



# WORLD CUP SECURITY

Gavin Hepburn explores what's being done to keep football fans visiting Russia this summer safe.

**T**his summer the biggest sporting event on the planet, the World Cup, will officially kick off in Russia on 14 June. The opening game will mark the first of 65 games played across 11 different Russian cities, including Saint Petersburg, Sochi and Kazan.

While the majority of fans will be watching the games via a television, laptop or smartphone, Russia itself is braced to receive around 1.5 million fans from across the globe, who will descend on the cities and venues staging the events. But, while millions of extra tourists will bring greater financial rewards to Russia, they also present security personnel with the challenge of keeping busy public areas safe.

The world is currently enduring times of great uncertainty, following the recent surge in terror-related attacks that have taken place in major cities including London, Barcelona and Nice. Russia has also experienced two high-profile terror attacks over the past year. The first was in April 2017, when a bomb was detonated at a metro station in St Petersburg and then in August, an attack was carried out in Siberia, where seven people were fatally stabbed.

Despite Russian security forces preventing 25 terror attacks throughout the course of 2017, in addition to quashing more than 50 terrorist cells, the fear is that more attacks could occur at this year's World Cup. Terrorist propaganda has already threatened the

**Russian riot policemen take part in special security exercises at the Saint Petersburg Stadium**

sporting event through a series of posters encouraging terrorists to target the event.

With the real possibility of an attack happening, it is vital that security efforts at this year's World Cup are stepped up to safeguard fans and prevent them from becoming victims of an incident. But what measures are being taken already to prevent and reduce the risk of an attack from happening?

## FAN ID

Following the increased terror threat, Russian organisers and security personnel have implemented a series of measures designed to prevent a future attack. For instance, in order for fans to enter a stadium, they will need their passport, their match ticket and a Fan ID – a laminated piece of paper showing the spectator's name and photograph. The idea of the Fan ID is that it forces every spectator to be checked and approved prior to events taking place. And as the delivery of ID's can be anywhere from six to 30 days, it eliminates people being able to sell on their tickets to other individuals just before the event. The aim of this is to prevent an attacker from gaining lawful entry into the stadium, where they then may carry out an attack on innocent spectators.

Further steps have seen the Russian Government restrict the sale of dangerous goods, such as weapons, explosives and poisons, in regions where the World Cup is held or any of the attending teams are to play,

train and stay. In addition, any factories that produce any form of dangerous goods, and which are close to any of the 12 venues, will be forced to close for the duration of the tournament.

Security officials have also been swift to ban the use of drones near any of the stadiums that are staging games. The move to ban drones comes at a time when the miniature flying devices are getting more popular with the public, but also with terror groups. Recent reports taken from encrypted messaging platforms and terrorist propaganda have shown drones being used to drop explosives and also as platforms to carry suicide bombers.

## TRAINS PLANES AND TRANSPORT

In response to the increasing threat, Russian officials have stated that there will be upgraded security on trains and planes used to transport the attending football squads between venues and their training facilities to prevent any harm from coming to them.

But while the Russian Government is taking proactive steps to prevent future attacks from happening, more can still be done. From the recent attacks that have taken place in London and Barcelona, it's clear that vehicles are now the preferred tool used by terrorists to wreak havoc very quickly. The reasons for this is that vehicles are easily accessible, as they can be rented, purchased or stolen, and can be used to cause maximum destruction in a small time frame.

Of course, increased security checks, greater security personnel and bans on the sale and use of dangerous goods and drones may prevent bomb attacks and attacks carried out by people on foot. However, these measures will do little in the way of preventing a vehicle travelling at speed from

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mounting a curb and targeting pedestrians. So, security and event officials should also be looking at physical security measures to protect the perimeter of the World Cup venues.

With hostile vehicles now increasingly being used as weapons by terrorists to cause harm, effective security solutions must be deployed around busy public areas and critical national infrastructure – areas that seem to be the prime target for these kinds of attacks. One of the most effective ways to bring a vehicle to a halt is to install barriers and bollards around the perimeter of popular sites.

We have already seen variations of barriers being installed across cities in response to the recent terror attacks. In London, for instance, large concrete barriers have been deployed across Westminster and London Bridge, following the vehicle attacks that took place last year. Ahead of the 2017 Christmas markets, large concrete deterrents were also utilised to prevent a hostile vehicle from mounting the pavement and causing damage in various cities, such as Manchester and Southampton. According



to our latest report, almost a third (29 percent) of people welcomed the deployment of visible security measures, such as bollards and barriers, at events to increase security against vehicle attacks. Therefore, utilising barriers to not only keep people safe, but also to make them feel more comfortable in large, open areas would likely be a positive and welcome move in Russia.

But, while traditional concrete structures will bring a vehicle to a halt, their size and presence can create additional dangers in some circumstances. Looking at Westminster Bridge in London, the size of the barriers that have been placed there have caused a series of issues for cyclists, as in order for them to

## SECURITY OFFICIALS HAVE BANNED THE USE OF DRONES NEAR STADIUMS THAT ARE HOSTING GAMES

be deployed, cycle lanes had to be narrowed. This has forced cyclists to ride close to the road in the path of oncoming traffic. Luckily security manufacturers have identified the problems concrete barriers create and are continuously innovating and improving security measures that can defend against the latest terror threats, while making them less disruptive to the lives of everyday civilians.

Following innovations in barrier security, new temporary Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) barriers have been developed that can withstand the direct impact of a vehicle colliding into them, making them

an effective solution that could be employed to protect the perimeter of the stadiums in Russia. Advancements in barriers have meant that some products are now capable of bringing a large vehicle weighing 7,200kg travelling at 32kph to a complete standstill.

### STAYING MOBILE

Just as importantly, certain barriers have been designed to come in lightweight modular components, enabling them to be transported, assembled and deconstructed extremely quickly. With some barriers able to be deployed in under an hour, this makes them the ideal solution for securing temporary events. Roads and streets can be shut off, secured and reopened immediately before and after the event, creating as little disruption as possible to road users and citizens. Some HVM barriers have also been designed to be permeable, allowing people to pass through them with ease. With some of the World Cup stadiums able to hold over 80,000 people, enabling them to flow in and out of the venues quickly and safely is highly important to prevent queues forming, where terrorists could cause maximum damage with a vehicle.

The 2018 World Cup looks set to be another great spectacle, thanks to the range of fantastic stadiums that will stage each football game and bring supporters from all over the globe to Russia. However, with the world becoming a more volatile and dangerous place due to more and more terror attacks being carried out, it is important that security is proactively stepped up. It is crucial that security professionals and event organisers learn lessons from the incidents of 2017 and implement effective security measures to protect fans, civilians and preserve the nature of the tournament ●

**Gavin Hepburn** is the sales and marketing director at ATG Access and has built up 14 years of experience within the security industry. He has also successfully established a large range of export links and lucrative distributorship networks across the globe.

**Gendarmes patrol the streets of Toulouse at Euro 2016**

