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FOCUS ON / URBAN SECURITY

CASE STUDY

SMITHS DETECTION HELPS SECURE A STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT RAILWAY LINK IN ETHIOPIA

SUMMARY

A crucial new railway link has been opened which is designed to facilitate international trade and boost the Ethiopian economy. Keeping this route secure is of fundamental importance to the landlocked African country. Working with Ethiopia's national security services, Smiths Detection has provided a range of scanners that will help prevent threats to trains on this crucial new piece of infrastructure.

THE CHALLENGE

The 750km railway from Addis Ababa to the Red Sea coast provides a vital connection between landlocked Ethiopia and the port of Djibouti, a strategic trade hub for Asia, Europe and the rest of Africa. As much as 95% of Ethiopia's imports and exports travel through this port.

The new railway line means that a three- or four-day road trip for haulage trucks can be replaced by a mere 10-hour rail journey. This new infrastructure is thus set to have a huge impact on the development of the country's industry. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti route is the longest electrified railway in Africa and forms the first stage of a planned 5,000km rail network that Ethiopia hopes to build by 2020, connecting it to Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan.

The line was initially used to transport government freight, followed by commercial cargo and then passenger services. Some stations are cargo only, while others handle both freight and passengers. Starting with one train per day in each direction, the schedule will increase to three daily trains, each with a cargo capacity of 3,500-4,000 tons.

Such critical infrastructure demands effective security and the Ethiopian Railways Corporation (ERC) followed a meticulous process in establishing how to protect this strategically significant route, keep people safe and maintain the free flow of trade. It carried out extensive research into different technologies and suppliers, which was backed up by recommendations from organisations in other countries that already cope with similar security challenges.

THE SOLUTION

In support of Ethiopia's national security services, a range of 39 Smiths Detection scanners are being deployed (during June and July 2018) to help prevent threats from making their way onto trains at 16 stations along the Addis Ababa-Djibouti route. The equipment offers high-speed, accurate screening for hand baggage, larger items of luggage and cargo, ranging from compact scanners for personal belongings to large

X-Ray systems for goods pallets. In total, Smiths Detection is providing 18 HI-SCAN 6040i scanners, 12 HI-SCAN 9075HR machines, and nine HI-SCAN 145180-2is devices.

THE RESULT

Public transportation networks – like government buildings, prisons, public places and arenas –are highly susceptible to ongoing threats and attacks from a range of lethal weapons and explosive devices. Smiths Detection's solutions are designed to respond to constantly changing threats. The range of Smiths Detection scanners deployed on the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway route will help protect the safety of people and goods, and keeping this crucial new infrastructure safe will benefit the Ethiopian economy.

"Our research confirmed that Smiths Detection is a key player, with extensive experience in ensuring the safety of people and assets," explained Behailu Sintayehu, ERC's chief officer, engineering procurement department. "The company fulfilled our criteria of good-quality equipment, reliability and reputation – plus the various tender requirements which were validated by independent technical specialists. ERC would like to thank the Smiths Detection teams who did a wonderful job. We were very impressed by the face-to-face negotiations and the great support provided throughout and we look forward to our relationship continuing beyond the first installations and into the future."

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