at the end of the game was a gesture of complete contempt, and is indicative of a strategy that set out to antagonise and create conflict.'

'Why are we treated like thugs and threatened and intimidated? This isn't fair. I have never felt that Liverpool fans would cause riots and destroy anything ... There will always be some idiots in every group, but the riot police in full riot gear was super disproportionate to what the threat level was.'

'... a large deployment (150 - 200?) of riot police emerged and walked out to our end, lining up right in front of the Liverpool supporters - many with an aggressive posture, creating a barricade with their shields, some gesturing to the fans. There was visibly no equivalent deployment at the Real Madrid end ... completely unnecessary, disproportionate and provocative ... fans again self-policed, shouting at each other not to throw things, urging calm'

'The mood had turned as the Liverpool fans had realised by the riot police standing in front of our fans only (at full time in the stadium) that we were for all intents and purposes being blamed for any and all failings of the organisation. The riot police were now being seen as a provocation by the Liverpool fans and some hostility was shown to them but nothing violent.'

Challenging the Official Narrative

In providing detailed statements, fans were keen to emphasise that they were committed to challenging false allegations broadcast at the time of the match and in subsequent statements by French politicians and police. It is instructive that so many responses use the word 'narrative':

'After the match it seemed the police wanted a reaction to justify a narrative, they did not get it from the supporters ... The response from the French government has been grimly predictable and I am proud the club and yourself are going to fight for us.'

'I hope you can dispel the narrative that has been painted by the French authorities and UEFA.'

'The French narrative must not be allowed to stand. Liverpool fans behaved impeccably and our name has been dragged through the mud.'

'We are now seeing the usual slurs and tropes being wheeled out about ticketless fans. This is so clearly false given the volume of media out there proving otherwise.'

'I find it very offensive that UEFA, the French authorities and the police have chosen the narrative they have which is to blame the fans for being late and ticketless. I hope that the Club, the FA and the British authorities do all in their power to change that narrative to the truth of what actually happened on the day.'

'I expect better than this from UEFA, particularly for a showpiece game like this. The false narrative now being pushed by UEFA and the French government is sickening.'

'No one should be afraid to go to a football match!! And the narrative that has shamelessly been created by the French authorities and UEFA themselves - with one simple motive to shift the blame onto the Liverpool supporters - means this will happen again! It is a disaster waiting to happen!!'

'This was the most stressful and frightening game of football I have ever attended. The narrative has already started blaming fans with an industrial level of fake tickets. [That] local criminal gangs were allowed to run amok, also at the Real Madrid [end], unchallenged was a bigger issue.'

'Convenient narratives from authorities have already started to set the tone that supporters were somehow responsible for how events in Paris unfolded. Whilst this is categorically not accurate, I feel it is wrong to dismiss incidents of poor behaviour - they do happen, they did happen, they were just not the catalyst or excuse for how the well behaved, excited, joyous, patient 99.9% of supporters were treated at Stade de France on Saturday evening.'

A woman fan's questioning of UEFA and the authorities:

'The incompetence of the staff and stewards at the stadium, the complete lack of organization and forward thinking of the organisers and the arrogance and quite frankly lawless behaviour of the police resulted in very few Liverpool fans witnessing and contributing to the singing of 'You'll Never Walk Alone' ... caused us to miss the opening ceremony and I suspect in many cases, certainly my own, [left us] struggling to understand the events which had taken place and thus unable to enjoy what will be for some a "once in a lifetime opportunity". Many just turned away and left the match forgotten. These fans are, in the main, good honest people – we care and have the right to expect the same courtesy and respect.

It is not the Liverpool Fans who need to provide answers but UEFA, the French Police and Authorities, the stewards of the stadium and the organizers of the event for what was an appalling show of incompetence, violence and discrimination against the Liverpool Fans.

At the very least UEFA should offer a full refund to Liverpool supporters. The ticket offered an event and a celebration of football which was substituted for a "horror show", smiles substituted with tears and joy replaced with fear.

I have always respected authority but the Police Officials in attendance should be questioned as to their ruthless and intolerable behaviour and reminded of what their roles are - to work for the state to protect its people, to prevent crime and to protect, help and reassure the community. They did nothing to achieve these goals - allowing French youths to access the stadium illegally, displaying threatening behaviour and causing fear to innocent people, assaulting innocent children, the elderly and often infirm, women and citizens without due cause.

Until the stadium officials can illustrate that a repeat of this disaster will not occur, that there are clearly signed access routes to the stadium, some semblance of order and indeed celebration, until they can take control of the local persons who sought to pick pocket, assault (a precious gold chain was ripped from the neck of a supporter as he left the stadium) and trespass then I would hope that UEFA would ensure that they were prohibited from hosting such events in the future. Could we really allow the Olympic Games in 2024 to be held at St Denis in what appears to be a sanctuary of criminals and criminal behaviour?'

Avoiding Tragedy

In fact, an alternative interpretation of fans' behaviour is that because they understood how confrontation and ensuing panic could result in tragedy, further injuries and deaths were avoided. This was emphasised in their testimonies:

'The only reason that this situation didn't turn even worse is that Liverpool supporters policed themselves.'

'If it was not for the self-policing, good conduct of Liverpool fans, the scale of injuries would have been much, much bigger.'

'The Liverpool fans were self-policing at this point [on the concourse] and telling each other to back off to prevent anyone from being hurt. Had they not done so, there could and would have been serious injuries ... Nobody was taking any responsibility other than Liverpool fans themselves, who were telling each other to remain calm and not push.'

'I believe that the restraint of Liverpool fans prevented a potential disaster. I did not see a single incident of hooligan behaviour between the two sets of fans. Indeed the rivalry was more of mutual respect and friendly at all times.'

'My honest opinion is that the only reason there wasn't serious injury and death is due to the restraint shown by Liverpool FC supporters under the most shocking treatment from the French State and abysmal 'organisation' from UEFA.'

'The police treated us like vermin and were already of the mindset that we were going to cause trouble. That was never the case. And when we didn't rise to their antagonism, they decided to attack and gas us in order to provoke a response and it didn't come ... in the face of extreme provocation. It's no overstatement to say that it's a miracle nobody died at the hands of the Police and the local gangs. Liverpool fans were the only ones who prevented a disaster because we stuck together and looked out for one another.'

'On Saturday, a major disaster was averted due to Liverpool fans making sure we looked after each other and the older fans, possibly the fans who have been present at previous disasters, advising the younger supporters that we would be ok if we were patient, calm and looked after each other.'

'We (men, women, families, children, the elderly, from all classes and walks of life) were made to feel like animals, like a threat to be controlled with fear and aggression. We were treated with contempt and handled violently, lacking in care or any human empathy or decency. The Liverpool fans, Real Madrid fans and other individuals caught up in the events of 28th May 2022 are the ones

to emerge with any credit – for their patience, compassion and incredible calmness under inhuman conditions and incredible provocation. It is because of this, that major disaster was avoided.'

Evidencing Events as they Happened

A marked difference between the events at Hillsborough in 1989 and Paris thirty-three years later was the prevalence of mobile phones. Most fans had cameras on their phones and were able to capture the situations with which they were confronted in the crush at the tunnel, on the access ramps, on the concourse, at the gates and inside the stadium as they occurred. Not least, their images and videos provided time-specific evidence of police hostility, tear-gassing, assaults and injury, countering and contradicting the false narrative created by the authorities.

'... fans I saw stuck together and began filming events on phones so the narrative couldn't take hold.'

'... in the age of mobile phones and social media, it is much more difficult for the authorities to lie and cover up what actually happened.'

'The Gendarmerie actions seemed to get progressively worse rather than genuinely trying to help the fans. At times it felt like they wanted to spark a reaction ... Horribly, a number of us were sort of pleased that reporters had been directly on hand/some even caught up in it all (and I wouldn't wish that treatment on anyone at all) as unfortunately the voices of fans alone are usually not heard/ believed in these circumstances. Social media and all of the various videos/photos etc taken by fans can easily show the real problems on the night.'

'I'm old enough to have witnessed Hillsborough. The authorities got away with it because there were no mobile phones. Now there are videos and photographs to prove we are innocent.'

'Thankfully, 30+ years on from Hillsborough, we all have phones and technology now to combat the sheer volume of the lies being spun.'

'Without the overwhelming video evidence filmed on mobile phones this would have been another cover up by the authorities – we need to take the opportunity that this presents to force a change in behaviour/ approach and not just the meaningless "apology" that we got last week.'

'Looking back and witnessing the shit show disorganisation and threats our fans faced, also from local shithouse gangs, I'm proud of our Fans. We look after our own. Finally they tried the old Narrative - blaming Liverpool supporters - and failed. We can be thankful for today's technology to let the world know the Truth.'

Fans recognised that their experiences and evidence was significant to broadcasters and journalists who were also witnessing events as they unfolded:

‘The only good thing to come out of Saturday night is the reaction of the press and the media. Fortunately all of their trucks were parked at the Liverpool end of the stadium. Many of them saw what unfolded with their own eyes and even got caught up in it themselves. Modern technology and social media means that there is no hiding place for lies and false narratives.’

‘Luckily in the modern world of TV, social media and mobile phones, the events and truth were recorded. The support for our fans from the journalists has been great. The rejection of the UEFA and French police lies has been strong and I hope this is looked into more and investigated with a fine-tooth comb.’

‘... despite UEFA & the French police trying to blame fan behaviour as ever, the truth seems to be coming out quickly this time with the help of mobile phone cameras, plus ... good journalists in the midst reporting on it.’

Yet, despite the evidence filmed by fans and endorsed across the media, there were still those who doubted the veracity of fans’ accounts:

‘It’s been really upsetting to see the reaction of a minority of the public, automatically believing UEFA’s lies about Liverpool fans. I have seen a small number of unfortunate incidents from a handful of unrepresentative Liverpool fans on social media (who should of course face consequences). However, using this against Liverpool fans to change the narrative is unacceptable, especially given the overwhelming evidence from eye witnesses and media outlets which some people choose to ignore.’

Learning the Lessons

In addition to having their testimonies heard and believed, the overwhelming commitment evident throughout fans’ statements is to learn the lessons of Paris and prevent future harm:

‘We must not let our club be tarnished with this lazy false narrative that continues to perpetuate, not only for ourselves but for the safety of fans in attendance in the future.’

‘I hope the truth comes out from this shambolic event and that lessons are learnt ... lives were not lost, thank God, but they so easily could have been ... please learn from this and please make these events safe.’

‘Whilst we are of course thoroughly relieved that the consequences of the authority failures on 28 May 2022 do not appear to have resulted in any fatalities, as they did on 15 April 1989, we believe it is important that the events ... are learned from, lest any future incident result in tragedy ... it is

essential that the events of the 28th May 2022 not be allowed to descend into myth, rumour, lies and smears in the same way that those of 15 April 1989 were allowed to by the authorities and media at that time ... If action is not taken to correct the mistakes that occurred on 28th May, there is every chance they could happen again, with worse consequences.'

A Hillsborough survivor concluded his testimony: 'The relief when we got home was like that feeling my mum had when I got home in 1989. Our group had every age group, including women and children. Everyone in our group and our extended group at the fan park [experienced] at least one of the following: attacked, gassed, pepper sprayed, chased, robbed, locked out, in fear of their life. Every single one. Please help ensure nobody else has to endure what we endured.'

Reflection on the behaviour of Liverpool fans, players and the club:

'... On the day, we, the fans, were faced with antagonism and frightening scenes around us. For a lot of fans this would have brought back terrifying memories of the Hillsborough disaster. It would have been easy to become violent and feed the narrative that the police wanted to create. This simply did not happen though. Every fan I came across followed instructions, turned away from trouble and refused to rise to the bait. Even when forced to wait for 2 hours to get into the fan park or pressed up against the fences in those death trap queues outside the stadium, still nobody became aggressive or violent. Instead, fans I saw stuck together and began filming events on phones so the narrative couldn't take hold. Sadly, our experience in these situations came to the fore. I believe we represented the club exceptionally well and I was proud to be a Liverpool supporter, and a Scouser, on Saturday evening.'

I believe the players' performance in the face of the events outside of the ground was phenomenal. It would have been easy for them, especially with family and friends caught up in the trouble, to wilt under the pressure. But they didn't. They played amazingly well and were extremely unlucky to be beaten despite being the better side for 89 minutes of a game that most of us now see as insignificant. They deserve massive credit for this and for fulfilling the bus parade the next day when understandably feeling low.

I would also like to thank the club officials and the board members for their statements following the game. Again, the easy thing to do would be to wait for the investigation to finish before making a statement. Instead, the club has backed the fans from the minute these events took place. I honestly could not have asked for more, particularly from the players, Jürgen Klopp, Mike Gordon, Billy Hogan and Tom Werner. You have not allowed the narrative to take hold by making clear the fans were not to blame for the despicable actions of the police, government and locals of Saint Denis...'

Part 2

Thematic Analysis

PART TWO

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF FANS' STATEMENTS

The 485 statements analysed in this Report document in detail fans' personal experiences at the Stade de France, on public transport and at the Fan Park. Thirty-two key themes or categories emerged from a close reading and analysis of these first-person accounts. They are included here with the percentage of statements raising the issue. While the sample is 485 and Liverpool Football Club was in receipt of 20,000 tickets it is important to affirm that, if the percentage of those submitting statements was applied to the entire allocation, the numbers of those impacted by what happened before, during and after the match would be considerably higher.

Category	N=statements	% overall statements
Tear gas	236	54%
Pepper spray	144	30%
Blocked entry (includes the stadium and fan zone)	96	20%
Blocked/ shut exit (includes the stadium and fan zone)	98	20%
Gates locked/ shut	227	47%
Ticket checks: a) not checked	52	11%
Ticket checks: b) checked	115	24%
Legitimate tickets refused or not scanning correctly	89	18%
No security checks	23	5%
No communication	235	48%
Chaos/disorganisation	225	46%
Inaction / confusion of stewards	133	27%
Absence of stewards/police	186	38%
Not / Mis-directed by police or stewards	73	15%
Negative behaviour of stewards/officials	89	18%
Marked presence of local youths	286	59%
Locals jumping fences to enter ground	204	42%
Locals thieving/pickpocketing	212	44%
Locals attacking	171	35%
Police action negative	257	53%
Police inaction	199	41%
Police action positive	14	3%
Riot police	204	42%
LFC fans' negative behaviour	73	15%
Expressions of fear/danger/feeling unsafe	318	66%
Sexual assault	6	1%
Crushing	227	47%

Never/ probably not returning (to Paris or EU matches)	85	18%
Positive conduct of Liverpool fans	See below	

Tear Gas/ Pepper Spray

Category	N=statements	% overall statements
Tear gas	236	54%
Pepper spray	144	30%

As noted above, 263 (54%) statements referenced the use of tear gas and 144 (30%) statements referenced pepper spray, with several overlapping. Some report that police sprayed directly into the faces of fans as they waited patiently for stadium entry gates to open:

'It was apparent, from where we were stood, that we would not make the turnstile in any time soon. I was struggling to breathe from the mixture of the tear gas and the crush. It was then that we first saw pepper spray being used by police, who were moving along the fence spraying it indiscriminately to try and remove people from the fence line.'

'... my son was pepper sprayed and hit with a baton repeatedly on his lower leg. His crime was standing patiently in a queue.'

'It was callous and mindless behaviour'

The discharge of pepper spray and tear gas by police was described by one fan as *'almost casual'*. Another term used was *'indiscriminate'* (33 instances) in its direct impact on children, those with disabilities, and the elderly, resulting in varying degrees of physical debilitation and psychological distress: *'burning'* eyes, burnt skin, confusion and disorientation, breathing difficulties, anxiety and panic attacks.

Many fans were sprayed multiple times while waiting to enter the stadium. Others were trapped in a crush at the bottleneck created by police in the underpass approach where they were also tear gassed. A father who travelled to the game in a taxi with his 9-year-old son had to exit the taxi after it could progress no further due to the volume of fans outside the ground caused by a police 'pinch point':

'We quickly found ourselves in a dangerous and terrifying situation. Fans were being crushed. People had to climb waist high fences at either side to avoid being crushed. My son was in tears and asked 'are we going to die Daddy!' the situation was caused by police and police vans blocking the only route in below an underpass which meant only a trickle of fans were getting through to the outer perimeter of the stadium. The crowd eventually found ways to break through the bottleneck

by going around on the road & climbing fences etc. the police started to indiscriminately use tear gas on those trying to escape crushing.

We eventually got through this first highly traumatic situation only to find ourselves in another! All gates were closed! The only option was to enter another bottleneck situation where fans were again being crushed. Obviously I avoided this option. Tear gas continued to be sprayed indiscriminately. I covered my sons head and face with my jacket as we were both now affected by tear gas. We were surrounded by distraught families with children in tears and also suffering from the effects of tear gas. Second time of the evening when my son asks 'are we going to die Daddy?!'

Police also pepper sprayed fans outside the ground after the match. A fan under attack from 'local gangs' as he left the ground with his 11-year old son, stated that he ran alongside the riot police while escaping violent locals believing he would be safer. On the contrary, the police attacked them: *'[They] tear gas[sed] my son right in the face from point blank range, he is 11 years old and they could see he was just a kid'.*

Statements referred to 'local gangs' also using pepper spray as a means of disorientating and disabling fans to steal from them while police watched without intervening. Fans described the situation as 'lawless'.

Pepper spray and tear gas were also used by police at the Fan Zone. Fans stated that the police were 'heavy-handed', attacking them without justification as they waited to exit: *'.. suddenly French Police started with the pepper spray and tear gas, havoc ensued in the fanzone as supporters tried to get away. Young and old affected by the gas'.*

'All of a sudden the gas hit ourselves and ensued a state of panic. I could barely see and was struggling to breathe, my dad's yelp of "[Name redacted] Where are you?" will haunt me forever. I quickly put my arm around his shoulder, my eyes feeling like they were bleeding and struggling to control my breath. We both turned and headed towards the exit which was some distance away. I looked over to my left and gas or Pepper spray was being unloaded over the perimeter fencing and into the crowded fan zone. I saw someone trying to escape the fan park over the fencing'.

Accessibility

Accessibility was a major issue in and around the stadium, in the Fan Zone, on the approach to and from the ground, and at the Metro stations. Six categories deal with accessibility and focus on various locations.

Category	N=statements	% overall statements
Blocked entry (includes the stadium and fan zone)	96	20%
Blocked/ shut exit (includes the stadium and fan zone)	98	20%

Gates locked/ shut	227	47%
Ticket checks: a) not checked	52	11%
Ticket checks: b) checked	115	24%
Legitimate tickets refused or not scanning correctly	89	18%
No security checks	23	5%

Blocked entry and blocked/ shut exit

‘Blocked entry’ (96 statements - 20%) and ‘Blocked/shut exit’ (98 statements - 20%) refer to the obstruction or intentional blocking of access points on approach to the stadium or Fan Zone or when leaving the stadium or Fan Zone. These categories differ from the category ‘Gates locked/ shut’ as the latter refers specifically to access to the stadium via the main entry gates specified on fans’ tickets.

Fans report that at various locations many entry and exit points were blocked or severely obstructed, both at the Fan Zone and in and around the stadium. These blockages were caused by French police who established ‘pinch points’ which funnelled fans into tight, narrow spaces causing bottlenecks, some of which resulted in dangerous crushes.

The purpose of police ‘pinch points’ is unclear. Fans document police operating security checks, but many others report that subsequently these were ‘abandoned’. Problems arising from blocked entry and exit points are clear in the following extract: *‘As we got closer to the checkpoint, I noticed two transit type vans parked up with policemen sat inside. They were parked on an angle to each other creating a funnel and at the pinch point they were less than 5 metres apart and then positioned in such a way that going through them the gap was reduced to about 2 metres wide. I was hit with two surges /crushes here and then found myself at the front of the queue with stewards (first ones I saw) and police using a black industrial type of wheelie bin to control us. I was forcibly moved forwards at least 10 metres by the surge and could feel my feet dragging along the pavement beneath me. I got through but my son got stuck / trapped behind the bin.’*

As fans attempted to leave the stadium, fearing for their lives in multiple crushes, their exit was blocked by police. A fan recounts how they decided to abandon their attempt to get into the stadium, pleading with officers to provide them with safe passage away from the ground, which eventually was permitted, before finally being ‘manhandled’ back towards the dense crowd by a different group of police officers:

‘I started to cry to my Dad saying I no longer wanted to go the game as it felt too dangerous. He agreed and said life is bigger than a football game. We tried to find a route away from the stadium. We crossed over the road to walk through another flyover tunnel, the police had taped it all off and were just standing there watching crushes unfold. We wanted to go through the tunnel to leave the Stade de France, the tunnel was empty with nobody in apart from a few police officers guarding either side. We tried to explain to a police officer we weren’t going back into the crowd, we said “danger, danger, no, danger over there”. The police officer refused to let us walk through and kept pointing for us to go back to the crush. He had a very aggressive tone. I started crying and more

police men started to head over to us like they were going to drag us back. The police officer finally allowed us to walk on the other side of the road as we explained it was unsafe and we didn't want to watch the match now. As this officer allowed us past, we got to the next set of officers who manhandled us and dragged us back into the crowd.'

Gates locked/ shut

Gates were reported locked or shut in 227 statements (47%). These closures by stewards or on the instruction of police officers appeared to be both indiscriminate and unpredictable throughout the two to three hours prior to the scheduled kick-off. This occurred most frequently at Gates X, Y, Z, A, B, and C which were mentioned repeatedly throughout the statements. No explanation was offered for shutting gates and when fans inquired they were ignored: fifty-four state that they were ignored by police officers, stewards, or UEFA officials; twenty-seven were laughed at or threatened with pepper spray or batons. The level of abuse and hostility is stark in the following testimony:

'I went through the police cordon and met [my son] by an underpass but we were then not allowed to return, even though we explained we had tickets. We moved around various points but met the same response; either silence or told the stadium was closed. A number of the police just laughed and mocked or gestured to their batons.'

Because fans were not allowed in they were left sweating in high temperatures and without water. Many had their water confiscated at earlier 'checkpoints' and report that shops refused to sell water after 6pm, claiming to have been forbidden by French police from selling drinks. Being held outside the gates also denied fans access to toilet facilities. One fan reports how a female fan's pleas for a toilet were ignored and consequently she was forced to 'squat' while 'surrounded by thousands of fans because she had no choice and was humiliated'.

Ticket Checks

Ticket checking was inconsistent or abandoned altogether. Many 'checks' involved using a counterfeit 'pen' on physical tickets (64 statements document this method) or part of the physical ticket being 'ripped' off. Many fans were refused entry if they attempted to scan tickets at undesignated gates even though their designated gates had been closed. Conversely, some fans who presented at the wrong gates were permitted entry via the scanning machine. For many, however, their tickets were not checked. Fifty-two fans (10%) specifically referred to tickets not being checked at any point.

Some fans noted that tickets were checked. That they mentioned this suggests that they considered ticket checking inconsistent. Of the 115 (24%) who stated that their tickets were checked, twenty-two were refused at the turnstile/ gate because their tickets scanned 'red' or they required multiple scanning attempts before the ticket was acknowledged as legitimate.

Other fans state that stewards hurried them in without checking tickets. Three statements report that stewards sought bribes from fans with legitimate tickets who had been refused entry. For example:

'By the time me and my mate got to the front of the queue, we were pushed tight to the turnstiles, because of the number of local youths who had forced their way into the queue. It was jam packed, and the steward had his hand on my chest pushing me back. I shouted that it wasn't me, I was being pushed, I had my hands in the air, and he shouted "I don't care I don't care!" I managed to move myself towards the left so I wasn't being pushed so hard against the turnstiles and I scanned my ticket but it went red. My ticket had come directly from LFC.'

The steward starting telling me to leave, but there was nowhere for me to go. I told him my gate was closed and that's why it hadn't worked. He said "If you give me something you will get in." He said that twice to me. I was desperate, I wanted to get in, I wanted to get away from the pushing - but I also knew that once I was in there was no way he could chase me for money because the turnstiles were so close to being overrun. I said yes and he double clicked me in with someone else and I was in, and moved away from the steward – I obviously didn't give him money.'

Legitimate tickets refused or not scanned correctly

At various points when gates were opened, albeit temporarily, the scanner machines failed to properly scan many digital tickets. This failure was explicitly noted in 89 (18%) statements in the dataset. Fans with legitimate tickets were refused entry and stewards accused them of having 'fake' tickets. The following extract typifies the experience of many fans whose tickets were not correctly read by the digital entry scanner:

'My son and I then went to the next gate along, again waiting to get to the turnstiles, we eventually got there, only to be told that our tickets was fake, I assured them they weren't as they had come direct from the club, I showed them my email of confirmation and also my passport as I.D, all the while being very nervous as the French gangs circled, pickpocketing or just snatch and grab thefts were happening regularly. Again, we were moved on and told the tickets were fake and we were being refused entry. The crowds started getting much worse now as nobody could get into the ground but as it was so congested, we also couldn't move away from the turnstiles. French locals started jumping over barriers and fences and running in. It now became very scary, there were large gangs of French locals, starting to blatantly mug Liverpool fans, men/women/kids. They didn't care who it was, they would just grab someone and drag them into their group while they stripped them of their possessions.'

Fans were informed by stewards that their tickets had been used already at the gates. Consequently, they were refused entry. Reportedly, local youths photographed fans' tickets as they were presented at the entry points. Fans deduced that this was to obtain the QR codes for the entry gates.

No Security Checks

Although checkpoints were established at various points, the quality of bag checks was inconsistent. Twenty-three fans (5%) stated specifically that they experienced no security checks. Some reported bag and body searches as being lazy and 'cursorly'. Thus, there were concerns that 'something terrible' could have been taken into the stadium. In contrast, other fans reported invasive and inappropriately executed body searches (see Sexual Assault).

(Dis)Organisation of the Final

Category	N=statements	% overall statements
No communication	235	48%
Chaos/disorganisation	225	46%
Inaction / confusion of stewards	133	27%
Absence of stewards/police	186	38%
Not / Mis-directed by police or stewards	73	15%
Negative behaviour of stewards/officials	89	18%

No Communication

The category 'no communication' refers to the lack of response from police, stewards and UEFA officials when fans sought information. For example, their questions about why gates were closed, their concerns about entry and exit points, and the delayed kick-off. It includes the lack of adequate signage at Metro stations, on the route to the stadium and on the concourse in the stadium. Two hundred and thirty-five statements (48%) noted the inadequate direction to and at the stadium. Thirty-eight statements specifically contained the phrase 'no signs' of which thirty-five specified lack of information about approaching and leaving the stadium. Signposting that did exist consisted of A4 paper sheets attached to lamp posts. A fan stated, '*Zero visibility of support staff & what little visual signage [there was] was more confusing than a support.*'

The absence of communication exacerbated an already dangerous situation. It created uncertainty regarding entry points and timings. In unfamiliar surroundings fans were left to negotiate huge crowds amassing at locked gates, not knowing whether to surrender their position in the queue and search for alternative entry points. Deciding on an appropriate and safe course of action was impossible. Fans on the concourse discovered that the kick-off had been delayed via social media and mobile messages from family at home. It is clear from the statements that, had this information been provided, it would have eased the panic and anxiety in the waiting crowd. A fan noted that Liverpool fans already in the ground came out to the gates to inform those locked outside that kick-off had been pushed back:

‘Upon getting to turnstile Z, it was closed, with lots of openly ticketless locals milling about and climbing fences. The turnstile remained closed, with no explanation or updates about what was happening, police and stewards opening laughing at us at points. Some of the locals (none wearing colours and all speaking French, so I can only estimate they weren’t Liverpool fans) then forced open a fence and were quickly met with a lot of security and armed police.’

It was only Liverpool fans inside the ground who came down to let us know kick-off had been delayed (this was around 15 mins before the original scheduled kick-off at which point it had taken 2-3 hrs to get from the underpass) that calmed things a little as, up to that point, no communication was given as to what was going on and why the turnstile was completely closed. Any attempt to shout through the fence to get some idea of what was going on was met with a mixture of hostility and mocking from stewards/ police/ security.’

Chaos/ disorganisation

This category covers explicit references to ‘chaos’ and lack of organisation on the day; 225 statements, 46% of the total. It is important to note that this category captures explicit references to these terms and also synonymous constructions such as ‘nobody knew what was happening’ and stewards/ police not knowing ‘what they were doing’. In addition to these explicit mentions, disorganisation was implicit within other categories, such as ‘being misdirected’, ‘ticket refused/ not scanning’, and ‘confusion or inaction of stewards’. Taken together, these categories constitute implicit rather than explicit references to chaos and/or disorganisation.

An example of an implicit reference to chaos is the construction, ‘once in the perimeter I thought the madness was over and breathed a sigh of relief!’ The use of ‘over’ carries pre-suppositional meaning, which is to say that ‘madness’ is taken to have occurred previously in order to entertain the possibility that it ‘was over’. Moreover, use of the definite article ‘the’ in ‘the madness’ presents it as given. As only explicit mentions of chaos and disorganisation were tagged, and not those in which it was implicated, the prevalence of chaos and disorganization as a key category is actually significantly higher than the 46% of statements that explicitly reference it when the implicated and pre-suppositional meanings are taken into account.

Inaction / confusion of stewards

This category was established to account for the prevalence of references to stewards who chose not to act or did not know how to act on the day: 133 statements, 27% of the total. Many statements identified stewards’ inconsistencies in handling ticket checks and processing the entry of fans. For example, a fan notes how stewards reacted to fans screaming for help at closed gates as local French youths surged into the waiting crowd:

‘They [French locals] pushed forward which meant fans at the front started to get crushed against the gates at B gate which were still closed. Fans were screaming at security to help but no one did. The security were like rabbits caught in a headlight, they themselves looked like untrained young kids with no clue [...] I entered the stadium to find my seat but there were no stewards anywhere. No one was checking tickets. It was mayhem. Lots of locals without tickets were sitting in my

seat and those near me. Arguments broke out as these people wouldn't leave their seat that didn't belong to them. However there were no stewards to sort this out. Eventually these locals with no tickets stood on the steps the whole game which was a massive fire risk. More arguments broke out as they were obstructing views but refusing to move. I saw one or two stewards later but they looked like teenagers with no clue what to do.'

Absence of stewards/ police

Stewards were regularly reported as absent (186 statements, 38%) leading to concerns about safety and security, particularly given the persistent threat of local gangs pickpocketing and attacking LFC fans outside the gates. There was concern about lack of stewards where police had created bottlenecks. There was also a lack of stewards at ticket checks, with many noting that there were only 'a few' who were '*using a marker pen to check the ticket[s]*'. Fans noted that most checks amounted to '*a superficial visual inspection at best*'.

Many stewards appeared to be young and inexperienced, with some noting that they appeared '*clueless*' and '*out of their depth*', as the following statements show:

'I noticed that gate Z was closed only due to a friend in a large queue shouting me and asking what was happening and why the gate closed. Upon this prompt I spoke to a number of stewards who, to be fair, didn't know much. The local stewards seemed young and inexperienced. Spoke to an LFC steward who did inform me that they were trying to liaise closely with UEFA to open gates but with little success. He stated they were just ignoring our advice.'

'... there were no stewards around – no-one to tell us why the gate was closed, when it might open, whether the game was still going to kick off on time.'

Police were absent from key flashpoints such as the Metro station on arrival and on routes leading from the exit gates to the main stations after the match (other than the underpass). In the data, a search for '*no police*' shows that it appears on 72 occasions across 55 statements. In 9 instances it collocates with '*no stewards*' in constructions like '*no police or stewards controlling the line*'; '*no police or steward presence outside the actual gates*'.

Additionally, the phrase '*no stewards*' occurs 85 times in 70 statements. In 24 instances it appears alongside a phrase asserting the absence of police, e.g. '*there were still no stewards and police*', '*there was no stewarding/police assistance or signage*'. Other constructions also capture the absence of police (e.g. '*I didn't see any police presence*'). It is clear the absence of stewards and police was a thematic concern.

Not or mis-directed by stewards or police

In 73 statements (15%) fans state that no information was provided and neither was it forthcoming when sought. When fans sought information about their whereabouts, police or stewards often responded incorrectly or deliberately to misguide fans. In the latter case it was often into danger:

'As the game ended we left and headed out. The police had once again created a bottle neck by turnstile Z.'

'When the police moved, unknowingly we were at the top of around 12-15 concrete steps. To me, it was as though they were hoping we'd fall down.[...] Then after all that, they fed us to the gangs they knew were waiting.'

'... me and a mate walked through the wrong fan park at the ground and were amongst the Real Madrid fans, as when we asked the stewards outside they sent us there knowing we were Liverpool fans.'

'We arrived by taxi at 18:00, asked Police for directions/help and were sent (what turned out to be) the wrong direction, with the officers parting words of 'Hala Madrid''

A statement of particular concern noted that on leaving the stadium the only exit point *'forced [fans] to walk down a ramp in the opposite direction to the metro station, only to have to double back and walk much further amongst the local gangs who were in the streets'*.

Negative behaviour of stewards/ officials

Eighty-nine statements (18%) identify stewards *'actively fighting local youths and men'*, *'dragging'* fans through gates aggressively, taking tickets from fans at the gates and *'running away'*. In one case, a steward used their fingernail to scratch off the bar code on the tickets presented by a fan: *'... as we got close to what looked like a check point we were filtered in one by one a girl asked for my ticket so i gave her my 3 [tickets] and she took her FINGER NAIL and tried to rub of my bar code i asked her not to as it would not scan but the police offered a stick to me as an option so i just let her do her thing.'*

Other fans note how security *'pushed'* them around to prevent them filming violent behaviour by police and stewards. As noted previously, fans witnessed stewards letting locals without tickets into the stadium: *'... they employed local 20yo's who let their mates in or accepted 50 euro bungs.'*

A fan stated that a steward controlled entry by threatening tear gas: *'Once calm again, I approached a UEFA steward at the top of the ramp who advised 'If you have a ticket, we won't use gas''*

Behaviour of locals, police and fans

The following categories relate to the presence and actions of locals, police response and conduct, and expressions of negative fan behaviour.

Category	N=statements	% overall statements
Marked presence of local youths	286	59%
Locals jumping fences to enter ground	204	42%
Locals thieving/pickpocketing	212	44%
Locals attacking	171	35%
Police action negative	257	53%
Police inaction	199	41%
Police action positive	14	3%
Riot police	204	42%
LFC fans' negative behaviour	73	15%

Marked presence of local youths

According to 286 (59%) statements, local youths - described variously as 'African descent', 'Algerian', 'French Algerian', 'African immigrants', 'Middle eastern ethnicity', 'North African' - were intimidating and often violent, at and in the stadium and in the journeys between the metro stations and the stadium. Horrific reports document stabbings, ambushes, physical attacks, thefts, and organized crime carried out by locals, described in some statements as 'feral'. Locals congregated outside the ground 'picking off' fans, particularly if they appeared vulnerable, before robbing them of their possessions (from tickets to phones and passports). Worryingly, fans report that they appeared to be organised gangs, some accounts suggesting that they worked in collusion with police:

'There was 100's of 'Locals', [...] African gangs. They were more organised than the police. What I saw from my position makes it very hard to avoid the thought that this was somehow pre-planned with the police. I saw people slashed with knives 6 feet in front of cops, they laughed. I saw people mugged 6 feet in front of cops, they laughed. I saw one guy knocked unconscious (the sound of his head hitting the concrete will stay with me forever), they laughed. Every now and then they would 'charge' at the 'Locals', charge is barely a word I would use, slowly walk towards them is more accurate. They would then disperse, the cops would then leave the area, and the 'locals' would return. I saw around 5 people knocked unconscious, 2 slashed and countless robbed, literally nothing was done. Nothing.'

Locals jumping fences to enter ground

This category refers to explicit mention of locals forcing entry, that is, where they were witnessed climbing gates or pushing through turnstiles or gates when the latter were opened momentarily. There were 204 statements (42%) that commented on forced entry by French locals:

'I got to the front of the gate and was pushed through. Three locals were trying to get through. One of them had been hanging around near me for a while. One of them got in with a ticket that had so obviously been swiped. Another tried to scan a photo of a ticket on his phone. Another had a fake ticket. The two were hovering at the turnstiles looking at people about to swipe. It felt like they were waiting for the right moment to run in. I quickly scanned my ticket and walked through.'

Many statements also commented on locals standing in the Liverpool end and occupying Liverpool fans' seats. Liverpool fans reported having no choice but to sit on the stairwell or find somewhere else to sit. Stewarding had broken down. As locals scaled fencing, forced gates and were allowed in by stewards, riot police 'stormed' into the crowd discharging tear gas and pepper spray:

'About 15 minutes later at 7:15 (have checked messages to my friends back home) standing on the concourse looking back out, we saw around 10-15 people jump the turnstiles at once and sprint to the stadium. It was immediately obvious these were not English Liverpool fans but locals. No colours or scarfs at all. The stewards caught the majority and then riot police immediately stormed towards block B entrance.'

Locals thieving/ pickpocketing

Entrance gates were closed as a response to forced entry by locals. Thus, queueing Liverpool fans were locked out, at the mercy of gangs for lengthy periods. As already noted, Liverpool fans were attacked often in front of passive police officers. In 212 statements (44%), fans report that they were robbed by locals, sometimes violently. Local 'pickpockets' stole iPads, bags, wallets, tickets, phones, money, and watches, often ripping them from owners' wrists, along with jewellery from their necks.

Locals attacking

Disturbing statements detailed thefts and physical attacks. In these statements, 171 fans (35%) report experiencing or witnessing attacks by locals. For example, a woman accompanied by two adult sons was slashed across the hand as she tried to protect her son from violent locals who had pushed him to the ground and robbed him. Quoted previously in this Report, the following passage is from her other son's statement:

'On walking over the bridge [after the match], my brother went on approx 10 yards ahead as I was a little behind with my mum due to the length of the day taking a bit of a toll on her. My mum alerted me that two youths were looking at my brother suspiciously. As I looked up I seen them both go over to him, initially pretending to be friendly. They quickly then attempted to take his phone out of his hand whilst dragging him to the floor. I attempted to run over to help but found myself being pushed down the stairs on the bridge by another individual injuring my arms and ankle. My mum rushed over to help my brother but was slashed across her hand with a knife. More helpful locals then appeared on the bridge and the individuals who attempted the mugging ran away ... An ambulance was called and we were taken to hospital in Paris. We have since discovered that both my brother and I have a fractured ankle, my mum has had her wound to her hand treated and has broken two fingers.'

Locals infiltrated the crowd and sexually assaulted women. Fans in the crowd bore witness to 'groping' by locals, detailing the distress of females 'groped' in the crush. A woman notes that she was 'punched, groped and my hair pulled' on her journey from the ground to the station.

Police action negative/ police inaction

Two categories were established to demonstrate the range of inappropriate police behaviour. 'Police inaction' was specified in 199 statements (41%) when police witnessed dangerous, unsafe, or criminal behaviour and chose not to intervene. Numerous fans commented on police standing by, watching, laughing, or ignoring attacks by locals. Thus, 'police inaction' extends to instances where police failed to control locals' criminality – in the words of one fan, '*turning a blind eye*' to assaults on fans.

When police actions are referenced, the statements are overwhelmingly negative. In fact, police action was evaluated negatively in 257 statements (53%). 'Negative police behaviour' constituted unprovoked heavy-handedness, unjustifiable force, threatening behaviour, and/or violence.

In some statements, police behaviour was more feared than that of attacking locals. The following is from a female fan, not an isolated statement, recounting her experience leaving the ground:

At the bridge the crowd [of fans exiting the stadium] was being funnelled through a small gap onto the bridge which was created by a parked police van. We had no choice but to join them. Our hearts sank when we realised that to get onto the foot bridge we'd have to walk through a line of French police. We were absolutely terrified. As we walked through the police one of them pushed my partner out of the way and rugby tackled a local man who was trying to walk towards the stadium whilst saying "My sister...". The police dragged the local man a few feet and then threw him back into the crowd. After walking through the line of police we immediately noticed that there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of local men on the bridge. Because the police had funnelled us onto the bridge we were in small groups in dribs and drabs which meant we (football fans) were greatly outnumbered by the scores of local men. I grabbed my partner's arm so that we weren't separated and told her to stay calm and try and walk close to the edge of the bridge, sticking close to the other football fans. This was without doubt the most terrifying experience of my life and I honestly thought we were going to be murdered. About 15 meters from the line of police the locals staged a fight to frighten the fans. Everyone was panicking trying to avoid the fight which also meant we were herded in the direction that the locals wanted us. Then about 25 meters along the bridge the locals started to stampede in the direction away from the stadium. At this point we thought the police were charging us which seemed more terrifying than the idea of the locals charging us. I told my partner not to run, we walked quickly with our heads down but did not run. The locals did this stampede tactic several more times along the length of the bridge. It wasn't easy to walk along the bridge as there were smashed glass bottles all over the floor. These were not here when we walked across the bridge on the way into the stadium. We were continuously being charged at by locals who were shouting and laughing. When we got to the bottom of the stairs at the end of the bridge we then had to walk under the flyover which was ring fenced in with only one small exit. There were more locals waiting to ambush us here. We walked through here and to a metro station (I don't know which one this was, we just jumped on the first metro we saw). We saw two people get mugged in the metro station. We managed to get on the second train that came.'

Another fan considered the presence of police on leaving the stadium more frightening than the threat posed by ‘local gangs’: *In any other city a police presence would be reassuring but not in Paris on Saturday, I would rather have asked the local gangs the way to the station. At least I stood a chance against them.*

The words used in the statements to describe police behaviour include ‘aggressive’, ‘hostile’, ‘confrontational’, ‘brutal’, ‘barbaric’. Thirty-two statements specified police conduct as ‘heavy-handed’.

Positive police action

Only fourteen statements (3%) referred to positive behaviour of police officers. Thirteen statements note that some individual police officers showed empathy or tried to assist fans amidst the chaos. One statement documents help the following day at a police station after the fan had been assaulted and robbed at the ground. Some individual officers assisted fans whose tickets failed to scan at the gate by allowing them entry. Yet, even these statements condemn general police behaviour as negative:

‘I managed to get through the crush and I got into the stadium at 20.57. A police officer even apologised to me as I entered the stadium ... After the game I went back to the Novotel where I had arranged to meet friends. We attempted to walk down the stairs in Photo A where we were met with riot police who seemed determined to make it difficult for us to leave.’

‘We moved around various points but met the same response [by police]; either silence or told the stadium was closed. A number of the police just laughed and mocked or gestured to their batons. We finally found a policeman who was amenable and he took us to a female steward who was prepared to take us into the concourse.’

Riot police

‘Riot police’ were mentioned in 205 (42%) of statements.

Riot police constituted the only institutionally sanctioned form of crowd management. They kettled fans without regard for their safety and meted out indiscriminate violence against peaceful fans enjoying a family event.

Liverpool fans’ negative behaviour

There were 73 statements (15%) that referenced what has been categorised as ‘negative fan behaviour’. However, it is important to contextualise this. The majority of these statements referred

to fans scaling fences to escape crushes at various gates. These actions were categorised as fans entering without tickets, therefore as 'negative behaviour', yet they were not presented in the statements as negative evaluations. For example, some fans were attacked by stewards or police having been chased and pushed back into the crush from which they were attempting to escape. Others trapped in the crowd for long periods climbed fences and 'got dragged back down':

'The queues just kept growing and growing and again the crushing. It got more compressed. We weren't that far from the turnstiles but they were all shut, no one going in. It was hot, uncomfortable, we couldn't hear any stadium announcements, we were just asking "what's going on?" "why are we shut out?" Some people every now and then would jump the fences, none wearing Liverpool shirts but I expect some were LFC fans. (I am sure they got 'dealt with' the other side) Some who were LFC fans got dragged back down.'

'... moments before we eventually got to the line, they withdrew the stewards and police, effectively abandoning the ticket check outside the stadium perimeter. The result was a stampede. Mixed into this group were people without tickets (yes, some LFC fans) including hundreds of local youths.'

However, several fans noted the exemplary behaviour of LFC fans. For example: *'I never saw a single Liverpool fan do anything bad other than the odd one try to climb over the outer fence.'*

Feeling unsafe/ in danger/ fear

Category	N=statements	% overall statements
Expressions of fear/danger/feeling unsafe	318	66%
Sexual assault	6	1%
Crushing	227	47%
Never/ probably not returning (to Paris or EU matches)	85	18%
Positive conduct of Liverpool fans	See text	

Expressions of fear/ danger/ feeling unsafe

The majority of fans stated that they had experienced danger; 318 (66%) had feared for their lives, their possessions or their safety. Many more implied fear in relation to the threat of gangs, using terms not usually associated with attending an international sports event: 'warzone', 'violence', 'lawlessness', and 'panic'. Fans witnessed and reported others in distress: crying, vomiting, scared, screaming, distraught, and inconsolable in their reaction to the terror confronting them.

They recalled that they had never before experienced the intensity of fear generated by the police and local gangs. A health and safety officer attending the match stated that UEFA's organisation 'lacked' even rudimentary 'processes and control measures to ensure the most basic safety management' and was 'frankly outrageous'. Fans were assaulted, often simultaneously, by locals,

police, and stewards. The very institutions present to protect their safety posed the most dangerous threat.

It was a threat that extended to the Fan Zone where fans, often entire families on vacation, became victims of police intimidation and the enforcement of bottlenecks, extending to the use of tear gas without provocation.

The fans' emotional responses and reflective intensity of feeling can be gauged in the regularity that the word or intensifier '*absolutely*' occurred in their statements: 111 times. As a once in a lifetime opportunity for fans attending one of the most important football matches on the annual calendar, the expectation would be that '*absolutely*' would correlate to a positive sentiment, such as 'absolutely amazing'. Yet, of its 111 occurrences in the statements, 109 were negative (e.g. '*carnage*' / '*catastrophic*' / '*shambolic*' / '*disgraceful*' / '*disgusted*' / '*gutted*' / '*infuriated*' / '*mobbed*' / '*no idea*' / '*no organisation*' / '*no police presence*')

The intensity of fear is well illustrated by the following quote:

'We got close to the entrance but simply could not move and people were having to jump up onto the wall and into the concourse. People in the concourse were shouting for people to stop jumping in and telling people to go back ... it was horrible and frightening. There was a lady in front of me who seemed like she was having a breakdown due to the sheer fear she had, at the same time an older lady was behind me crying. People were panicking and scared. It got to a point where I was facing the wall and had no option but to help someone up and then follow suit, otherwise I might not be typing this feedback.'

Sexual Assault

Five fans reported body searches that appear to have constituted a sexual assault, with two fans stating that the searches to which they were subjected were intimate and invasive, leaving them feeling uncomfortable. Male stewards searched women, despite protestations and physical attempts to refuse the search:

'... the security check was a thorough check of bags. I was frisked and I mean frisked! It was more like sexual assault! Hands literally down the front of my pants. The boys in our group had their scrotums felt for stashed contraband!'

Another woman stated:

'I went through first and was told to move to the left. I thought this was where females were being searched. A male steward told me to stand next to him to be searched. I asked him where the women were and he said 'no women' and he began to give me a rub down. I was shocked to be

searched by a male steward, but just stood there with my arms out. All I wanted to do was to get into the stadium as quickly as possible. My friend told the steward that she was not willing to be touched by a man but he physically pulled her towards him and began rubbing her down. She refused to lift her arms, but this didn't stop him. She protested throughout. I just stood there and watched, stunned.'

One fan reports a sexual assault while waiting to enter through the gate.

Crushing

There were 519 references to 'crush' in 227 statements. Thus 47% of fans directly experienced being crushed. Some stated that they had survived the fatal crush at Hillsborough, triggering traumatic memories of the 1989 crush, some with very physical consequences such as panic attacks and vomiting.

As the crush worsened it became clear that stewards 'had no apparent plan, certainly no communication, and certainly no respect. Pushing my face, my chest, and my throat, with no concept of what things were like for me, just pressing me backwards into a crowd I could not possibly control, and which should never have been allowed to build up in this way.'

Crushes occurred due to restricted or blocked entry, at bottlenecks created by police around the ground and at gates where fans had been waiting in huge crowds for up to three hours. Gates were opened intermittently and then closed again, causing 'surges'. Forty-nine statements refer to 'surges' and four feared or anticipated a surge. The pressure was exacerbated by locals who 'stormed' the gates, crushing waiting fans. Fans report resorting to climbing metal fencing and barriers to escape the danger of crushes and surges. Some were forced to choose between being trapped in a dangerous crush or stepping into traffic on a busy road. The following excerpt typifies the experience of many who experienced the dangerous situation at the gates:

'At approximately 8.55pm, with what we thought were only five minutes remaining until kick-off (as the by then confirmed delay had not been announced outside the stadium), one single entrance door of Gate B was opened by stewards inside. As would be expected, the crowd began to move forwards towards this entrance. Both of us had, by chance ended up quite close to the open entrance. There did not appear to be any ticket checks taking place at all. Instead, due to the movement of people behind us, people began to be squeezed against the fence surrounding the stadium and inside the entry point to Gate B, while stewards attempted to push people back. We were at this stage separated slightly; one of us was carried further forwards, slightly inside the entrance, while the other was pinned further back.

At this point, panic descended very quickly upon the crowd. One young man next to one of us appeared to break down in a vocal panic attack, and there were shouts and screams towards the stewards and now advancing security inside Gate B, as well as toward the crowd behind who were continuing to move forward. Still no attendance or stewarding was happening. Throughout this period, both of us lost control of our movement, forced in place by the crowd and being squeezed increasingly closely together. At this point, perhaps aware of the escalating situation, the stewards

and security who were blocking the way to Gate B moved out of the way, leading to a rush of people forwards into the space. Both of us were included in this rush, carried forward by the motion of the crowd into the turnstile section just inside the opened Gate B entrance.

Just as both of us had been forced into this small turnstile section, a squad of heavily armoured police rushed towards the gate from inside, clearly intending to push back fans. We were directly in front of this group, who raised their batons as if to strike us and the people around us. The sight of this caused more panic behind us, as people began to move even further forwards. One of us was pushed up painfully against a turnstile and began to fall backwards over it; for a moment, it seemed certain that we would fall to the ground. The other was pushed up firmly against the side of the Gate B entrance, which security were now attempting to pull shut, while waving batons around freely, seeming to strike some people. At this stage, both of us were entirely out of control of events, unable to control our movement and unable to breathe clearly, barely able to make noise, with a squad of heavily armoured police continually raising weapons towards us. Inevitably, during these moments, a serious fear of what would happen next descended.'

The police and stewards' response to the danger of crushing at gates oscillated between doing nothing and ridiculing fans. While crushes posed a threat to life, many fans commented that police officers and stewards simply '*laughed*' in their faces:

'Everyone was calm in the colour red, until the crush started by which time I witnessed a woman standing next to me who we had to try and lift out ourselves as she had a panic attack. Our bodies were crammed, pushing together, with no movement whatsoever and police officers continually laughing whenever they were being asked what was happening.'

Never / probably not returning to Paris or EU matches

Following their distressing experiences of survival in Paris, 85 fans (18%) stated that they would probably or definitely never return to Paris or attend another European away match. The reasons given include: '*the police were shocking*', '*the authorities let us down*', '*I genuinely feared for my life*', '*I don't trust foreign police anymore*', '*we genuine fans always get treated like rubbish*', and '*without doubt, one of the worst experiences of my life*'.

Positive conduct of Liverpool fans

Although not a distinct category (because of the wide variation in expressing it), it is important to note the prevalence of references to Liverpool fans' stoicism, restraint, physical and emotional support in the face of antagonism and danger at the Fan Park and the stadium. A clear majority of the statements refer explicitly and implicitly to fans' altruism, commending their resolve, patience, and conduct in the face of life-threatening crushes, lawless policing and antagonism from those in charge of managing the entry points at the stadium.

The statements show that, as the crowds intensified, fans took a degree of control; self-policing, supporting each other, and saving lives. They assisted the vulnerable, protected children and generally raised spirits, while they were fearful and under threat from the authorities and violent local gangs:

'I have never attended a football match where I felt so at risk, both in terms of my personal safety and those around me. I truly believe if it was not for Liverpool fans there would have been a very serious tragedy. People would have died. The reason we are lucky that it is Liverpool fans is that we are used to being treated like animals abroad and unfortunately people have become injured to it, which shouldn't be the case ... I believe if that was a less experienced group of supporters many would have panicked, got injured, or worse. That is unacceptable. Liverpool fans saved lives that day. We did not cause any of the problems. In fact, we prevented a tragedy.'

'Our fans were being remarkably patient despite the complete lack of communication. Looking into the ground you could see 50-60 people at the steps of the stadium just watching what was happening. We helped a couple of older and disabled fans in between the fences where there was a small amount of space.'

'Once the gate opened, I was so terrified at what might happen but, as our fans had been the whole time, we acted calmly and managed to squeeze through this ONE tiny gate that they opened for all our fans.'

As the following statement demonstrates, fans' altruism risked personal safety and jeopardised their chances of entering the stadium:

'... groups of Liverpool fans stayed back [at gates] to try to tell the officials what they might cause by closing all the gates and giving these instructions [to go en masse to a single gate]. Others shouted at the back of the crowd to stop more people from joining. When the crowd got overrun due to officials continuously directing all fans to one single gate, fans climbed on to food truck roofs and helped vulnerable people up with them to avoid the crush. Men held back the crowd to let crying women and children get through the single turnstile that was eventually opened ... The actions of Liverpool fans outside that stadium saved lives. Which is why it stings with injustice to hear the blame from UEFA, from French leaders and from opposition supporters who, when faced with the same situation, may not have been so lucky.'

Part 3

**Media
Analysis**

PART THREE

'WITH THEIR OWN EYES': THE MEDIA

'It's a miracle nobody died.' This quote is typical of media coverage of the chaotic scenes before and after the Champions League Final. Uniquely the world's press and broadcasters of all shades of political opinion share the view that the French authorities, police and UEFA are collectively culpable. They have been scorned for their attempts to blame innocent fans.

Repeatedly, the horrors of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster are evoked. As discussed earlier in the Report, 97 Liverpool fans were killed and many injured and traumatised. For decades the police, stadium owners and local politicians hid their mismanagement by blaming supporters. Whole sections of the media were complicit in sustaining a profound deceit that protected powerful interests and scapegoated those who died and those who survived.

In the immediate aftermath of Paris the media were not so gullible. By the time UEFA announced on screens inside the Stade de France that the kick-off was being delayed due to the late arrival of fans, journalists at the stadium were already reporting a significantly different story via their accounts. They witnessed what had happened with their own eyes.

Tariq Panja of the *New York Times* noted his concerns regarding crowd mismanagement stretching over 'three and a half hours'.²⁰ Repeatedly he cited the 'chaos' including tear gassing of innocent men, women and children, the absence of sufficient, trained stewards and the failure to tackle local, St Denis youths who had caused mayhem. Writing as events unfolded, he exposed the apparent fallacy of widespread fake tickets:

'Police here have tear-gassed fans outside Stade de France who have spent more than 90 minutes trying to enter. These are fans with tickets but because of a system failure have been unable to enter. Nasty scenes.'

'UEFA blames problems at the Stade de France on "thousands of fans" who it said tried to enter with "fake tickets" in the Liverpool side of the stadium. Doesn't refer to the locals who were ticketless and trying to scale barriers.'

'Big difference in what police on the ground and official narrative being spun [sic]. Police at stadium were saying trouble was result of largely local population trying to get into the stadium. Add this to shortage of manned and entrance gates and we got mayhem.'

While reporters recounted what they had personally experienced, the one exception was the broadcast rights holder, *BT Sport*, televising the match to a UK-wide audience. For all BT's multiple cameras and drones, they showed none of the mayhem outside. Television viewers throughout the UK - including anxious relatives of those who had travelled to Paris - were informed by presenter, Jake Humphrey, of UEFA's statement: that kick off was delayed 'because of the late arrival of Liverpool fans'. There was no further explanation.

Later, engaging in football chat while waiting for the delayed match to begin, Humphrey announced:

'I'm very sorry to tell you that a fan has come up onto our podium, in amongst the fans, and said that outside the stadium it is horrendous.'

²⁰ Tariq Panja, *New York Times* <https://tinyurl.com/y9dvzkrhttps7>

'He said that a huge number of Liverpool fans were tear-gassed by the French police, including families and children. His eyes were streaming. He looked distraught.'

'These are only patchy bits of information but we can confirm that tear gas was used outside the stadium this evening, there has been a delay to kick-off.'

The BT coverage provided no further detail. Once the game kicked off, however, Kaveh Solhekol, *Sky Sports News*, provided a detailed account from outside the stadium of the ordeal fans had undergone. He described their journey from Metro station to the stadium via bottlenecks and kettling in an underpass, and then being tear gassed by the police. He concluded:

*'I'm just hoping the police operation is more effective for when they leave than it was when they arrived.'*²¹

His hope was in vain. According to the coverage, the violence after the match was in many cases far worse. Supporters had to run a gauntlet of police with truncheons and tear gas and also local gangs with clubs and knives.

For *The Athletic*, Simon Hughes interviewed fifty fans who recounted the horror they had faced:

'From there, all he remembers is being pinned to the floor, with several of the men on top of him as they tried to take his valuables. When he realised they had his wife by the hair, he managed to fight them off. With blood on his face, he gave chase with his son.'

*"It was like *The Walking Dead*," he tells *The Athletic*.*

For Paul Simpson, a Liverpool fan from Sheffield, the worst part of the whole day was now. "There were local gangs trying to mug Liverpool supporters and the police were absolutely not interested," ... He is not the only person to describe the situation as being like a scene from "The Purge".

Heading in the opposite direction was Dan Davies, to Charles de Gaulle airport. He says the train windows were smashed by gangs of locals. The man sitting next to him had his wallet stolen and he caught someone trying to steal his. "It was the most unsafe I've ever felt in my life".

Simon Hughes also reported police attacks on fans as they left the Fan Zone, where those without match tickets had watched the game on a big screen:

'Shaun Bowden, from Barry in Wales ... was ushered in another direction but that exit proved to be blocked as well by police who turned him around before using tear gas "completely unprovoked with kids and elderly people amongst us".'

"As we turned back around with our eyes streaming and throats burning, we were met with a crowd of people coming in the opposite direction who had also been tear-gassed," he says. "None of us knew where to go. I stopped a policeman and asked him which way the exit was as we got gassed one way and then the other way. He just smiled and shrugged at me".

In the early hours of the following morning, social media was filled with fans' camera phone footage of police indiscriminately pepper spraying the innocent as they tried to enter the ground. It went around the world.²²

Print journalists had put together their own considered analyses of what they had witnessed. Dan Austin compiled his account for *The Metro* as he travelled back to Liverpool:

'Children trembling with fear, their eyes streaming from an arid yellow wave of tear gas billowing through the barriers. An elderly man crumpling in on himself as he suffers a panic attack in a crushing crowd and cannot move. Women being kettled by state-employed bullies with reinforced shields.'

²¹ <https://tinyurl.com/3bxtpat2>

²² <https://t.co/pqwZZg4O1Y>

*No, not in a riot, a brawl, or a war. This was the UEFA Champions League final in Paris on Saturday evening.*²³

Such powerful reporting put Austin, a Liverpoolian journalist, eyewitness and fluent French speaker, in demand from the broadest range of French media in the coming days.

Hillsborough survivor Kevin Cowley, ticket in hand, was photographed being manhandled by police. It was beamed around the world by *Mail Online*. He was interviewed by *The Guardian's* Andy Hunter:

"I am in pieces again," said Cowley. His voice, breaking with emotion, testifies to that. "It took me years to get over Hillsborough and I feel like I've just relived Hillsborough again. Saturday was horrendous. I want to vocalise this because I spent so many years bottling up Hillsborough and that did so much to me that I have to do something this time. I want to talk."

*"We arrived at an underpass where the police kettled everybody. It was getting tighter and tighter. I hate crowds, I can't do them. I have a mechanism for Anfield where I won't get in that position. I had to climb over a fence because it was getting so tight, along with people of all ages. Then we came to another underpass where the police had parked vans across the road. The sheer weight of people meant I was forced against the bonnet of a police van"*²⁴

Two weeks before the Champions League Final the *Mail on Sunday* had condemned Liverpool supporters for booing the national anthem at Wembley.²⁵ Now the newspaper was prompt to defend the fans. From Stade de France Rob Draper reported:

*'UEFA's organisation was again in the spotlight and the blame game began on Saturday night, with French Interior Minister Gerard Darmanin laying the responsibility with ticketless 'British fans', apparently unaware or ignoring how the police force's own disorganisation and ineptitude had started the initial bedlam.'*²⁶

On *BBC Sport* Liverpool player, Andy Robertson described the match organisation as 'a shambles', pouring scorn on the claims by France's Interior and Sports Ministers (their statements supported by UEFA) that thousands of Liverpool fans had fake tickets:²⁷

'Robertson says he had given a ticket to a friend but he was denied entry for the game which Real Madrid won 1-0. "One of my mates got told it was a fake which I assure you it wasn't"'

In Germany *Deutsche Welle* was also sceptical about thousands of fake tickets,²⁸ citing a tweet from its reporter, Matt Pearson:

*'DW journalist Matt Pearson was in Paris to cover the match and witnessed the chaos unfolding at the stadium, highlighting the lack of adequate organization.'*²⁹

This was immediately followed by Pearson's report, *What Went Wrong At The Champions' League Final*, in which he quoted a tweet from Merseyside Police whose officers were deployed at the match:

*'Can only describe it as the worst European match I've ever worked or experienced. I thought the behaviour of the fans at the turnstiles was exemplary in shocking circumstances. You were not late 100%.'*³⁰

23 <https://tinyurl.com/39yj3xde>

24 <https://tinyurl.com/bdz98zjv>

25 <https://tinyurl.com/52mnu6ch>

26 <https://tinyurl.com/mr47x9k>

27 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/61621930>

28 <https://tinyurl.com/52b6v7ph>

29 <https://tinyurl.com/2p8x9epe>

30 <https://tinyurl.com/2p84ydtm>

Pearson also included comments from the lawyer Pierre Barthulemy of Football Supporters Europe:

“I really don’t understand how they [those in charge of security] could mess things up so badly,” Barthulemy told DW. “And the worst part is that it happened and they needed two hours to understand.”

*“I stood at Gate Y for an hour and I only saw about 10 people with fake tickets being arrested by the police,” Barthulemy told DW. “All the hundreds, maybe thousands, of fans still outside the stadium at this time had valid tickets. And when they showed these valid tickets, they got teargas as an answer”.*³¹

By Monday, thirty-six hours after the match, France’s premier circulation newspaper, *Le Monde*, was also sceptical of the French Ministers’ joint claims:

*‘Despite the damning videos and distressing images, and against all evidence, British fans were singled out as the only ones responsible for the fiasco.’*³²

In fact, as the French Government later conceded, British fans were not responsible for the ‘disaster’ which had been ‘broadcast across the world, viewed by some 400 million viewers in total.’

The social media sports and entertainment site, *Joe.co.uk*, ran alarming accounts from fans who had returned home:

*“It’s a miracle that nobody died”... “He’s got three police officers with guns pointed at him.”*³³

Merseyside’s Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram, shared his experiences. Trapped with thousands of others in the underpass on the stadium approach, his pocket was picked by French youths. After Liverpoolians told the police he was a senior politician, Rotheram was led into the stadium. There he confronted Aleksander Ceferin, UEFA’s president. He recounted the meeting to Paul Joyce of *The Times*:

‘He [Ceferin] said: “You don’t know how difficult it has been to organise this in just a few months.” He said they killed themselves to get this game on, and I just appealed to him and said: “Don’t kill the fans outside”.

*I literally had my hands together saying please try to do something. It didn’t even fall on deaf ears. I said: “You need to do something.” They said I was being disrespectful because I said it again. Ceferin said to me this conversation is over and I said: “No it is not because people could get injured outside”.*³⁴

Steve Rotheram stated in an interview for the *BBC*: *“The pickpockets were more professionally organised than UEFA or the police”.*³⁵

Clifford Stott, a Keele University professor and an authority on crowd management, gave his damning assessment to the *Liverpool Echo*:

‘The evidence we are seeing is increasingly painting a picture about extremely poor crowd management on the part, particularly of the French police. The French police are notoriously bad at crowd management, their over-reliance on tear gas and distance weaponry.

It seems to be that a lot of the key decisions in terms of restricting the movement of fans towards the stadium itself and then closing gates around the turnstiles, restricting movement even further

31 <https://tinyurl.com/5n87tyf4>

32 <https://tinyurl.com/5y58cj8t>

33 <https://tinyurl.com/mr3rjf39>

34 <https://tinyurl.com/2s2hnj9d>

35 <https://tinyurl.com/y73wvjhr>

and then firing tear gas into an already densely crowded area, all speak of very poor decisions on behalf of the police.’³⁶

He reiterated these points in more detail on *Sky Sports News*.³⁷

France 24 reported that the chaos had raised doubts about France staging the 2024 Olympics:

‘After a crisis meeting at the sports ministry on Monday, French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin defiantly insisted that ticket scams and the bad behaviour of Liverpool fans were to blame.

What has been confirmed is a massive, industrial-scale and organised fraud in fake tickets ... this was the root cause of the delay to the match,’ Darmanin said.’

By now, France’s Interior and Sports Ministers had presented a figure on the Liverpool fans they insisted had forged tickets: thirty or forty thousand.³⁸

Under the headline, *‘Why simple maths proves French ministers’ blame of Liverpool fans cannot be true’*, Dan Austin writing in *The Metro*, examined the figures and concluded they did not add up.³⁹

For the *New York Times*, Tariq Panja’s investigation arrived at a very different total for fake tickets than the tens of thousands claimed by the French Government:

‘... according to official numbers reviewed by The New York Times, the exact number of fake tickets intercepted by stewards manning the entrance gates was far lower: 2,589, to be exact.’⁴⁰

Even this figure was open to contention given the emerging evidence, presented earlier in this Report, that ticket machines gave multiple false readings on genuine tickets.

In a letter leaked to the *Liverpool Echo*, Liverpool FC’s chairman, Tom Werner, demanded an apology from the French Sports Minister, Amelie Oudea-Costera, stating that he was *‘in utter disbelief* that she had blamed the Club for failing to control supporters.⁴¹

Liverpool FC’s chief executive, Billy Hogan, claimed that the comments by the French Interior Minister and by the Sports Minister were *‘disgraceful’*. He demanded an independent investigation.

The French authorities were further undermined when Real Madrid requested information about why their fans, who had approached the Stade de France from a different direction, also had suffered during ‘unfortunate events’ before, during and after the match. The *BBC* reported:

‘They also want to know why the Stade de France was chosen for the game and who is “responsible for leaving the fans abandoned and defenceless”’

“Football has transmitted an image to the world which is far away from the values and goals which it should pursue,” said a Real Madrid statement.’⁴²

Hugh Schofield of the *BBC* described in detail the horrors suffered by Liverpool fans and suggested the French Government’s position was being dictated by concern over impending elections:

‘For them, the real story was less the failures of organization (though these undoubtedly existed) and certainly not hooliganism by Liverpoolians (of which there was next to no evidence) - but rather the eruption of more thuggery from the run-down high-immigration areas around Saint-Denis.

36 <https://tinyurl.com/22x89d23>

37 <https://tinyurl.com/tpzwcs5z>

38 <https://tinyurl.com/em2efv3r>

39 <https://tinyurl.com/bdz2bar3>

40 <https://tinyurl.com/44t56h3c>

41 <https://tinyurl.com/mn4bzj9b>

42 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/61681762>

More outrageous yet was the government's clear reluctance to call this out, for fear (according to critics) of alienating centre-left opinion by "stigmatising" the people of the Paris suburbs.

*Little wonder that far-right leader Marine Le Pen is using the fiasco to galvanise her electorate ahead of the parliamentary vote.'*⁴³

In his rush to judgement, France's Interior Minister, Gérald Darmanin, was one of the first authority figures to blame Liverpool supporters and praise the police. His message, however, was roundly rejected by the French media and beyond. *Liberation's* front page carried a photograph of Darmanin as Pinnochio, elongating his nose.⁴⁴

When, five days after the Final, Darmanin appeared before a Senate hearing his credibility was shredded. Dan Austin in the *Metro* examined the political backgrounds of Darmanin and also the Sports Minister, Amelie Oudea-Costera, concluding that both were increasingly unpopular members of President Macron's coalition government.

The Francophone Austin had become the go-to Liverpoolian journalist in the French media and was welcomed as a perceptive if understandably incensed commentator. He stated:

*'In media appearances I have made in France across the course of the week on major networks including France Info, France 4, Canal+, BFMTV, presenters and guests have nodded when I have called the claims made by ministers physically impossible and untrue. They are asking questions about the severity of the trauma some fans have suffered, and the danger of a major diplomatic incident breaking out between the United Kingdom and France.'*⁴⁵

In the Senate on 1st June, Darmanin accepted that the organisation of the final was flawed yet he still insisted that there had been 30,000 or 40,000 ticketless Liverpool fans who had arrived at the stadium. *Le Monde* reported his comments, noting that he had produced no evidence supporting his figures:

"The negative impact of this game is a scar to our national pride and it is obvious that things should have been better organized," he said. "Did we avoid the worst? Yes. Could we have anticipated more? No doubt about it"

UEFA commissioned an 'independent' report into the Paris Final. Liverpool Football Club stated its reservations regarding its independence. In *The Guardian*, David Conn quoted Liverpool's Chief Executive demanding an inquiry rather than a review:

*"Our objective in calling for this independent investigation was and still is to ensure that all the relevant facts are listened to, all the relevant parties are listened to, the truth is established and the lessons are learned so this never happens again".*⁴⁶

On 1st June, at Wembley, UEFA's president Aleksander Ceferin, enjoyed the Finalissimo, a match between Italy and Argentina. He was eager to praise Lionel Messi but when asked on *BeIn Sports* about Paris, he made a sharp exit without responding to the question.⁴⁷

On 3rd June, six days after the Paris Final, and following Real Madrid's statement that their supporters also had also suffered, UEFA issued a 'sincere apology' to fans. The *Liverpool Echo* noted:

⁴³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-61685718>

⁴⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/ypdrmuat>

⁴⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/4ftyrdzt>

⁴⁶ <https://tinyurl.com/562k4a3e>

⁴⁷ <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8baw8w>

‘However, the statement released by UEFA on Friday evening makes no mention of reviewing events after the match outside the stadium, nor the misleading message emblazoned on the screens inside the Stade de France initially blaming supporters for the delayed kick-off.’⁴⁸

In *The Times* Paul Joyce reported that Liverpool had questioned the appropriateness of the UEFA appointment of the chair of its ‘independent’ panel:

‘One of the points raised relates to the choice of Dr Tiago Brandão Rodrigues to lead the report. Liverpool are keen to know more about why the member of the Portuguese parliament was selected and whether he has links with Uefa.’

Dr Rodrigues has worked closely in the past with Tiago Craveiro, who served as the chief executive of the Portuguese Football Federation for ten years before moving to Uefa in May to act as a senior adviser to the governing body’s president, Aleksander Ceferin.’⁴⁹

Within weeks there were serious misgivings regarding the independence of several of the appointments to the UEFA Panel, not least the two assistants to Rodrigues. All three had past close associations with UEFA. In *The Guardian*, David Conn noted ‘*further concerns about the independence and governance of the review*’.⁵⁰

Within a week of the Final most of the media were united in their assessment of what had happened in Paris. For the French authorities and for UEFA the media verdict was damning. *Le Monde* published a ten-minute video capturing the chaos outside the Stade de France, explaining:

‘Our investigation reveals that the presence of supporters without tickets or with fake tickets was real on May 28, and even expected by the French authorities. But it was not the cause for the incidents that occurred around the stadium. Thanks to hundreds of photos and videos of the events published on social media, Le Monde’s video investigation department was able to reconstruct the timeline and the routes taken by thousands of supporters that evening. The documents were shot as close as possible to the events and shed light on the erratic crowd control measures and the inadequate policing around the stadium.’⁵¹

In *The Mail on Sunday* Rob Draper concluded that, in fact, it had been Liverpool supporters’ memories of Hillsborough that had prevented a catastrophe:

‘The Mail on Sunday can reveal how close the chaotic scenes at the Champions League final and the breakdown of law and order came to causing fatalities after compiling a damning dossier of evidence on the controversial night in Paris.’

Liverpool supporters caught up in huge crushes outside the Stade de France last Saturday only avoided serious injury because the memory of the Hillsborough disaster prompted them to act with unusual caution, our investigation has been told by crowd control experts.’⁵²

Neil Atkinson of *The Anfield Wrap*, a Liverpool fans’ podcast, wrote in *The Observer* that it was crucial that journalists and sponsors had been victims and had shared the experience of ordinary fans:

‘It helps that there were phones, cameras, authority figures. It helps that former footballers, friends of footballers, politicians and executives were there. It helps that Sky Sports were incredible in capturing it and the supporters themselves better.’

48 <https://tinyurl.com/4j5nwyj6>

49 <https://tinyurl.com/2p9fac8v>

50 <https://tinyurl.com/jvvuk7zu>

51 <https://tinyurl.com/5ydxm8mk>

52 <https://tinyurl.com/mwf3ys9>

It helps that attendees of football events are now more middle class, better connected, own the means of production and know how to depict what happens to them in real time.’⁵³

In *The Sunday Times* Tom Roddy revealed that UEFA’s head of security, Zeljko Pavlica was a close personal friend of the UEFA President and had been best man at his wedding. Further, three major finals under the two men had resulted in chaos:

‘Within hours, Pavlica was witnessing the third Uefa event in the 14 months since he was promoted to head of security to descend into mayhem. After chaos at the finals of Euro 2020, at Wembley last July, and the Europa League in Seville last month, fans in Paris were packed into long queues and tear-gassed by French police as they attempted to gain entry to the stadium in ugly scenes that Uefa described as “frightening and distressing” in a public apology issued on Friday night.’⁵⁴

Martin Samuel in the *Mail* followed up: *‘Resign. That’s what Pavlica should do. Ceferin, too. They have had their chance, this dream team, and it is lucky nobody is dead.’⁵⁵*

As Samuel noted, a week before the Paris event UEFA had presided over the Europa League Final in Seville where Rangers fans complained bitterly over their treatment. In *The Athletic* Jordan Campbell reported they had been denied water inside the stadium and temperatures had approached forty degrees. Mismanagement had been apparent as they approached the ground.

“It was a shambles,” he said. “They just crowded us together like animals at every checkpoint and, in that heat, it was murder.

“There was no order to it all. The first point was just three police on horses not letting anyone through, the second one just a line of officers, the third was a steward to activate your ticket then the fourth was a police search where they chucked everything. That was before you got to the turnstile.

“I had a battery pack, a bottle of water, sunscreen and a charging cable taken from me. I asked why and showed him the ticket where it says battery packs are allowed but his only response was to shove me and say: ‘Put it in the bin’ ... It was bad. I’m amazed no one died.”⁵⁶

UEFA eventually issued an apology for the absence of water, but there was no reported UEFA response to the wider complaints.⁵⁷

Almost two weeks after the Paris Final, at the second French senate hearing, the Chief of Paris police, Didier Lallement admitted his force had failed but claimed that the police had no alternative but to use tear gas. The *BBC* reported:

“I am fully aware that people acting in good faith, even families, were tear-gassed,” he added. “For this I am very sorry. But there was no other way.”

He did however admit that the security operation was “obviously a failure,” saying “people were pushed around or attacked even though we owed them security.”⁵⁸

Lallement accepted that he had been responsible for the claim that there had been 40,000 forged tickets and accepted that he could have been wrong. *ESPN* reported:

“I might have been wrong on the figure of 30,000 to 40,000 thousand [fans with fake tickets] I gave to the [interior] minister,” Lallement said.

⁵³ <https://tinyurl.com/2p9b25j8>

⁵⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/4pvt8ebz>

⁵⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/ycy46zu3>

⁵⁶ <https://theathletic.com/3325038/2022/05/23/rangers-fans-seville-europa-league/>

⁵⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/exvt382t>

⁵⁸ https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/us_and_canada

“From an operational standpoint, it doesn’t change anything if it was around 40,000 or 30,000 or 20,000.”

French senators pushed Lallement to explain the empirical evidence behind the figure for fake tickets, which he said had come through reports from police officials on the ground.

“It was I who gave this figure to the Minister, and I fully stand by it,” he added.’⁵⁹

Senators expected to view extensive CCTV footage for evidence of the scenes outside the Stade de France. As *France 24* disclosed, they were outraged to discover that the footage had been destroyed:

‘Socialist vice-president of the Senate’s law commission David Assouline said on ... radio he was “stupefied” by the news, adding it demonstrated an “incredible lack of co-ordination” between the police and politicians.

Liverpool [Merseyside] Mayor Steve Rotheram, questioned by the Senate commission after the FFF delegation, said that he failed “to understand why the videos were destroyed”.

“We’re heading straight towards a state scandal,” the head of the opposition Republicans (LR) faction in the Senate, Bruno Retailleau, told RFI radio, adding the destruction of the CCTV footage was an “intentional act ... to make evidence disappear”.’⁶⁰

The vivid and shocking evidence of eye witnesses and their camera phones remained. Writing a substantial article in *The Athletic*, Daniel Taylor interviewed eight children, aged between nine and fourteen, and their parents. Their detailed testimonies about surviving the crush at the gates, tear-gas and attacks by the police had left them traumatised, *‘wary, frightened even, about going back to football’.*

Joe Blott, Chair of the fans’ organisation, *Spirit of Shankly*, stated:

“Watching those harrowing and distressing scenes of young children being pepper-sprayed or feeling the effects of tear gas is truly heart-breaking. Young kids on their parents’ shoulders, singing songs about their idols, pinching themselves that their parents had got them a ticket. A dream come true. A dream that turned into a nightmare.”⁶¹

Liverpool fans, haunted by the knowledge and emotion that Paris 2022 could so easily have been a repeat of Hillsborough in 1989, were determined the truth would not be denied. The media also recognised the connection with Hillsborough.

According to David Conn in the *Guardian*, the irony was that a leaked French government report suggested the calamitous Stade de France security operation had been based on an erroneous assumption about the causes of the Hillsborough disaster:

‘The French authorities deployed riot police in large numbers at the Champions League final in Paris apparently due to a misconceived association of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster with hooliganism, according to an official report produced for France’s Prime Minister.

The report by Michel Cadot, the French Sports Ministry’s delegate on major sporting events, appears to confirm many Liverpool supporters’ bleakest assumptions at the final, that the heavy-handed policing they suffered, including being teargassed, was informed by prejudice about their likely behaviour.’⁶²

⁵⁹ <https://tinyurl.com/46xbbf8m>

⁶⁰ <https://tinyurl.com/5n7uurf4>

⁶¹ <https://theathletic.com/3356972/2022/06/16/liverpool-tear-gas-children/>

⁶² <https://tinyurl.com/2nry5mjc>

Some weeks later David Conn in the Guardian claimed yet more evidence of UEFA's prejudiced mindset had emerged.

'Uefa's statement apparently blaming Liverpool supporters for causing the delay to the start of the Champions League final in Paris was pre-prepared a considerable time before the day of the match, the Guardian has learned.

The statement, put up on the big screen at the Stade de France, announced that a delay to the scheduled 9pm kick-off of the final between Liverpool and Real Madrid had been caused by "late arrival of fans".

*The statement ... was decided on in the planning stages of the match, as the one likely to be used in the event of kick-off having to be delayed.'*⁶³

In mid-July, the eve of Bastille Day, the French Senate concluded its inquiry, damning Ministers and police who'd sought to blame innocent fans (see Appendix 3). *Sky Sports* carried a comprehensive account headlined:

'Liverpool fans unfairly blamed for Paris fiasco to "divert attention", says French Senate'.⁶⁴

Once again the ignorance of police and political authorities had taken football supporters to the brink of catastrophe. Once again, they had combined to conceal the truth. On this occasion, however, the world's media was alive to the mischief and ready to call it out. But how could football's governing body allow the debacle of Paris under their banner and with their supervision? These are the most significant questions for the future of club football's biggest competition.

Meanwhile, the European Champions League has rolled on. Just eighty-eight days after the chaos outside Stade de France, UEFA officials and leaders of European football's leading clubs gathered in Istanbul at the draw for the Group Stage of the 2022-23 competition.

Under *The Times* headline, 'Shiny Champions League draw glossed over Paris pain for Liverpool fans', Henry Winter noted:

'A shiny, well-presented draw is all very well, and pleasing for broadcast paymasters, but Uefa cannot airbrush out of the picture the fact that the lives of Liverpool and Real Madrid supporters were put at risk outside the Stade de France. Fans were shamefully treated by police, targeted by local youths and ignored by an arrogant Uefa ...

... it needs remembering by Uefa that Paris almost ended in tragedy. Uefa has to take its attention away from the money men and appreciate those who take the Metro, the fans, the families, those who generate the atmosphere that TV pays so handsomely for.

It was astonishing to read the naivety of the Uefa technical report about Liverpool being tired in the final when denied the habitual adrenaline rush from their fans at the Stade de France. Why? Because many of their followers were either being pepper-sprayed or were demanding that gatecrashing locals vacate their seats ...

... Fans love to travel and explore, revelling in a sunny afternoon in Paris on May 28 and not expecting to be tear-gassed that evening when reaching the stadium as Uefa officials turned their backs and headed for the canapés.

⁶³ tinyurl.com/5n8c3w55

⁶⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/yz2ynmtv>

*It is important this message gets through to Nyon [UEFA Headquarters]. Uefa doesn't own football. Fans do. Ceferin is a temporary custodian and his credibility took a hammering in Paris. If he genuinely cares about the game, Ceferin should consult more with fans' organisations.'*⁶⁵

⁶⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/4vp7wexm>

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

METHODOLOGY

Process

On the evening of the Champions League Final delayed television and radio coverage, together with the stadium announcement that this was due to the 'late arrival' of fans, created immediate concern that what was happening outside the stadium was serious. This was particularly significant for Liverpool fans as it echoed allegations made against them in April 1989 at the time of the Hillsborough disaster which claimed 97 lives. The difference in Paris was that mobile phones, both orally and through cameras, were used to immediately tell a different story of the events as they unfolded. Media reporters, former players and the team's families in real time presented a counter narrative to the stadium screen announcement.

Consequently, on 30th May, Phil Scraton made an appeal via Twitter and other platforms inviting fans to submit their experiences of what had happened in Paris: in the City, going to and arriving at the stadium, delays in the approach to the Gates, police responses, assaults on fans (including deployment of tear gas), and the aftermath. It was intended that these contemporaneous accounts could inform a potential inquiry. The appeal resulted in the submission of 485 detailed statements in two weeks.

Realising the volume of information, he approached colleagues with knowledge and skills to analyse the statements. An Independent Panel was formed with the intention of writing a Report that would evidence fans' experiences. The statements were collated into files and sent to individual Panel members who had agreed to undertake qualitative and quantitative analysis of the information gathered. They each saved and worked on the statements using password protected devices. The range and focus of analysis is explained below.

A framework was developed to identify overarching themes: arrival in Paris; watching the game for those not in the Stade de France, particularly at the designated Fan Zone; travelling to the Stade de France; arrival at and access to the stadium; leaving the stadium; personal accounts of harms experienced by individuals/ families/ groups; experiences of specific groups; comparison with previous experiences of attending major events; reaction to media coverage and 'official' responses.

Panel members with specialisms in particular areas drafted sections of the Report. These drafts were shared and edited following feedback. The final Report is the result of collective work.

Methods

Members of the Independent Panel have a range of research skills central to the Report's analysis.

Qualitative analysis of statements

Every statement received was read and analysed to identify fans' experiences. These were categorised under broad topics: women; children and young people; parents; older people (over-60s); 'vulnerable' groups; people with disabilities, mobility difficulties or long-term health conditions; Hillsborough; personal impacts; impact on others; financial impacts; impact on attendance at future matches; comparison with previous experiences of attendance at major events; the importance of fans being listened to and their accounts being heard.

Direct quotes were selected from individual statements, with quotes combined under themes to establish a narrative and evidence commonalities in experiences. On occasion, quotes from the same person are present in more than one topic. Spelling has been corrected and punctuation has been changed to retain fluency or clarify points. All quotes have been anonymised.

This information provides a wealth of detail, constituting Part One of the Report.

Thematic analysis of statements

A thematic analysis of fans' statements was conducted using computer software. Each of the 485 statements was uploaded as an individual file and 'tagged' according to the presence of specific categories. This involved reading each statement in detail and noting all 'complicating action' contained in the statement (i.e. an event that forms a narrative and progresses the narrative in response to the question 'what happened next?'). From a list of 'complicating actions', a set of 32 thematic categories was established. Using an Excel spreadsheet, each of the 485 statements was allocated a row number and the categories were listed as columns.

When a statement referenced a category it was tagged with the numeral '1' in the spreadsheet. All occurrences of '1' in an individual statement were calculated and each statement was given a total score. The average score was 9.76. Each statement, therefore, contained commentary on approximately 10 of the 32 categories in the list. Each category column was then totalled to provide statistical analysis of the dominant themes (use of tear gas/pepper spray; accessibility; (dis)organisation of the final; behaviour of locals, police and fans; feeling unsafe/ in danger/ fear), including how many and what proportion of the statements mentioned each category within the theme.

The statements were also analysed for characteristics such as word frequency and context. Use of software enables manual analysis by examining the regularity with which key categories emerge, in which statements, and in what contexts. For example, the intensifying adverb 'absolutely' appears overwhelmingly in a negative context (e.g. 'absolutely disgraceful'), largely in relation to poor organisation and police conduct. Thematic analysis, therefore, provides a quantitative overview of the key themes across all statements, using qualitative examples to demonstrate how individuals used specific categories in their statements.

This analysis forms Part Two of the Report.

Media analysis

Media coverage during and immediately after the Final was analysed to identify how international press (*New York Times, The Athletic, The Metro, The Guardian, Mail Online, Mail on Sunday, The Times, The Sunday Times, The Observer, Deutsche Welle, Le Monde, Liberation, Liverpool Echo*) and TV broadcasters (BT Sport, Sky Sports News, BBC, BeIn Sports, ESPN, France 24) covered the Final and its aftermath. Many journalists attended the Final and reported personal experiences, providing 'on the spot' accounts which presented a markedly different version of events from that announced on screens inside the stadium, broadcast worldwide on the night and subsequently repeated by French authorities, police and UEFA.

Journalists interviewed fans who recounted their experiences of being kettled, tear gassed, attacked by police and local gangs. Fans' extensive mobile phone footage and photographs were available instantly and circulated worldwide. In the days following the Final, a united international media, including French journalists, presented sceptical commentary on statements by Government politicians and Ministers who made unsubstantiated claims about ticketless fans and forged tickets. Journalists also questioned the claim by UEFA that the review it had established was 'independent', given that its Chair and his two primary assistants previously had close associations with UEFA.

This analysis constitutes Part Three of the Report.

Documentary analysis

Relevant safety regulations and guidance were also analysed to identify expectations regarding crowd safety. Key aspects have been summarised in Appendix 2: Ensuring the Safety of Crowds. Also analysed were reports produced by 'official' bodies immediately after the Final, including an overview of the findings and recommendations published in the *French Government Inter-Departmental Inquiry*. This is presented as Appendix 3.

APPENDIX 2

ENSURING THE SAFETY OF CROWDS

In 2015 the Council of Europe *Standing Committee on Safety, Security and Service at Football Matches and other Sports Events* provided a detailed overview of good practices.⁶⁶ Emphasising that safety should be ‘top priority’ at football matches, ‘the ethos adopted throughout should centre on protecting the health and wellbeing of individuals, in their capacity as spectators, participants or employees at a stadium event, or members of the wider resident and business communities’.

To ‘achieve this objective ... all potential safety risks’ should be identified to inform ‘measures designed to eliminate or reduce those risks, and having contingency arrangements in place for dealing with any incidents or emergencies’. Fans, ‘should never be exposed to unsafe physical structures or inoperable safety systems and equipment’, ‘should never be put at risk by ineffective safety measures’, their ‘safety should never be compromised by inadequate safety measures and/or service failings’; they ‘should never be exposed to overcrowding or crushing’, and ‘risk to spectator safety posed by a major incident or emergency should be minimised’.⁶⁷

UEFA Safety and Security Regulations, published in 2019, relate directly to football matches ‘played under the auspices of UEFA’, specifically regarding ‘organisational measure for safety and security in and around the stadium before, during and after every match in the competition’.⁶⁸ An ambiguity in establishing institutional responsibilities is the defined status of ‘match organiser’. In matches played at neutral venues, where neither club has responsibility for the stadium, there is no clear attribution of responsibility.

UEFA places responsibility for stadium safety certification, inspection and compliance on the ‘designated public authority’. While the certificate ‘must be made available to UEFA on request’ (Article 10) there is no reference to the circumstances for making a request. Neither is there any comment on the role of UEFA regarding the condition and operation of the stadium. Nine regulations are concerned with tickets.

Additional to stewarding at the venue, clubs are obliged to provide stewards to travel with fans as a ‘liaison point for the match organisers, public authorities and supporters’ (Article 24). The Regulations also list thirteen examples of information to be provided by Clubs to travelling supporters, including ‘public transport services’, ‘access routes from the town/ city to the stadium’ and ‘known police tolerance levels’ (Article 25).

The match organiser, the police match commander and the stadium security officer are responsible for opening the stadium, the rate of flow at the turnstiles, segregation of fans outside

⁶⁶ https://rm.coe.int/recommendation-rec-2015-1-of-the-standing-committee-on-safety-security/168072b9a1_p7 accessed 5 September 2022

⁶⁷ Ibid. p8

⁶⁸ UEFA Safety and Security Regulations: edn 2019 p7 <https://documents.uefa.com/r/UPE0QDp~FJso7vSx8slqLQ/root> accessed 5 September 2022

and the 'search regime' (Article 30). Trained security personnel should ensure crowd safety in the approaches to the stadium, entry points and exits, and understand safety, emergency and evacuation procedures' (Article 32).

UEFA establishes two elements to screening and searching fans by security personnel on arrival at the stadium. First, at an 'outer perimeter fence or cordon' to check for tickets and prohibited objects or substances. Second, at the turnstiles. Article 33 is clear that fans should not be searched more than once, and only by same sex personnel.

Regulations regarding the control of fans inside the stadium include the presence of safety and security personnel to ensure fans do not move between areas of the stadium, to maintain access to passageways, unlocked gates and evacuation routes. Article 41 states that the organiser should ensure an 'integrated approach to safety, security and service activities' through 'a stadium control room' in which the closed-circuit television system should cover all approaches to the stadium and its entrances.

APPENDIX 3

FRENCH GOVERNMENT INTER-DEPARTMENTAL INQUIRY

The French Government established an inquiry into the events at Stade de France under the Senate Law and Culture Committee. It was headed by François-Noël Buffet, President of Commission des Lois (Law Commission) and Laurent Lafon, President of Commission de L'Éducation et de la Communication (Culture and Communication Commission). Their fourteen page report entitled, *The Essentials on the Incidents at the Stade de France on 28 May 2022: An Inevitable Fiasco*, was published on 13th July 2022.

The Report's summary noted the 'difficulties encountered ... raise serious questions about France's ability to organise major sporting events, particularly in view of the Rugby World Cup in 2023 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024'. Failures at the May Final were 'primarily the result of a chain of events and malfunctions that had led to a weakening of the arrangements in place and a temporary loss of control of the situation before and after the match'.

The 'significant shortcomings' identified in the Report include an erroneous emphasis on hooliganism, for which there was no evidence, and a failure to identify and police a 'large number' of local 'delinquents'. Further, there were failures in 'routing' fans access to the stadium and a breakdown in communication between the authorities involved.

Naming Prefect Cadot, the inter-ministerial delegate for major sports events, the Report's authors stated it was 'unfair to have tried to blame the Liverpool team's supporters for the disturbances ... in order to divert attention from the state's inability to adequately manage the crowds' and its failure to prevent the criminal behaviour and violence of 'several hundred' locals. This amounted to a 'serious collective failure'.

The Report is in four discrete sections: 1. Failures due to ticketing and the movement of fans; 2. Organisation of security by the public authorities; 3. The rigidity of an inadequate system for filtering fans' access to the stadium; 4. Given serious failures in organisation, the delayed public acceptance of institutional responsibilities. At the outset it stated without qualification that the hearings found no evidence of hooliganism by fans.

The Commissioners 'established that UEFA's management of ticketing was inadequate' without any appropriate mechanism for pre-empting and dealing with counterfeit tickets. However, the conclusion that 2,471 counterfeit tickets were scanned, 1,644 in the turnstiles allocated to Liverpool fans, is disputable given the evidence provided in the Report of genuine tickets being refused or re-scanned several times.

The Report does not address the mechanical failure of scanners yet it affirmed the inadequacy of the 'ticket dispute handling system'. UEFA's decision to establish 'pre-screening security points'

created blockages in the stadium approach exacerbated by stewards without appropriate training. Consequently, the system failed, significantly contributing to fans' delayed access to the stadium.

According to the Report the primary responsibility for 'fans' mobility' from their arrival in France to arriving at the stadium lay with the Fédération Française de Football (FFF). On the afternoon and early evening of the match the Report found that 110,000 people travelled to the stadium: 6,200 by RER (Réseau Express Régional) B; 36,000 by RER D; 37,000 by Paris Métro Line 13; 20,905 by coaches; 6,680 by taxi; and 4,111 in cars, etc.

Threatened strike action on RER B resulted in a much reduced use of that line and a significantly inflated use of RER D. Announcements made at the stations stating that Line B 'should not be used' resulted in 'saturating Line D' by carrying over three times more passengers than usual. Although this imbalance was noted early in the evening, no action was taken by the company or the police to redirect passengers until 40 minutes before kick-off which was 'too late'.

The flow of fans to the stadium was 'made more difficult' by the police decision to remove 'the signage intended to redirect the flow of people' arriving on the RER D line. Alternative plans were not made. Without any information and in an unfamiliar place fans simply followed a single sign that misdirected them to the fateful underpass.

Failure in planning fans' movement to the stadium, particularly by RER, was criticised in the Report. The FFF, Police and public transport organisations neglected to 'organise effective real-time communication on the flow of supporters'. The Commissioners considered 'it was primarily the flow from the RER D that undermined a system ... poorly adapted to the event' that was 'too rigid'.

The Report noted the lack of organisation of access routes, the failure to indicate alternatives and the absence of evacuation routes for those whose tickets were rejected or who were in distress. Further, a major reduction in provision of local authority staff 'dedicated to the circulation of pedestrians and cars around the stadium' contributed to the confusion.

Crucial in the testimonies given by supporters' organisations and other key witnesses with experience of travelling to matches in unfamiliar cities was the contention that 'match security was based on an outdated vision of British supporters'; a vision based on four decades old notions of 'hooliganism'. Anticipating problems outside the stadium, 'public officials were almost exclusively concerned with policing non-ticketed' fans.

This outdated perception undermined the responsibilities of the 'organisers' to plan and accommodate the 'flow of supporters to the stadium ... to entertain them in the vicinity of the stadium or in safe places in town'. Oral direction by station staff, 'audio or mobile phone announcements' and 'adequate signage' were absent from the planning.

While accepting the failure to accommodate fans appropriately, particularly providing Fan Zones a significant distance from the stadium, the Report repeated and reinforced the unfounded allegation that Liverpool fans delayed in making their journey to the stadium. When fans approached the stadium stewards 'were unable to explain what was going on' and 'overwhelmed' in attempting to check tickets. The FFF accepted that stewarding failed and noted difficulties in recruiting suitably accredited staff who could communicate with fans in English or Spanish.

After the match the safe passage of fans leaving the stadium was compromised. There were no arrangements to 'regulate the flow of fans', a 'lack of public lighting' and footpaths 'strewn with broken bottles'. The Commissioners concluded that 'the spectator experience was not taken into account by the event organisers'. They recommended 'a change in the way public authorities view supporters', developing a 'permanent dialogue so that their representatives become partners in the preparation and running of major events' to 'enable better sharing of information and make the measures put in place more effective'.

The Commissioners noted a failure to ensure 'the security of supporters and the protection of property'. Within the stadium forecourt, fans were robbed by local gangs and pickpockets but 'the security personnel ... dedicated to anti-terrorist measures, were unable to intervene'. Local gangs involved in violence and robbery remained in the 'vicinity of the stadium' assaulting fans and stealing their property after the match and at stations.

The 'presence of these offenders' was 'predictable', foreseen by stadium staff and the local Mayor. Yet there was no response to this information resulting in a serious failure to police effectively and protect visiting fans around the stadium. Only 209 police officers were present in this area, a third of the deployment for a subsequent international soccer match.

In fact, policing in the proximity of the stadium was based on three objectives: 1. 'to prevent the risk of terrorism'; 2. 'to maintain order'; 3. 'to ensure public safety'. The Report concluded that the first two objectives took precedence and caused 'some of the violence suffered by the supporters' inflicted by riot police. The third priority 'was neglected'.

The objective of pre-screening fans approaching the stadium reflected a policy to 'prevent terrorist attacks'. Combined with ticket checks away from the stadium, 'a bottleneck in access for spectators leaving the RER D station' was created. Subsequently, both elements of the strategy were criticised regarding their legality and ineffectiveness in filtering the crowd.

The police claimed that 'saturation' policing as a strategy was based 'on the number of Liverpool supporters who came with forged tickets or who tried to approach the stadium without tickets'. This, they maintained, resulted in congestion. Ten to fifteen thousand fans were blocked at what was described as a 'filtering point' where police vehicles had been marked to ensure that the pathway was 'reduced to 4 or 5 metres wide'.

Commissioners considered these were the 'very conditions created by the prefecture of police', together with the failure to respond effectively to the ensuing crush, that trapped fans and caused

the blockage. Ticket checks on the approaches to the stadium were 'inappropriate' and fans were attacked by local gangs. Fans who were refused entry, including many who had genuine tickets, were trapped as the crowd compressed behind them.

Having endured the 'risk of being crushed', fans then faced 'being gassed as they approached the gates of the Stadium'. Pre-screening checks on tickets were abandoned, the police then tear-gassed the crowd 'to make people near the gates of the Stadium move back'. This decision, premised on the assumption that serious crowd disturbance was imminent, was considered 'legitimate for the security services ... to preserve order'. In evidence to the Commission the Police Prefect remained satisfied that the use of tear gas was justified.

A 'consequence of lack of foresight' the use of tear gas directly into the faces of men, women and children 'shocked national and international public opinion and tarnished France's image'. Further, it left fans vulnerable to further attacks by local gang members. The Commissioners state that tear gas 'was seen as particularly aggressive by supporters from countries where it is not practised', subjecting them 'to excessive force and even police violence'.

Seemingly contradicting their findings, the Commissioners called for 'better management of the crowds of spectators at major sporting events', by directing their movements, using video information and 'positioning equestrian units' or 'water cannon which have a proven dissuasive effect'. Given the calmness of Liverpool fans at the stadium these final comments were clearly inappropriate.

The Commissioners noted that it was only after the Senate hearings were announced that Ministers 'expressed regret' that fans with tickets had been refused entry to the stadium. Similarly, it was only at the hearings that the Police Prefect regretted the indiscriminate use of tear gas. The Minister for the Interior 'finally apologised' for 'poor management' of the event after publication of the findings. 'This gradual and belated recognition contrasts with the desire to blame the Liverpool team's supporters that characterised the first official statements'.

Further, the Commissioners noted that, while the Minister refused to give the nationality of those 'arrested for delinquency', he 'did not hesitate to detail the number of British nationals arrested for attempted break-ins'. It was 'unacceptable' to present the fans as the 'cause of the chaos' in order to 'hide the poor organisational choices made'.

In the immediate aftermath it was self-evident that detail from video monitors would have primary significance for the investigation. Had so many ticketless fans attempted to force entry, as alleged, visual corroboration would have been crucial. Further, it would have shown the circumstances in which the crowd had been tear gassed. FFF officials, however, informed the Commissioners that there were no records from the four main cameras.

In fact, the footage that had existed had been destroyed. It transpired that neither the police nor the Public Prosecutor had requested retention of the recordings. The consortium, the police and the

Prosecutor's office had failed to act 'with diligence to safeguard evidence that was essential to the truth'. It appears that UEFA did not request access to this material.

Limited images from the transport authorities were retained but those from RATP had been 'deleted due to lack of requisition'. Further, the SNCF images that had been retained were not made available to the Commissioners, 'due to the lack of response from the Bobigny Public Prosecutor'.

The organisation of the Champions League Final had 'showed a lack of coordination between the different actors involved'. Addressing the holding of future events at Stade de France, specifically the Rugby World Cup and 2024 Olympics, the Commissioners were concerned that the 'multiple malfunctions' they identified, and the presence of local criminal gangs, were 'likely to occur again'. Consequently, all underlying issues identified in the Report should be addressed by the organising committees and the local agencies involved. A 'designated organisation' should be appointed to focus on all future events at the stadium.

The Commissioners made fifteen recommendations, 'to be applied more broadly to major sports events', not least the upcoming Rugby World Cup and Olympic/ Paralympic Games. These focused on the responsibilities of the organisations and corporate bodies involved: UEFA; FFF - Fédération Française de Football; the State; Parliament; Minister of the Interior; Police Préfecture; RATP - Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens; SNCF - Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français; Stade de France Consortium.

INDEPENDENT PANEL: PROFILES

Professor Phil Scraton PhD is Professor Emeritus, School of Law, Queen’s University Belfast. Widely published, his books include *Hillsborough: The Truth* (Penguin/ Random House, 2016). He led the Hillsborough Independent Panel’s research team and was principal author of its Report, *Hillsborough* (HMSO, 2016). Seconded to the families’ legal teams throughout the 2014-2016 inquests, in 2016 he was consultant on, and contributor to, the 2017 BAFTA winning ESPN/ BBC documentary *Hillsborough*. He holds a Leverhulme Fellowship addressing the unique work of the Panel and the legal processes that followed. Most recently he has edited *The Report of the Independent Panel of Inquiry into the Circumstances of the H-Block and Armagh Prison Protests 1976-1981*, is co-author of *Deaths in Contested Circumstances and Coroners’ Inquests* (ICCL, 2021) and *Truth, Acknowledgement and Accountability: Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses* (NI Executive). He was awarded the Freedom of the City of Liverpool in recognition of his Hillsborough research.

Dr Deena Haydon is an independent researcher and writer whose research and publications focus on childhood, children’s rights, parenting and family support, youth justice, and the needs of vulnerable groups. She has co-authored books and written journal articles, book chapters, research reports, resources for children and practitioners, and submissions to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for the NGO sector in Northern Ireland. She has presented workshops and conference papers for academics, practitioners and public audiences in the UK, Europe, the US, Australia and New Zealand.

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Dr Patricia Canning is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities at Northumbria University in North East England. She is an applied linguist specializing in forensic texts and contexts. Her work includes the investigation and analysis of police reporting, particularly the attribution and deflection of blame through individual and institutional language choices. She has published research on analyses of witness statements following the Hillsborough Disaster.

Peter Marshall is a journalist and broadcaster. He has reported from five continents, focusing on political and investigative stories and documentary films. He was a correspondent with the BBC for 35 years, reporting primarily for Newsnight, Panorama and Radio Four. He is now freelance. He presented *Hillsborough: How They Buried The Truth* for the BBC and *Hillsborough: Smears, Survivors And The Search For Truth* for ITV. He is a Liverpool supporter and was at Hillsborough in 1989 and the Stade de France in 2022.

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The authors acknowledge the remarkable strength and resilience of all who made detailed submissions to the Independent Panel on behalf of themselves, their families and their friends. Their testimonies, given in the immediate aftermath, speak for many others whose harrowing and painful experiences in Paris at the Stade de France and the City's Fan Park left them traumatised. Without provocation, they were attacked and tear-gassed by police in paramilitary uniforms and also by local gangs intent on robbery. While our work focuses on Liverpool fans we are aware that Real Madrid fans were also subjected to such violent attacks.

We acknowledge the generosity of friends and colleagues who have supported this intense work conducted during a very short period of time. Dr John Burton provided medical commentary on physical and psychological harm, David Renton on legal duties, Beverley Griffiths on crowd management regulations, Helen Turner on tear gas deployment. Thank you to all the journalists for in-depth coverage and critical analysis documented in this Report. Finally, to Chris Curran for his Communications Support.

When we embarked on this project we did not anticipate that so many fans would respond in such detail. It is to them, their loved ones and all who survived the events in Paris that this work is dedicated.

‘We had the most traumatic and terrifying experience of our lives.’

‘Tear gas was then released by the riot police into the concourse for no reason. I started coughing, sneezing and my eyes were stinging ... elderly, parents and children were crying, not only from tear gas but also from fear and shock. People were just in pure disbelief.’

‘I will never forget the feeling of breathlessness by the overcrowding that never seemed to stop ... I will never forget the children standing frozen ... I will never forget my life flashing before my eyes ... I will never forget the guy grabbing me by the throat.’

‘We (men, women, families, children, the elderly, from all classes and walks of life) were made to feel like animals, like a threat to be controlled with fear and aggression ... treated with contempt and handled violently, lacking in care or any human empathy or decency.’

‘I will never forget supporters saying, “Easy! Calm! Steady! We don’t need this again!” countless times.’

‘It’s no overstatement to say that it’s a miracle nobody died at the hands of the Police and the local gangs. Liverpool fans were the only ones who prevented a disaster; we stuck together and looked out for one another.’

‘The French narrative must not be allowed to stand. Liverpool fans behaved impeccably and our name has been dragged through the mud.’

‘It is not the Liverpool Fans who need to provide answers, but UEFA, the French Police and Authorities, the stewards of the stadium and the organizers of the event for what was an appalling show of incompetence, violence and discrimination against the Liverpool Fans.’

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