



REVIEW



Co-funded by
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1 March 2024 - 31 May 2024
Third Edition



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.

Call ID and Topic:

ISF-2022-TF1-AG-PROTECT

Grant Agreement No: 101100521

EU Contribution: € 952 546.63

Starting date: 1 June 2023

Duration: 24 months

Coordinator: UIC Security Division

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 1 March 2024 - 31 May 2024.

Based on keyword 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:

- Explosion, Aggression, Theft, Sabotage, Trafficking,
- Sexist and sexual violence and harassment,
- Hoaxes - false alerts, Abandoned luggage

The review also describes news item of relevance to rail security culture, trainings & more.



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EXPLOSION

Explosion halts train traffic in Hoshiarpur (India)

A low-intensity blast near Gate No. 71 on the Jalandhar-Jammu rail track in Hoshiarpur (India) on 1 March, caused public disorder and halted train movement. The explosion injured the gateman, leading to investigations into the circumstances surrounding the blast. [1] [2]

Minor explosion at Amsterdam Zuid station (The Netherlands)

On 26 March, there was a minor explosion at a ticket and service shop at Amsterdam Zuid station, whereby the police cordoned off the area to investigate and trains were not permitted to stop at the station. The situation resolved itself rather quickly. [3]

TRAINING

CSMT station safety exercise boosts passenger preparedness (India)

The Central Railway Civil Defense Organization in Mumbai conducted a special exercise at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus station on 7 March which focused on security and emergency preparedness. The initiative aimed to equip travelers with the knowledge and skills to respond effectively to unforeseen events. [4]

PRIME MINISTER COMMENDS RAIL STATION'S SECURITY EFFORTS (FRANCE)

French Prime Minister visited the Paris Saint-Lazare train station on 1 April. During the visit, he was honored to be presented with the railway security efforts and measures taken by the team to ensure the safety and security of passengers and facilities. [56]

NATIONAL POLICE CONDUCT NATIONWIDE RAIL SECURITY OPERATION (HUNGARY)

Hungarian police conducted a 24-hour international operation to ensure rail safety and security across the country in April. As part of the RAILPOL action, nearly 700 freight and passenger trains, as well as 589 stations, were checked by officers. The operation aimed to prevent and disrupt violent acts, detect unruly passengers, and address issues like metal theft, drug-related crime, and illegal migration. [5]

BENELUX ENHANCES CROSS- BORDER RAIL SECURITY (BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS AND LUXEMBOURG)

Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg are collaborating to improve security on trains crossing their borders. The "Railway Concertation" initiative strengthens cooperation between the countries' police services. Working together, the police can address issues like assaults on staff and drug-related disturbances, ensuring a safe, secure and comfortable journey for passengers on cross-border public transportation. [6]





AGGRESSION AGAINST PASSENGERS

Teens are sentenced after physically attacking a boy on a train (UK)

The three teenagers who brutally attacked a boy on a train, by kicking, jumping and stamping on him, which resulted in leaving him with heavy brain damage, were sentenced for more than three years each for attempted murder this May. The attack occurred on 15 October 2021. [7]

KNIFE ATTACKS

Police Appeal for Information After Knifepoint Robbery at Leatherhead Station (UK)

Police in Leatherhead have issued an appeal for information after a robbery at knifepoint occurred at a local train station on 2 March. Police are seeking the public's assistance in identifying the perpetrator. [8]

Jailed for stabbing a teen at Surrey train station (UK)

In Surrey, a stabbing at a train station stemmed from a confrontation among youths, leading to a man stabbing a teenager on 4 March. The perpetrator was arrested and jailed. [9] [10]

London train robber with 20-inch blade, sentenced to jail (UK)

A man, known as a "knife fanatic," has been sentenced to jail for a train robbery where he menaced a man with a 20-inch blade on a south London train. This incident led to his arrest and subsequent imprisonment on 7 March. [11]

Multiple individuals stabbed on train at Hasselt station (Belgium)

A 28-year-old man stabbed multiple individuals on a train at Hasselt station, leading to injuries and a temporary rail traffic suspension on 8 March. Bystanders subdued the assailant until police arrived, with investigations ongoing to determine the motive behind the attack. [12]

Knife attack on a Mumbai local train leads to death of victim (India)

One of the victims of a knife attack, which occurred on a Mumbai local train in early May, passed away. The perpetrator carried out the attack over a misunderstanding that he was being made fun of. [13]

Perpetrator of train knife attack jailed for life (Germany)

The perpetrator of the 2023 deadly train knife attack, whereby two people were killed and several others injured, was sentenced to life in prison in mid-May. [14]

Garda Intervention Halts Irish Rail Train due to Knife Threat (Ireland)

An Irish Rail train was stopped by Gardaí (Irish police) who came onboard to chase a man believed to have a knife on 9 April. [62]





KNIFE ATTACKS

Security guards halt knife-wielding attacker at Katowice station (Poland)

Security guards at Katowice station displayed bravery in February, stopping an aggressive man armed with a knife. Their swift action was recognized by Polish State Railways S.A. On 12 March, they received commendations and a financial reward, reinforcing the importance of security personnel in maintaining security. [15]

Manhunt launched after violent knife attack on London train (UK)

A man wielding a large knife stabbed a passenger on a Southeastern train in south London, leaving the victim fighting for their life on 27 March. The attack occurred between Shortlands and Beckenham Junction stations. Witnesses saw the suspect repeatedly stabbing the victim as passengers pleaded with him to stop. The attacker then fled, prompting a police manhunt. [16][17][18][19][20][21]

Suspect claims voices made him fatally stab man on Portland MAX train (USA)

A man allegedly used a butcher knife to stab another passenger to death on a MAX train in late March, claiming "voices" told him to commit the murder. [22]

Man sentenced to prison for carrying kitchen knife at train station (UK)

A 46-year-old man from Salford was sentenced to 6.5 months in prison for possessing a kitchen knife at Manchester Piccadilly railway station in March. British Transport Police (BTP) charged him with carrying a bladed article in a public place, and he pleaded guilty at court on 3 April. [23]

Ticketless traveler stabs four people, including a rail employee (India)

A passenger travelling without a ticket stabbed a railway coach attendant to death and injured three other, including a travelling ticket examiner and passengers, then jumped off the train and escaped, mid-May. Police are currently looking for the assailant. [50]



SEXIST AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Basque Railway boosts security with emergency totems initiative (Spain)

The Euskal Trenbide Sarea has installed 48 emergency totems at Basque railway stations, aiming to enhance security and inclusivity for all users in March. This initiative, supported by a national white paper on gender-inclusive design criteria for stations, aligns with regional efforts to promote sustainable mobility and environmental balance. [25]

Man sexually assaulted after falling asleep on train (UK)

A man was sexually assaulted after falling asleep on a train from London to Colchester on 22 March. The victim woke up to find another man assaulting him. Police launched an investigation but provided no further details. [26]

Security concerns raised for women commuters on Mumbai's local trains (India)

In May, concerns have been raised about the security of women commuters traveling on Mumbai's local train network. The Central Railway and Western Railway (both subsidiaries of Indian Railways) have launched an online survey to gather feedback from female passengers on their perceptions and experiences. [27]

Man sought for sexual assault after following a woman off a train (UK)

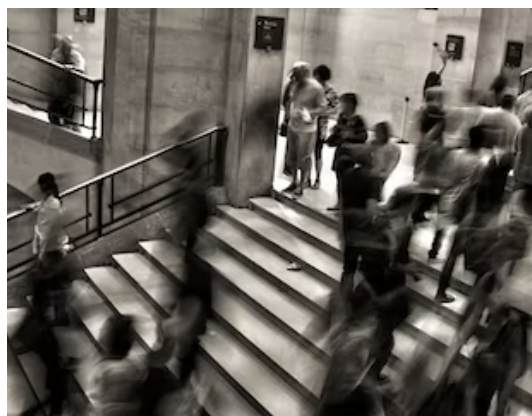
A woman was reportedly sexually assaulted by a man who followed her off a train and attacked her on a Tube station escalator in London on 18 February. Police have released CCTV images of the suspect and are appealing for the public's help to identify him. [28]

Man sexually assaults a teenage boy on a train in Glasgow (UK)

British Transport Police are currently searching for a man who sexually assaulted a teenage boy on a train leaving Glasgow (UK) on 18 May and ask any witnesses to come forward. [29]

CRACKDOWN ON YOUTH CRIME IN BARNHAM, WEST SUSSEX (UK)

Sussex Police have launched Operation Precinct to address ongoing issues with youth crime and anti-social behavior in Barnham, which have been occurring near the rail station. Since February 2024, 14 youths have been arrested as part of the crackdown. [30]





THEFT

BURGLARY INCIDENT IN CALIFORNIA (USA)

In east Bakersfield, a man was arrested on March 20 for disconnecting train rail cars in a burglary incident. The Union Pacific Railroad Police are investigating the collision. [31]

TEENAGE DUO APPREHENDED FOR THEFT AT PARTICK TRAIN STATION (UK)

Police were called to Partick train station in Glasgow after two teenagers were charged in connection with a theft incident on March 27. [32]

MAN DIES TRYING TO CATCH MOBILE PHONE THIEF (INDIA)

A man died after jumping from a moving train on March 28. The victim jumped off the train to apprehend the suspect who had snatched his phone, but the fall resulted in fatal injuries. Police later arrested the suspected thief and filed charges. [33]

GUILTY PLEAS FOR STEALING FROM ENTERPRISE TRAIN (IRELAND)

This April three people pleaded guilty to stealing baggage from an Enterprise train during the 2023 Christmas season when it stopped at the Newry station. [34]

NATIONAL RAILWAYS OF ZIMBABWE RAISE SECURITY ALERT (ZIMBABWE)

An increase in vandalism and theft have led the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) to call for increased stakeholder collaboration. Thanks to increased collaboration, the theft of materials such as spring fasteners is now punishable with a mandatory 10 year prison sentence. [35]

SPIKE IN THEFT INCIDENTS ON TRAINS TO BIHAR RAISES PASSENGER ALARM (INDIA)

In recent months, theft and drugging incidents on trains to Bihar have surged, alarming passengers. Reports show a significant increase compared to previous years. These incidents raise security concerns, with passengers being targeted by thieves and sometimes drugged. [45]





METAL

Railway theft ring busted in Plateau State (Nigeria)

Seven people were arrested in Plateau State for allegedly stealing railway infrastructure on 23 March. The suspects were found in possession of 60 tracks, 30 sleepers, and other materials. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) will charge the suspects after further investigation. [36]

Edmonton rail yard copper theft: trio nabbed, one suspect at large for \$10k heist (Canada)

Three men have been arrested in March 2024 and a fourth suspect is wanted in connection with the theft of approximately \$9,500 worth of copper wire from an Edmonton rail yard in September 2023. The incidents involved break-ins and cutting through fencing to access the Canadian National Railway storage yard. [37]

Theft of railway infrastructure surges along Laos-China Rail Line (Asian Region)

Theft of railway equipment has surged along the Laos-China railway, with the operator hiring more security guards in 2024. Despite increased security, thefts continue, with 71 arrests in 2023, up from 52 in 2022. The railway project faces an ongoing challenge from such theft. [38]

Thieves Target High-Voltage Cables (Germany)

In April 2024, rail traffic in Germany was severely disrupted when thieves stole high-voltage cables from a railway line, most likely for their copper content. The theft caused train delays and cancellations, affecting commuters and freight services. [39]

Cable theft leads to passenger disruptions and several fires (Spain)

Commuter rail in Barcelona and northeastern Spain suffered major disruptions due to cable thefts, some of which led to fires in the cable signaling system on 13 May. [40]

Insider Knowledge Used for Cable Theft Scheme (UK)

Using insider knowledge on where steel rails were stockpiled, criminal gang members have been sentenced for conspiracy to steal rail. The conspiracy was unearthed by the British Transport Police. Officials estimate that the losses caused to Network Rail were at least £1 million. [41]

Attempted cable theft disrupts rail services over holiday weekend (UK)

Due to an attempted signaling cable theft, rail services were disrupted in the West Midlands on 25 May, over a holiday weekend. [42][43]



PICKPOCKETING

Six arrested for thefts and pick-pocketing on railway routes in Rome (Italy)

Six people were arrested in Rome's province for thefts and pick-pocketing on railway routes in March, as authorities cracked down on criminal activity targeting passengers on the regional rail network. [44]



AGGRESSION AGAINST STAFF

Violent Incident at Barnham Railway Station (UK)

A group of young girls were involved in a violent attack on private security guards at Barnham Railway Station in West Sussex on 29 April. The girls assaulted the guards, punching and kicking them, prompting police intervention. [46]

Passenger takes conductor hostage in Agen (France)

A drunk passenger who missed his stop in Agen, France on 24 May, threatened and attacked train staff, held the conductor hostage for 15 minutes, and also attacked the police and the SUGE (French security agents) when they arrived on scene. The attacker was sentenced to 1 year. [47]

Train conductor allegedly assaulted in Larne (UK)

On 30 May, the accused was first asked to leave the train by the conductor when caught vaping. The conductor quickly realized the accused had left a charger behind, and when attempting to return the property, the accused began to physically attack the conductor. [48]

KICKED IN FACE DURING INCIDENT BETWEEN COUPLE AT LANCASHIRE STATION (UK)

A police officer was kicked in the face by a woman during an incident with a drunk couple at Lancashire railway train station on 31 March. [49]





SABOTAGE

Sabotage Attempt on Gabonese Railway Network (Gabon)

On 27 April, the Gabonese railway company Setrag reported an act of sabotage on their railway network. Unknown individuals placed obstacles on the rails with the intention of causing a train derailment. While a disaster was avoided, Setrag strongly condemns this criminal act and reserves the right to take legal action. [51]

TRAFFICKING

Combating illicit trade and smuggling on Ethiopia-Djibouti railway (Ethiopia)

On 2 April, stakeholders, including railway security, police, customs, and intelligence services met to discuss the need to prevent unlawful trade and smuggling by building on successes in resolving safety issues on the Ethiopia-Djibouti railway. All agreed to work together more closely to combat illicit activities along the corridor. [52]

Drug Trafficker Jailed After Spotted at Crewe Station (UK)

A man has been jailed after he was spotted at Crewe station carrying a suitcase containing £160,000 worth of cannabis. [53]

GRAFFITI

Man Arrested for Graffiti Vandalism on Northern Ireland Trains (UK)

A 20-year-old man has been arrested by the Police Service of Northern Ireland on 23 April on suspicion of spraying graffiti on a number of trains in the region. The arrest is part of an investigation into reports of train vandalism. [54] [55]

ABANDONED LUGGAGE

Suspicious package at Basingstoke train station (UK)

A security alert at Basingstoke train station on 3 April led to the station being closed and trains being stopped or delayed. The disruption lasted several hours until the item was deemed non-suspicious by police. [65]





HOAX - FALSE ALERTS

Bomb Threat Hoax on Gwalior-Barauni Express Train (India)

On 7 April, a bomb threat was reported on the Gwalior-Barauni Express train. The train was halted, and a search operation involving police, RPF, and the Army's bomb disposal unit found no explosives. The threat was determined to be a hoax, and the train was cleared to continue its journey. [57][58]

Rail traffic disrupted following bomb alert (Belgium)

Rail traffic was disrupted following a bomb alert on Eurostar trains on 18 March, leading to disruptions in Belgium. [59]

Bomb threat at Trani station (Italy)

On 25 March, a bomb threat was found in Trani station, written on a piece of paper where it was indicated that a biological device was in the station. After intervention of the police and other specialised responders, the threat was determined a hoax, and rail traffic was able to resume normally. [60] [61]

GARDAÍ RAMP UP RAIL PATROLS TO TACKLE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR (IRELAND)

In March, it was announced that Gardaí are stepping up patrols on the Cork-Dublin rail route to tackle rising anti-social behavior as part of the 2024 National Operation Twin Tracks campaign targeting public transport misconduct. [24]

SOLIHULL STATION INSTALLS WEAPONS SURRENDER BIN (UK)

A weapons surrender bin has been installed at Solihull Railway Station. The safe and secure metal box is intended for people to dispose of knives, blades, and other dangerous items. [63]



PARIS TRANSPORT OPERATORS AUTHORIZED FOR "INTELLIGENT" VIDEO SURVEILLANCE TRIAL (FRANCE)

Two decrees from the Paris police prefect have authorized SNCF and RATP to deploy "intelligent" video surveillance solutions in selected train stations and metro stations during upcoming events. The trial periods are set for April 19-22 and April 20-21, 2024, coinciding with a soccer match and a concert. [64]





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