



# REVIEW



1st June - 1st December 2023  
First Edition

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## IMPRESS

The EU co-funded project, IMPRESS (**IM**Proving **R**ailway **s**ecurity through **aw**arene**SS** and training) aims to improve the protection of stations and trains by developing security training and awareness programmes for all stakeholders in rail stations and on trains.

It focuses on the 'immediate responders' from the railway environment, or those who are most likely to be the first to prevent or react to a security incident. This includes rail staff at stations and onboard trains, security staff, staff from station shops, and cleaning staff as well as other service providers.

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## REVIEW

As part of the IMPRESS dissemination strategy, a media monitoring was carried out by the UIC Security Division on the topic of rail security from 01 June - 01 December 2023.

Based on key word searches performed on X (formerly Twitter), Google news & AP News, the following pages summarize the relevant news items found during this period for the following threats:

Terrorism, Aggression, Theft, Sabotage, Vandalism,  
Irregular Migration & Abandoned Luggage.

It also describes news item of relevance to rail security culture & recent publications.



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## TERRORISM

### **False Terror Alert Shakes Lille**

On July 20, 2023, a man and his partner caused a false terrorist alert in Lille, France, to delay a train and catch their connection. The man sent two SMS messages to an SNCF platform, one indicating a "terrorist alert" and the other the number of a Paris-Lille train.

The alert was taken seriously, and the train was diverted to another station, while the two stations in Lille were evacuated and the area was cordoned off by a significant security force, including the national police, the Raid, the military of the Sentinelle operation, and the bomb disposal services.

The man was put in pretrial custody and will stand trial, as will his accomplice, who is also facing charges for the same crime. If found guilty, both might spend two years in prison and pay a fine of 30,000 euros. This episode demonstrates France's dedication to responding appropriately to any terrorist alert. In the future, ways to avoid false alerts could be examined.

As of 1 December 2023, no news of the trial has been seen on the IMPRESS Review media monitoring. [1][2][3][4][5][6]

### **Cleveland Man Charged in Attempted Train Sabotage**

In October, a Cleveland, Ohio, USA, man was charged with terrorism after attempting to derail a passenger train. The man is accused of wedging pieces of metal into a rail switch and placing train spikes to derail the train. The investigation into the incident is ongoing, and it is not yet clear whether the incident was an isolated act or part of a larger plot. [7] [8]

### **France Boosts Rail Security Due to Bomb Threats**

France is increasing security measures at airports and on trains after a wave of bomb hoaxes occurred in October. Security staff at SNCF will be reinforced by 20%, in addition to extra police patrolling railway stations. False alerts are generally punishable with fines and prison if the alert includes a threat. [9]

## G20 LAUNCHES INDIA-EUROPE RAIL PROJECT

President Biden, Indian Prime Minister Modi, and other G20 leaders announced a new rail and shipping project that would link India to the Middle East and Europe, which would help boost trade, deliver energy resources, and improve digital connectivity during the G20 meeting in September. While not mentioned by the article, security of this new rail and maritime link is paramount to its success. [10]





## RPF UNVEILS MARTYRS MEMORIAL

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) in India established a National Martyrs Memorial and Museum to pay tribute to fallen officers which opened with a ceremony on 31st July. The memorial commemorates the RPF personnel who died in the fight against terrorism, militancy, and insurgency in India. [11]



## AGGRESSION AGAINST PASSENGERS

### India Train Shooting Prompts Security Concerns

In late July, a shooting incident on a train in India impacted the country. A constable from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Indian Railways shot and killed four individuals. This has brought attention to the pressing need for enhanced effective security protocols to prevent similar incidents in the future. The circumstances surrounding the shooting still remain unclear. [12]

### Amtrak Train Stabbing Leads to Drug Bust in New Mexico

On October 30, a man was stabbed on an Amtrak train in New Mexico, USA, causing the train to stop. The victim, who was taken to a hospital, faces drug dealing charges after police discovered 20 pounds of methamphetamine in his bag. [13]

### 13-Year Sentence for Commuter Train Stabbings in Albuquerque

In October, Luis Sanchez was sentenced to 13 years in prison for stabbing and injuring two people and hurting a third on a commuter rail train in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA, in March 2022. Sanchez got into a confrontation with another male passenger of the Rail Runner Express while the commuter train was between stations, and then stabbed that passenger as well as a security guard who tried to step in. He also slashed an elderly woman in the shoulder. He then fled down the tracks, but authorities arrested him. [14][15]





### AMTRAK'S SECURITY UPDATE: KEYS, THREATS, AND INNOVATIONS

Over the summer in June 2023, Amtrak met with American lawmakers during a stakeholder meeting.

When faced with comments regarding security differences between aviation and rail, Amtrak CEO discussed the multi-tiered security system in place and their close cooperation with the TSA (Transport Security Administration of the Department of Homeland Security USA).

He further stated that Amtrak are considering implementing certain unintrusive screening methods such as those used at museums or stadiums. Another point of contention focused on the potential for insider threat, with a recent audit finding that Amtrak security keys were for sale. Amtrak ensured policy makers that their key control process is being updated. [16]

### VR CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A campaign towards prevention and action against sexual harassment was carried out through an immersive VR experience at a Birmingham New Street station (UK) event in October.

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG), British Transport Police (BTP), and local train operators have created a short virtual reality (VR) film to educate passengers on how to combat sexual harassment on trains.

The VR experience was initially launched at London Waterloo station and is now available for passengers at Birmingham New Street station.

The event aims to educate people to recognize how these situations occur for passengers and to tackle all forms of sexual harassment.

The campaign is part of the rail industry and British Transport Police's continued commitment to make sure every passenger feels safe when travelling by train. [17]





## THEFT

### RSR (SOUTH AFRICA) PUBLISHES SECURITY INCIDENTS REPORT

Railway operators in South Africa have experienced a high number of security-related incidents, with 97% attributed to theft and vandalism. The "State of Safety Report 2022/23," published in October, recorded 8,643 security-related incidents in the past year, resulting in fatalities and injuries. The Railway Safety Regulator (RSR) is committed to enhancing security measures and infrastructure to address the issues. [20]

## BATTERY

### BATTERY THEFTS REPORTED IN CANADA

Police on Vancouver Island (Canada) reported in November that thieves are stealing batteries from railway control boxes, causing an estimated \$800,000 in damages and replacement costs since the summer. [23]

## BIKE

### RAILWAYS AND POLICE WORK TOGETHER TO COMBAT BIKE THEFT IN THE UK

Transport for Wales (TfW) hosted a series of Bike Events from June to October across Wales and Borders to promote active travel and encourage sustainable transportation. As part of these events, participants had the opportunity to improve their bicycle security free of charge through a marking system, in collaboration with the British Transport Police. This initiative aimed to deter potential thieves and enhance bike security, while also reducing bike theft at rail stations. [21][22]





## METAL

### **Prabumulih Police Detain Rail Thieves Targeting PT KAI**

The Prabumulih city police in South Sumatra, Indonesia, detained three men for stealing rail tracks in PT Kereta Api Indonesia (KAI) rail lines in March 2022, July and September 2023. The suspects are still being held in police custody for further investigation, and if found guilty, they could face up to five years in prison. [18]

### **Network Rail's Success: 7 Arrests in Cable Theft Crackdown**

In the six months preceding the summer period, Network Rail adopted new and improved ways of cracking down on cable theft on the railway, which have led to seven arrests. Measures included funding British Transport Police officers, using CCTV to alert when people are on the network, incorporating drones in security patrols, installing new ways of securing cables, using forensic marking agents to track thieves, introducing cables that are harder to steal and easier to identify, and setting up a dedicated security team. These new security measures have led to the doubling of arrest for cable theft. [19]

### **Adelaide Commuter Chaos: Foiled Copper Heist Disrupts Train Services**

Thieves attempted to steal copper by cutting cabling at the North Adelaide Railway Station (Australia) between 12:50 am and 6 am on July 21st, which caused a major disruption across several train lines. The incident affected thousands of commuters on the Gawler, Seaford, and Outer Harbor lines, but regular train services resumed in time for the afternoon peak. To prevent similar events, the article comments on how it is crucial to secure vital infrastructure and implement robust security measures, as demonstrated by the risky effort to steal the 650-volt signaling cables. [24][25][26]

### **Copper Thefts Derail Deutsche Bahn: €6.6 Million Hit in 2022**

Deutsche Bahn (Germany) has been facing a rising number of copper thefts, costing the company about €6.6 million in 2022 alone. This has led to significant train delays and disruptions to supply chains. [27]

### **SNCF Rail Worker on Trial for Massive 565-Ton Rail Theft Scheme**

A railway worker was tried in November for stealing 565 tons of rails from SNCF (France). The worker, along with two accomplices known for their expertise in the recovery and resale of metals, used a simple scheme to steal the rails: a fake removal order. The stolen steel was destined to be melted down and then shipped to Spain. The suspects are being prosecuted for "criminal association", "fraud" and "forgery and use of forged documents". [28]





### JRC REPORT: ADVANCING TRANSPORT SAFETY AND RESILIENCE IN EUROPE

The JRC (Joint Research Centre of the European Commission) published in October the report: "Research and Innovation in Transport Safety and Resilience in Europe."

The report outlines European efforts to enhance transport safety and resilience.

It focuses on key areas such as human factors, cyber security, and climate-proof infrastructure.

The report emphasizes the need to promote a safety culture, safeguard human vigilance, and prioritize safe infrastructure design and maintenance. [35]

### UK HIGHLIGHTS ADVANCED RAIL SECURITY CAPABILITIES IN NEW BROCHURE

The UK released in September a brochure outlining its capabilities in enhancing the security of transportation networks, including rail.

The document showcases the UK's strengths in improving passenger security, protecting cargo, and securing sensitive locations from unauthorized entry.

It also provides information on effective passenger and freight screening, as well as command, control, and communications solutions to detect and prevent criminal activity.

The brochure includes case studies demonstrating the range of products and services available to safeguard transportation hubs and facilities. [31]





## SABOTAGE

### **Railway Security Surge: Joint Anti-Sabotage Operation at Tiruchi Junction**

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Indian Railways and the Indian Government Railway Police (GRP) conducted anti-sabotage checks at the Tiruchi railway junction ahead of Indian Independence Day (15 August). This initiative aimed to ensure the security of the railway infrastructure and prevent potential sabotage activities. The joint operation reflects the ongoing efforts to enhance railway security, particularly considering the evolving challenges and technological advancements. [29]

### **Vande Bharat Express Attacked, Halts Udaipur to Jaipur Journey**

The Vande Bharat Express train (India) was pelted with stones and obstructed by rods on the track, leading to a halt in its journey from Udaipur to Jaipur in October. [30]

### **Hamburg Rail Arson: Political Motive Disrupts Key Routes**

On September 8, 2023, a series of fires hit railway infrastructure in Hamburg, Germany, causing widespread disruption to trains between Hamburg and Berlin and between the port city and the Baltic Sea coast. Police suspect that the damage was politically motivated. [32]

### **Sabotage Probe: Fires Hit German Train Line Amid Geo-Thermal Plant Explosions**

On 2nd October, cables for the German train line linking Tuessling and Muehldorf went up in flames. German anti-terror police are investigating these fires which appear linked to explosions that occurred at a geo-thermal plant. An anonymous letter published on a far-left website claimed responsibility for the actions, saying the sabotage was carried out as a protest against "neo-colonial exploitation and earth destroying extraction of raw materials". The investigation is ongoing, and it is not yet clear whether the fires were caused by terrorism or other factors. [33]

### **Suspected Sabotage Paralyzes German Railways: Federal Prosecutors Take Over Investigation**

German federal prosecutors have taken over the investigation into the suspected sabotage of a railway communication system that brought trains to a standstill across northwestern Germany on Saturday, October 8th, 2022. The cables were deliberately severed in two places, one in a Berlin suburb and the other 440 kilometers away in the western German town of Herne.

Trains in the northwestern states of Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, and Bremen were halted for nearly three hours on Saturday morning. Railway operator Deutsche Bahn said that was necessary because a digital train radio system failed. Even if the motive is unclear, the incident is being treated as an act of sabotage. [36][37][38]







### **SNCB AND RAIL POLICE BOOST COLLABORATION FOR ENHANCED RAIL SECURITY**

Over the summer period, SNCB's security staff Securail and the Police des Chemins de Fer (Belgian Rail Police) intensified their collaboration to enhance rail security to address the passenger influx. With a 40% increase in joint controls, the visible police presence aimed to reduce daily assaults. The partnership aimed to bring passengers closer to law enforcement, fostering a positive perception of security and fortifying the rail company's ability to ensure passenger security. [44][45]

### **UKRAINIAN TRAIN: VITAL LIFELINE TO FRONT LINES AMID ONGOING CONFLICT**

In September, an article highlighted how a Ukrainian train is a lifeline connecting the nation's capital with the front line. Despite the war, the country's vast railway system has remained operational, carrying cargo, aid, and gear. The popularity of the Kyiv-Kramatorsk route highlights the reality of war. [46]

### **UZ DEPLOYS CIVILIAN CLOTHED SECURITY MARSHALS**

Ukrainian Railways have introduced railway security marshals who are employees of a specialized security service. Their main task is to monitor the security situation in passenger rail and respond promptly if necessary. Unlike regular security guards, marshals work behind the scenes and are not in uniform, so neither passengers nor criminals are aware of their presence. The marshals are specially trained to assess risks and respond quickly to threats that may arise during passenger travel. The first marshals began working in September 2023. [41] [42]

### **SNCF CONDUCTS SECURITY DRILLS AT GARE DE LYON**

The SNCF (France) Sûreté Ferroviaire, in collaboration with SNCF Gare et Co and SNCF SA Voyageurs, conducted inter-force exercises at the Gare de Lyon on November 9-10 in a realistic environment to test the readiness and coordination of the security forces in the event of a major security threat. The Continuum De Sécurité, which unites the internal security forces including the Préfecture de Police de Paris, the Police Nationale, the service des douanes, and the mission sentinelle, was embodied here. [48]





## LEFT LUGGAGE

### **PORTSMOUTH RAILWAY STATION CLOSURE: FALSE ALARM CAUSES DISRUPTION**

On 16 July, Portsmouth's (UK) main railway station was closed for many hours after a suspicious item was found, disrupting rail traffic and leading to the evacuation of nearby businesses and accommodation. In the end, the police confirmed that the item was not suspicious and rail travel resumed normally. [40]

## VANDALISM

### **VANDALISM PLAGUES WESTERN CAPE RAILWAYS**

Over the summer, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) in the Western Cape has admitted that canceling security contracts in 2020 during COVID-19 was a mistake. This decision led to vandalized infrastructure and illegal occupation of land on its rail tracks. The cost of replacing infrastructure is far greater than what PRASA would have spent on security during COVID-19. [43]

### **SOUTHEND RAIL BOOSTS SECURITY WITH FINES FOR ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR**

The Southend rail network (UK) is set to introduce security officers with the power to issue fines to rowdy and antisocial passengers as part of a £490,000 crime crackdown. The move comes in response to a series of incidents, including vandalism, which have caused chaos in the area. The security officers will patrol targeted routes. [49]

## IRREGULAR MIGRATION

### **FERROMEX HALTS TRAINS AS MIGRANTS RISK DANGERS TO REACH U.S. BORDER**

Mexico's largest railroad company, Ferromex, suspended operations of its cargo trains in September due to the massive number of migrants that are irregularly hitching a ride on its trains moving north towards the U.S. border. The company said it had seen a "half dozen regrettable cases of injuries or deaths" in a span of just days. In response, Mexico pledged to set up checkpoints to dissuade migrants from hopping freight trains to the US border. Despite the dangers, thousands of migrants continue to ride the trains to reach the US. [39]





## SECURITY OF MAJOR EVENTS

### **SNCF Scores Security Success at 2023 Rugby World Cup**

During the 2023 Rugby World Cup, the SNCF (France) Sûreté Ferroviaire (Rail Security) ensured the security of individuals in stations and on trains. The security teams were responsible for facilitating the movement of supporters, managing the flow of people, and supporting the transportation of athletes using the rail network. Over the 50-day competition, 500 security teams undertook approximately 350 missions to maintain a safe environment. [47]

### **SNCF Bolsters Security for 2024 Olympics**

The SNCF (France) is recruiting 500 new agents for the security service, or SUGE (Sûreté Ferroviaire) in Paris in preparation for the 2024 Olympic Games. The role of a SUGE agent is to protect the installations and the heritage of the railway company, participate in the fight against fraud, and immobilize delinquents. The job requires being vigilant, calm, and able to react quickly in case of conflict. This article follows the day of Lola, one of the few women SUGE agents along her day of patrolling and monitoring trains and stations, ensuring the safety & security of passengers and staff. [50]





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