



# REVIEW



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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.

### Call ID and Topic:

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## REVIEW

As part of the IMPRESS dissemination strategy, a media monitoring was carried out by the UIC Security Department on the topic of rail security from 01 September to 31 November 2024.

Based on keyword searches performed on X, LinkedIn, Google news & AP News, the following pages summarize the relevant news items found for the following threats:

Theft, Drugs, Aggression, Fraud, Trespassing, Vandalism, Security Measures, Terrorism, Hoax, Sabotage, Gender-based Violence, Knife attack & Active Shooter.

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



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## GENERAL THEFT

### RPF 2024 ACTIONS AGAINST THEFT (INDIA)

Throughout 2024, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) campaign against theft and property crime across the national railway network demonstrated operational efficiency. Western Railways reported over 6,200 theft cases from January to September, resulting in more than 1,300 arrests and utilizing advanced technologies like CCTV and Face Recognition Systems to resolve 528 cases [4].

The most remarkable anti-theft efforts happened on 7 September 2024 with a high-profile joint operation at Secunderabad station (India), where RPF, GRP and local detectives apprehended a notorious thief and recovered gold worth ₹21.60 lakh [1].

By mid-October 2024, RPF had arrested 152 individuals for stealing passenger valuables, recovering items valued at ₹94.02 lakh [3]. Additionally, a notable operation on 16 November 2024 saw RPF apprehending three thieves and recovering stolen electronics worth ₹1,49,000 [2][5]. Complementing these measures, Operation Amanat focused on returning unclaimed luggage, further reinforcing security and property protection [6].

## DRUGS

### DRUG OFFENSES AT BLACKPOOL (UK)

Adam Chothia was sentenced to 21-month in prison at Preston Crown Court on 2 September 2024, after pleaded guilty to possessing a bladed article and intent to supply class A drugs. He was found with nearly £5,000 worth of drugs and an eight-inch knife at the Blackpool North station (UK) by the British Transport Police [7].





## METAL THEFT

### **Stolen Cables Recovered (France)**

Police from the Nord region of France, Belgian police, and the French National Gendarmerie have recovered 325 kg of copper cables stolen from SNCF. In 2022, such thefts affected around 40,000 trains and cost SNCF approximately 20M euros. This operation aligns with the "Hazeldonk" cross-border cooperation framework, focusing on combating illicit trafficking and enhancing security in transportation networks [8].

### **Rail Cable Theft Increases (UK and Belgium)**

Signalling cable theft between Leeds and Huddersfield/Wakefield, Kirkgate/Castleford caused significant disruptions to train services on 20 November 2024 in West Yorkshire (UK). All lines were blocked, resulting in cancellations, delays of up to 45 minutes, and route revisions. This incident echoes a similar event that occurred on 5 September 2024 in Belgium, where cable theft disrupted train services between Ghent and Brussels [9][10].

### **Cable Theft Disrupts Padma Rail Link (Bangladesh)**

A series of cable thefts disrupted the Padma rail link project (Bangladesh) on 22 September 2024, causing significant malfunctions in the signal system and posing a serious security risk. Thefts targeted essential copper cables at five newly established railway stations, including Munshiganj's Mawa station, affecting the Computer-Based Interlocking (CBI) signaling system. It caused trains to be unable to stop at designated platforms and passengers to be forced to board and disembark from the tracks. Railway officials urge the public to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activities near railway lines to help combat cable theft [11].







## AGGRESSION AGAINST STAFF

### GTR INTENSIFIES CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR (UK)

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) has launched a £2.5 million Antisocial Behaviour Improvement Plan to address rising staff assaults, with key measures including doubling Travel Safe Officers, training and educational programs at schools and deploying 1,500 body-worn cameras. A trial in West Coastway (UK) demonstrated a 60% reduction in antisocial incidents, prompting a network-wide rollout. The initiative aims to create a safer environment through enhanced enforcement and collaboration with British Transport Police [12].



### STAFF ASSAULTED ON MUMBAI EXPRESS (INDIA)

An attack occurred on the Mumbai Express train (India) on 11 December 2024, resulting in injuries to two railway staff members: a coach attendant and an assistant. Both victims were assaulted in one of the air-conditioned coaches of the Mumbai Express, a train that typically runs between Mumbai and other major cities [13].

### VIOLENCE ERUPTS AFTER TRAIN FATALITY (EGYPT)

On 21 October 2024, a tragic incident occurred near Cairo (Egypt), when a train struck and killed two children crossing a restricted railway intersection in Bilaydah (Egypt). Following the accident, an enraged crowd confronted the railway guard stationed at the crossing, blaming him for the children's deaths. The situation escalated as the mob attacked the guard and set fire to his monitoring post [14].







## FRAUD



### SCAMMERS TARGET EAST MIDLANDS RAILWAY (UK)

East Midlands Railway (EMR) has issued a warning to passengers about a surge in fake social media accounts posing as the company. Since August 2024, fraudulent accounts have been identified on X, using EMR's profile name, bio, and images to deceive users [15].

### RISING ILLEGAL TRAIN RIDES (SOUTH KOREA)

Korail plans to crack down on illegal train rides by 2024, following over 1 million fare evasion cases since 2019. Offenders face fines up to 30 times the fare, with habitual violators paying retroactive fines of over 200,000 Won [16].

### WHATSAPP HELPLINE TO COMBAT UNAUTHORIZED TRAVEL (INDIA)

Central Railway has re-launched a WhatsApp helpline to address the issue of unauthorized travel in first-class and air-conditioned (AC) local trains in Mumbai. This initiative aims to ensure that only passengers with valid tickets are traveling on these premium coaches [17].





## TRESSPASSING

### BRITISH RAILWAY FACES RISING TRESSPASSING INCIDENTS (UK)

In 2024, the UK railway system faced numerous disruptions with over 200 track intrusions reported from January to August [20]. In September, a near-miss involving children on the Heart of Wales line prompted an emergency police response. Additionally, overcrowding and a trespasser at London Euston station led to calls for security improvements [18]. Police responded to trespassers at Broadstairs Railway Station on 6 October, resulting in a power shutdown for security [19]. And, on 22 November, an incident between Wolverhampton and Birmingham New Street caused further service delays, though lines were eventually reopened [21].

## VANDALISM

### Vande Bharat Window Smashed (India)

A viral video showed a man smashing the window of a stationary Vande Bharat Express train with a hammer, sparking widespread debate on social media on September 2024 [22].

### NSCDC Tackles Railway Vandalism (Nigeria)

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) has arrested 267 railway vandals and secured 16 convictions over the past 3 years. Most arrests were made by the Commandant General's Special Intelligence Squad, with Kaduna State identified as a major hotspot. Recent incidents include the arrest of 47 suspected vandals by the Nigerian Army in June 2024 [23].

### Police Arrest Two for Vandalizing SGR Train (Kenya)

On 22 November 2024 police in Dodoma arrested two boys for throwing stones at a Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) train, damaging two windows. The incident occurred as the train traveled from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma (Kenya). The suspects admitted they were curious about the train's speed [24].





## SECURITY MEASURES

### **Indian Railways Boosts Security with New Measures to Prevent Sabotage (India)**

In September 2024, Indian Railways rolled out multiple security initiatives to improve passenger security and prevent sabotage. Nagaland set up three 24/7 police checkpoints at Dimapur station to verify passenger identities. As well, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav announced a Rs 15,000 core project to install AI-powered CCTV cameras across 40,000 coaches, 14,000 locomotives, and 6,000 EMUs [25][26][27].

### **DNA Technology Deployed to Combat Cable Theft (UK)**

Cable theft on the East Coast Mainline has caused major disruptions. In response, Network Rail and British Transport Police are using UV-marking DNA technology to track criminals. The initiative, along with drones and covert cameras, aims to reduce thefts, which cost £4 million and caused 55,000 minutes of delays last year [28][29][30].

### **AI-Powered Security on South Africa's Passenger Trains (South Africa)**

The Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) has implemented an AI-based security system to protect its rail infrastructure. This system includes an intelligent e-guarding perimeter that alerts a central control center to security breaches, such as cable theft or vandalism [31].

### **SNCF New CSR Initiative for 2024-2025 (France)**

SNCF has unveiled a Corporate Security Responsibility initiative for its Railway Security Division. Key measures include eco-friendly patrol vehicles, energy-efficient equipment and collaboration with local organisations to promote safety and inclusion. The initiative also emphasizes ethical practices, including training on human rights and diversity, and investment in AI-powered surveillance [32].







## TERRORISM



### BOMBING AT QUETTA STATION (PAKISTAN)

On 9 November 2024, a suicide bombing at the Quetta railway station killed 32 people and injured 62. The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the attack, which targeted civilians and security personnel. The blast caused significant damage, prompting emergency services to assist the wounded and the government to declare 3 days of mourning [33].

## BOMB HOAXES

### WWII BOMB FOUND (UK)

Rail services between Leeds and York (UK) were disrupted due to a suspected unexploded WWII bomb found near the Cross Gates area on 9 October 2024. The train routes between Leeds and Micklefield were closed, causing delays and cancellations until 21:00 BST. Authorities and bomb disposal experts were called, and alternative travel arrangements were implemented. The disruption ended at 21:57 BST the same day [34][35].

### BOMB HOAX HALTS TRAIN FOR 3 HOURS (INDIA)

The Puri-New Delhi Purushottam Express (India) was halted for over 3 hours at Tundla Railway Station on 10 October due to a bomb scare triggered by a tip-off on X (the social media platform). The alert prompted a thorough search from 2:30 am to 6:00 am (local time). However, after thorough investigation, authorities confirmed that it was a false alert [36].





## SABOTAGE

### RPF AGAINST SABOTAGE (INDIA)

India has seen a disturbing rise in railway sabotage cases throughout 2024, with over 200 incidents reported since June 2023 [41][45]. Notable events include a stone-pelting attack on the Sutlej Express [37][46][50], a near-disaster on the Kalindi Express due to an LPG cylinder on the tracks and derailment attempts using cement blocks in Ajmer [38] [39][40][44][47]. Other hazardous materials have been found on tracks in Punjab and Madhya Pradesh [48][51][52]. Authorities are investigating multiple sabotage cases, including a suspicious train collision in Tamil Nadu and a staged sabotage in Surat [42] [43][49].





## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT OFFENCE INVESTIGATION (AUSTRALIA)**

Two men have been arrested as part of Operation Waratah 2, targeting public transport offenders in Sydney (Australia). This operation began on 29 November 2024, focusing on assaults and sexual offenses on public transportation. The arrests occurred on 7 December 2024, following the release of images of 15 persons of interest, bringing the total identified suspects to five [53].

### **N.F. RAILWAY SUPPORTS SECURITY OF WOMEN PASSENGERS (INDIA)**

The Northeast Frontier (N.F.) Railway has implemented several new measures to improve the security of women passengers. These initiatives include increased surveillance through CCTV cameras in coaches and stations, deployment of Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel on vulnerable routes, and the 'Meri Saheli' initiative, which focuses on women traveling alone on long-distance trains. Additionally, awareness campaigns and frequent public announcements are being conducted to educate passengers on safety precautions [54].

### **CAUGHT FOR TRAIN ASSAULTS (CANADA)**

Durham Regional Police have arrested Christopher Otoo in connection with two assaults on women aboard GO trains on 11 November 2024. The first incident occurred at Pickering GO Station, where a 50-year-old woman was seriously injured. An hour later, a second assault involved a 33-year-old woman who sought help from nearby citizens. Otoo faces multiple charges, including assault causing bodily harm and theft under \$5,000 [55].







## KNIFE ATTACKS

### AGAINST PASSENGERS

#### **Acquitted in Beckenham Train Stabbing Case (UK)**

Rakeem Thomas has been acquitted of all charges related to a train stabbing, after claiming self-defense in September 2024. He said the victim, who had previously stabbed him, owned the knife. The altercation happened during a brief train journey in March 2024, and the victim suffered life-threatening injuries but refused to cooperate with the police [56][57].

#### **Knife Causes Panic on Ernad Express in Kerala (India)**

A passenger armed with a knife caused panic in Kerala (India) on 24 September. The individual boarded the train and began brandishing the weapon. Passengers managed to subdue the suspect, who was later handed over to railway staff at Cheruvathur station. The suspect was taken into custody by the Chandera Police [58].

#### **Barricades During Knife Attack at Train Station (UK)**

Ronald Whelan injured a man in a knife attack at Blundellsands and Crosby Station in August 2024 and pleaded guilty on 18 November 2024, receiving a 15-month suspended sentence and community service. The altercation, sparked by a bag left on a seat, escalated when Whelan brandished a knife, injuring the victim's hand. A witness barricaded her children and later helped the victim [59].

#### **Stabbing in Taiwan High-Speed Train (Taiwan)**

On 16 November 2024, Chen was arrested for attacking a woman on a Taiwan High-Speed Rail train. After blocking the entrance, he punched the woman and brandished a 30-centimeter dagger, stabbing a tray table before fleeing at Taipei Station. After his arrest, he claimed the knife was for self-defense and faces charges of public intimidation and assault [60][61].

#### **Teen Stabs to Death Over Seat Dispute (India)**

A 16-year-old boy has been detained for fatally stabbing a man at Ghatkopar station in Mumbai (India) after a quarrel over a seat on a train beginning the previous day. Police arrested the minor on 20 November 2024, using CCTV footage to identify him. His older brother was also arrested for allegedly aiding in hiding the murder weapon. The minor has been sent to a juvenile detention center [62].





## AGAINST STAFF

### **Man in Squid Game Costume Brandished a Knife at Police (Australia)**

A man dressed in a Squid Games costume was tasered after approaching a police officer with a knife at Central Station on 7 September 2024 [63].

### **Train Conductor Stabbed in Genoa (Italy)**

A train conductor was stabbed by a 21-year-old Egyptian passenger on a regional train near Genoa (Italy) on 4 November 2024. The attacker became aggressive when asked for tickets, leading to the stabbing after the conductor requested him to disembark from the train. The conductor was hospitalized in a serious but stable condition [64].

### **21-Year-Old Sentenced for Stabbing Station Staff (UK)**

A 21-year-old man has been jailed for stabbing London station staff after being told to move away from the entrance due to his aggressive behavior against passengers on 20 October 2024. The court proceedings revealed the man's actions were both violent and unprovoked [65].

## AGAINST PASSENGERS AND STAFF

### **KNIFE CRIME ON BRITISH RAILWAYS (UK)**

On 3 September 2024, armed police searched for a machete-wielding man near a train station in Stoke-on-Trent [66]. Despite a heavy police presence and a nearby school lockdown, no suspect was found. Later, 7 September, a British Transport Police officer was stabbed in an unprovoked attack at Preston Railway Station during a festival, injuring a rail staff member as well [67][68]. Finally, in another incident on 14 October, police seized 18 knives and drugs from a man during a stop-and-search operation at Edmonton Green train station, targeting gang-related violence [69].





## ACTIVE SHOOTER

### FATAL CHICAGO TRAIN SHOOTING (USA)

Rhanni Davis was charged with 4 counts of first-degree murder following a shooting on a CTA Blue Line train that left four people dead on 3 September 2024. The victims were reportedly asleep when Davis opened fire. He is being held without bond and will appear in court later this month [70].







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