



# REVIEW



1st December 2023 - 1st March 2024  
Second Edition

Co-funded by  
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## IMPRESS

The EU co-funded project IMPRESS (IMProving Railway sEcurity through awareneSS 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 December 2023 - 01 March 2024.

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

Terrorism, Aggression against passengers, Theft,  
Vandalism, Sabotage, Drugs & Irregular Migration

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



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## TERRORISM

### **Bomb Threat Evacuates Aarhus Central Station (Denmark)**

A bomb threat at Aarhus Central Station (Denmark) on 23 December 2023 led to the evacuation of the station. The police and bomb disposal teams responded to the threat. Subsequently, the police reopened the station and normal operations have resumed. [1]

### **Arrested at New Delhi Railway Station for terrorism and arms smuggling (India)**

On 4 February 2024, Delhi Police arrested Riyaz Ahmed, an alleged member of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), at New Delhi Railway Station (India), after police revealed his involvement in a busted terror module which engaged in cross border arms smuggling. [2][3]

### **20-Year Sentence for BNSF Railway Station Bombing in Hinsdale (USA)**

On 9 February 2024, Thomas James Zajac received a 20-year prison sentence for detonating a pipe bomb at the BNSF Railway Station in Hinsdale (USA) in 2006. The explosion damaged the station and injured an employee. [4][5]

### **54 Detonators Found Abandoned at Kalyan Railway Station (India)**

At Kalyan Railway Station in Mumbai (India), two abandoned boxes containing 54 detonators were discovered, prompting the involvement of authorities like the Government Railway Police and Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad on 21 February 2024. While there was no immediate threat, they are reviewing CCTV footage to identify the individuals responsible for leaving the detonators at the station. [6][7]

### **LARNE RAILWAY LINE REOPENS AFTER SECURITY ALERT (UK)**

Police closed the railway line in Larne, Northern Ireland, on the afternoon of Monday, February 5th, due to the discovery of a "suspicious object" in the Hope Street area of the town. Cordons were set up in surrounding streets, and the train line between Larne and Whitehead was temporarily suspended. Service is now back to normal. [9][10]

### **WWII BOMB DISCOVERY DISRUPTS CORNWALL RAIL SERVICES (UK)**

Rail services in Cornwall were disrupted and canceled due to the discovery of a World War II bomb under a property in Keyham, Plymouth (UK) on 23 February 2024. Eventually, the bomb was removed for disposal at sea. [8]





## AGGRESSION AGAINST PASSENGERS

### **Rise in Violent Attacks on Trains Spurs Calls for Improved Security (UK)**

A recent analysis of crime statistics on British trains revealed a notable 12% increase in violent attacks, including a surge in robberies by 18% and sexual offenses by 2.3%. Calls have been made for the British Transport Police and the government to bolster security measures. It is important to note that the responsibility for railway security is shared between the railways and the police. [11]

## KNIFE ATTACKS

### **Train Hostage Crisis: Asylum-Seeker Seizes Dozens (Switzerland)**

An asylum-seeker seized more than a dozen hostages on a train in western Switzerland using an axe and a knife in February 2024. After nearly four hours, police stormed the train, freed the hostages unharmed and mortally injured the hostage-taker. The motive is under investigation. [12]

### **Tokyo Train Knife Attack Injures Four, Motive Under Investigation (Japan)**

In January 2024, a woman initiated a knife attack while aboard a train in central Tokyo, resulting in injuries to four individuals, and was apprehended by the police just afterwards. Motive is unknown. [13]

### **Atlanta Transit Officer Shoots Stabbing Suspect (USA)**

On 24 January 2024, a transit officer in Atlanta, USA, shot an unidentified man outside the Five Points train station after he stabbed two people and attacked the officer, injuring him in the hand. The suspect and the two stabbing victims are reported to be in stable condition. [14]

### **Paris Train Station Knife Attack (France)**

On 3 February 2023 at the Gare de Lyon train station in Paris (France), a knife attack occurred, resulting in three individuals being injured and hospitalized. The suspect was apprehended by French authorities, who have stated that the stabbing spree was not terror-related. [15][16][17][18]

### **Salt Lake City Arrest: Suspect Holds Boy on Train (USA)**

On 8 February 2024, a suspect was arrested in Salt Lake City (USA) for holding a boy against his will on a TRAX train and threatening passengers with a knife. Charges include child kidnapping, aggravated assault (two counts), failure to comply with law enforcement, and obstructing an arresting officer. [19]



## ROBBERY

### **Indian Railways Employee Arrested for ₹2.92 Lakh Theft (India)**

On January 25, an employee of Indian Railways was arrested for stealing from passengers and confessed to the crime. The police recovered stolen goods worth ₹2,92,776.00 Indian Rupees. [21]

### **British Transport Police Arrest Over 60 in London Rail Robbery Crackdown (UK)**

The British Transport Police conducted Operation Invert, targeting robbery and phone theft on the London rail network, leading to the arrest of over 60 individuals. The operation resulted in the seizure of 15 weapons. [22][23]

### **Indian Railways RPF Nabs Thieves, Recovers ₹33.6 Lakh (India)**

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Indian Railways recently apprehended six individuals for stealing passengers' belongings. This follows the arrest of 30 individuals in January, resulting in the recovery of values totaling around ₹33,60,000 Indian Rupees, as part of ongoing efforts to combat theft on trains and at railway stations. [24]

### **RPF Nabs Five Phone Thieves (India)**

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Indian Railways apprehended five mobile phone thieves within three days on February 18th, recovering several stolen phones. The arrests were made following tip-offs and alert passengers reporting suspicious activities. [25]



### **RAILWAY TRIO UNITE FOR ENHANCED SECURITY AND SAFETY MEASURES (UK)**

Southeastern Railway, Network Rail, and the British Transport Police have entered into a tripartite security agreement. Signed on 13 December 2023 it focuses on reducing workplace violence, tackling anti-social behavior, minimizing graffiti, addressing trespass incidents, suicide reduction, counter-terrorism preparedness, and collaborative resource optimization. [26]





## MURDER

### **Murder Probe Initiated at Harold Wood Rail Station After Fatal Attack (UK)**

On 27 February 2024, British Transport Police initiated a murder probe at Harold Wood rail station (UK) following a fatality. Officers arrived after a station worker reported severe injury after an attack; the victim passed away despite medical aid. One suspect was apprehended and held. The station remained shut for further investigations during the day. [27][28]

### **Man Charged with Attempted Murder and Assault at Larbert Train Station (Scotland)**

An incident occurred at Larbert Train Station (Scotland) on 16 February 2024 which involved a 46-year-old man charged with attempted murder, assault, and weapon possession following a disturbance on a train at the station. [29]

### **Brighton Train Station Stabbing: Teen Attacker Denies Murder in Ongoing Trial (UK)**

Mustafa Momand, a teenager with a £20,000 drug debt, was stabbed near Brighton train station (UK) on 20 February 2024. The 16-year-old attacker denies intent for murder but admits to the act. The trial is ongoing at Brighton Crown Court. [30]

### **Fatal Stabbing at Mymensingh Railway Station Prompts Investigation (Bangladesh)**

Gopal Pal, a 45-year-old laborer, was fatally stabbed in a suspected mugging at Mymensingh Railway Station (Bangladesh) after disembarking from a train on 21 February 2024. The assailants fled the scene, leading to an investigation by Rail station Police. [31]

### **Police Investigate Train Arson Incidents (Bangladesh)**

Following two train arson incidents in Bangladesh, the Mohanganj Express fire in December 2023 and the Gopbagh incident in January 2024, police are still struggling to identify the culprits. [32]

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

### **Man Sought for Indecent Act Against Woman on A Train in London (UK)**

British Transport Police (UK) are actively searching for a man who reportedly masturbated on a late-night Elizabeth Line train in London on 27 February 2024. [33]





## THEFT

### SECURITY CONCERNS RISE IN KLAPMUTS OVER TRANSNET TRAIN HEISTS (SOUTH AFRICA)

Klapmuts (South Africa) residents are expressing concerns about the security of Transnet trains, due to the rise in train heists, particularly those involving thieves armed with bolt cutters and crowbars targeting freight trains. [20]

### ALARMING SURGE IN CARGO THEFT (USA)

Cargo theft in the United States has nearly doubled since 2019, with a 57% increase reported in 2023 alone. Retail businesses, such as Amazon, suffered significant losses, reaching \$112.1 billion in 2022 due to criminal activities. The Los Angeles basin has emerged as a major hotspot for cargo theft, particularly targeting freight trains transporting goods from ports, where criminals focus on containers loaded onto trains and trucks. [35][36]

### IDENTITY THEFT LINKED TRAIN USAGE (FRANCE)

Charly Acosta, a 20-year-old student, faced over €7,000 in fines from SNCF over two years due to identity theft. Despite never boarding the trains, he had to prove his innocence repeatedly. The theft occurred in Béziers (France), where he studied. SNCF advises other victims to contact their Identity Theft department promptly for help. [37]

### PARIS 2024 OLYMPICS DATA LOST AT GARE DU NORD STATION (FRANCE)

A bag containing a computer and two USB memory sticks with data about the Paris 2024 Olympics was lost by a City Hall engineer at Gare du Nord railway station on 26 February 2024. The incident led to an investigation into theft by transport police. Although the bag contained notes on traffic in Paris during the Olympics, it did not include sensitive security plans. [38][39][40][41][42][43][44]





## METAL

### **COPPER THEFT DISRUPTS EUROPEAN RAILWAYS**

Copper theft carried out by organized criminal networks is delaying thousands of trains and causing millions of euros worth of damage to rail infrastructure across Europe. As such, rail operators are increasing their defenses and exploring new technologies such as DNA marking to deter thieves. [45]

### **PRASA Enhances Security for Shosholoza Meyl Train Service (South Africa)**

In response to challenges such as vandalism and cable theft, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) has implemented various security protocols and measures to mitigate these issues and ensure the smooth operation of the Shosholoza Meyl train service. These include increased deployment of security personnel, utilization of surveillance technology, community engagement and policing efforts, installation of security fencing and barriers, asset protection strategies, development of emergency response plans, and public awareness campaigns. [46][47]

### **Marlboro County Authorities Arrest Suspects in CSX Railroad Metal Theft (USA)**

In December, Marlboro County (USA) law enforcement authorities apprehended two individuals accused of stealing metal from CSX railroad tracks. One of the arrested remains in custody. [48]

### **Stafford Metal Theft Incident Leads to Driver's Arrest and Truck Seizure (UK)**

On 4 February 2024, in Stafford (UK), a metal theft incident resulted in the apprehension of a driver and the seizure of his truck. The driver was allegedly caught in the act of stealing scrap metal, as captured by video surveillance. [49][50]

### **Cape Town Commuters Hit by Cable Theft (South Africa)**

In February 2024, cable theft halted train services in Cape Town (South Africa). Efforts to address this issue have included increased security measures, resulting in a significant number of arrests in the past. [51][52]

### **Copper Theft Disrupts Ube City Rail Service (Japan)**

In February, West Japan Railway Company reported the disappearance of over 100 copper cable components, known as rail bonds, in Ube City, leading to temporary train service suspensions for repair. Police are investigating the incident. [53]





### **British Transport Police Recover £150,000 in Metal Theft Crackdown (UK)**

In a targeted crackdown on metal theft in February 2024, the British Transport Police uncovered stolen goods valued at £150,000. The operation included the recovery of a substantial amount of stolen property. [54]

### **Four Arrested in Ghana for Railway Track Theft (Ghana)**

Four suspects were arrested in Ghana for stealing railway tracks in February. They were caught by police transporting the stolen railway lines in a truck. [55][56]

### **PRASA Theft Case Delayed: High Court Review Stalls for a Year (South Africa)**

A High Court review in the criminal case involving former PRASA acting CEO Mthuzeli Swartz and businessman Syed Mohiudeen, accused of stealing 42km of railway line in the Eastern Cape (South Africa), has been pending for a year without a set hearing date. The case, which dates back to 2019, has faced numerous delays, with Mohiudeen changing lawyers multiple times. [5]

### **Culcairn Rail Station Targeted in Copper Wire Theft (Australia)**

Two kilometers of copper wire were stolen at Culcairn (Australia) rail station reportedly to settle the debts of the accused. [59]

### **Theft Strikes Avon Valley Railway (UK)**

Criminals targeted the Avon Valley Railway (UK), stealing thousands of pounds worth of metal just after Christmas 2023. An investigation is underway to address the robbery. [60]

## **VANDALISM**

### **GRAFFITI ON TRAIN CARS PROMPTS WITNESS APPEAL (GERMANY)**

Towards the end of January 2024, two instances of graffiti vandalism on train cars occurred in Germany. The police have issued a call for witnesses. [34]







## SABOTAGE

### **BNP Leaders Arrested for Gazipur Rail Sabotage (Bangladesh)**

On 23 December 2024, two leaders linked to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) were arrested for their involvement in the Gazipur (Bangladesh) rail sabotage. The incident, which aimed to vandalize 72 fishplates on a railway line, caused a halt in train movement for about one and a half hours on the Domar-Chilahati route. The investigation revealed that the attack was planned at a meeting chaired by a BNP ward councilor. [61][62][63]

### **Villagers Prevent Disaster on Simanta Express with Timely Intervention (Bangladesh)**

Unidentified individuals removing fishplates on the Chilahati-Parbotipur rail tracks (Bangladesh) were caught by locals, who were able to recover 32 unscrewed fishplates. Alerting the approaching Simanta Express, they prevented a potential accident by waving lamps and cloths. Railway authorities repaired the tracks, restoring movement after one and a half hours. Investigations are ongoing to determine if the incident was sabotage or theft related. [64]

### **Fatal Sabotage Fire on Benapole Express Sparks Political Controversy (Bangladesh)**

On 6 January 2024, the Benapole Express train in Bangladesh caught fire in an intentional act of sabotage, leading to at least five fatalities. The incident occurred on the eve of elections, adding a political dimension. Investigations are ongoing. [65][66][67]



### **Man Sentenced for Attempted Rail Sabotage at Union Pacific Railroad (USA)**

A Nebraska (USA) man has been sentenced to a year in prison for attempted rail sabotage at Union Pacific railroad crossing in 2019. A 6-foot metal pipe was found lodged between the switch bar and rail and investigators discovered a green metal pipe in the suspect's pickup that matched the pipe at the track. [68]





### **Marshalling Yard Derailment Raises Sabotage Concerns (Latvia)**

The derailment of freight cars at the Marshalling B Yard (Latvia) on 26 February 2024 has raised questions about negligence or intentional sabotage at Latvian Railway (LDZ). The incident occurred due to the freight car brake system not being engaged, with LDZ workers responsible for train marshalling failing to respond. [69]

### **Sabotage Suspected in Vassijaure Derailment, Rail Border Closed (Sweden)**

Swedish police are treating a February 2024 derailment near Vassijaure, Sweden, along the Iron Ore Line, as sabotage. This incident has resulted in the closure of Europe's northernmost rail border crossing connecting Sweden and Norway. The derailment occurred shortly after the line had reopened following a previous incident in December. [70]

### **Vandals Spill Ukrainian Corn, Fourth Incident (Poland)**

Unknown vandals in Poland spilled Ukrainian corn from eight wagons at the Kotomez station on 25 February 2024, marking the fourth such incident in recent days. Previous incidents involved spilled beans and rapeseed at Polish railway stations. Poland has maintained an embargo on Ukrainian grain pending an EU decision. [71][72]

### **FRA PROPOSES RULE TO SECURE FREIGHT AGAINST NATIONAL THREATS (USA)**

In February 2024, the United States Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has proposed a rule aimed at protecting freight-rail security by ensuring that new freight rail cars in the U.S. are manufactured in countries that do not pose a national security threat, e.g. China. [73]

### **BRIDLINGTON STATION HONORS WWII RAILWAY HEROES WITH BLUE PLAQUES (UK)**

On 20 February 2024, Bridlington station (UK) unveiled blue plaques honoring local World War II railway heroes who bravely extinguished a fire on a train carriage full of ammunition during a bombing incident in July 1941. [74]





## DRUGS

### **MULTI-AGENCY OPERATION TARGETS DRUGS AT BRUGES TRAIN STATION (BELGIUM)**

The Belgian Federal Police conducted a significant control operation at Bruges train station (Belgium) in mid-January. This involved multiple agencies including the Railway Police, Federal Police, SNCB, including Securail agents, and the public prosecutor's office. A total of 18 trains were inspected, over 1000 passengers were checked, 35 searches were conducted, and 21 fines were issued, with a focus on drug-related offenses and illegal stays. [75]

## IRREGULAR MIGRATION

### **RAIL OPERATIONS AT TEXAS-MEXICO BORDER SUSPENDED (USA)**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) temporarily suspended rail operations at international railway crossing bridges in Eagle Pass and El Paso, Texas, from 18 - 22 December 2024, to assist the U.S. Border Patrol with increased migrant encounters at the Southwest Border. This decision was prompted by a resurgence of smuggling organizations using freight trains to transport migrants through Mexico. CBP prioritized border security and adjusted operations accordingly. [79][90]

### **TSA CONDUCTS CROSS-BORDER RAIL SECURITY TRAINING IN VANCOUVER (CANADA)**

The TSA (Transport Security Agency of the USA) conducted a training session in Vancouver, Canada, focusing on cross-border rail security threats, especially for passengers. The initiative aimed to enhance cooperation and information sharing between the United States and Canada to prevent terrorist attacks and improve security preparedness. [76]

### **INDIAN RAILWAYS TO DEPLOY FACIAL RECOGNITION (INDIA)**

Indian Railways is set to deploy facial recognition in CCTV cameras in thousands of coaches to enhance security. [77]

### **NORTH TOPEKA RAILROAD BURGLARY (USA)**

A railroad burglary in North Topeka (USA) on 28 February 2024, led to a loss of over half a million dollars and \$550,000 in damage to the Union Pacific Railroad. The suspect was caught fleeing the scene and arrested by police. [78]





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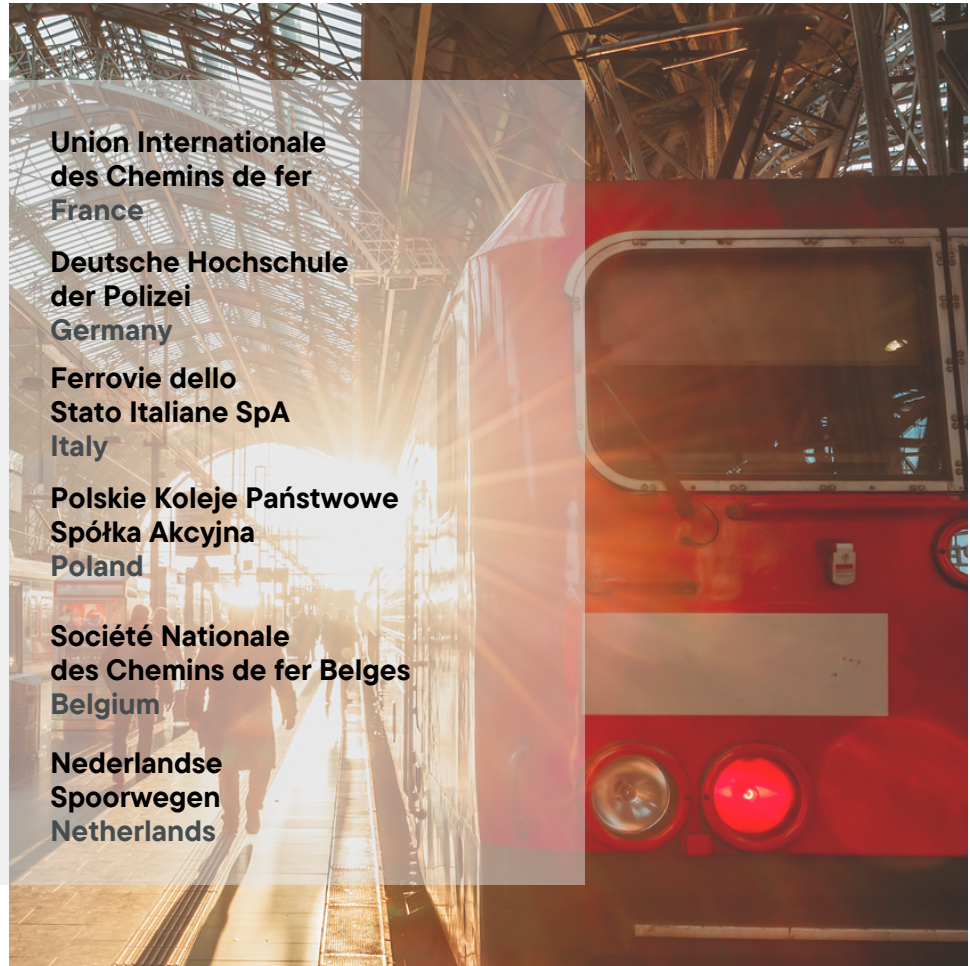
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