



# Attacks on Drivers of International Heavy Goods Vehicles

## Survey Results



*International  
Road Transport  
Union*



INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT UNION (IRU)

**ATTACKS ON DRIVERS OF  
INTERNATIONAL HEAVY  
GOODS VEHICLES:  
Survey Results**

**2008**

## INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT UNION (IRU)

The International Road Transport Union (IRU), founded in Geneva on 23 March 1948, is an international organisation which looks after the interests of the road transport industry worldwide. Via its network of national Member Associations, it represents the operations of buses, coaches, taxis and trucks, from large fleets to individual owner-operators.

The IRU started as a grouping of national associations in eight western European countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Today, it has 180 Members in more than 70 countries, across all five continents.

The IRU's Active Members, with full voting rights, are all national road transport associations. The IRU's Associate Members are drawn from industries that have close ties with road transport, including the manufacturers of vehicles, fuels, tyres and information systems.

The IRU's tried and tested collaborative approach is summed up in its slogan: "Working together for a better future".

The IRU helps to solve problems affecting road transport and promotes the professional competence of the sector, to reinforce the quality of services it offers. It defends customers' freedom of choice between transport modes and the equal regulatory treatment of all modes. It works, with its Members, to ensure the harmonious development of road transport and to improve its image. It represents the road transport industry to public authorities, private bodies and the media. It promotes co-operation and complementarities with other modes of transport. Its activities fall under two strategic priorities: sustainable development and facilitation of progress of the road transport industry.

IRU Members contribute know-how, experience and political weight to the organisation's worldwide network. With its democratic structure, the IRU is able to act globally, nationally and even locally, thanks to the commitment and support of all its Members. IRU Members' unity gives the sector authority, credibility and strength when addressing governments, inter-governmental bodies, other industrial sectors and civil society.

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Further information about the IRU is available on Internet at the following address:

**[www.iru.org](http://www.iru.org)**

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## FOREWORD

Terrorist atrocities around the world have drawn increasing attention to the fragility of systems involved in the international movement of people and goods.

Moreover, legitimate trade has been used by criminals as cover for other illicit activities, including cargo and vehicle theft with or without attacks on drivers, illegal migration, drug trafficking, money laundering, Customs and transit fraud, movement of counterfeit goods and other offences threatening human health and life, the well-being of national societies and the international community. There is also the danger of the two “illegal worlds”, i.e. criminal and terrorist, becoming interfaced.

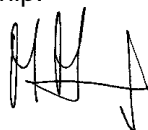
Today, security is, rightly, among the highest corporate priorities for those involved in the international movement of goods. However, it must be considered that facilitation of trade, hence transport, cannot be ignored, even when security considerations are high on the agenda.

The international Survey initiated by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), predecessor of the International Transport Forum (ITF), and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) has targeted one of the specific concerns stemming from criminal activities: attacks on international drivers involving, almost systematically, the theft of the cargo, the vehicle and the driver’s personal belongings.

The results of the survey presented in this report are enlightening and they will help to understand the problem, clarify attack characteristics and dimensions, quantify the huge economic and other losses engendered by attacks and identify the best possible tools and means to protect international drivers’ life and health as well as their vehicles and the cargo in the load compartments. This, by hammering out the right response to incidents and implementing the best preventive measures by the driver, the transport company, shippers, Trade Unions, Authorities and many other actors concerned.

The IRU acknowledges that not all data from international truck drivers’ responses given to a questionnaire or in Face-to-Face interviews can be considered as the most reliable source of information on this delicate subject matter. The sporadic and therefore anecdotic evidence otherwise available today concerning attacks on drivers cannot be considered sufficient either. Therefore, the IRU trusts that the information collected, structured and analysed may be regarded as an attempt to broaden the knowledge about the unfortunately growing trend of attacks on drivers and other related crime.

We know that crime is a social issue. It does not mean however that we should just sit back and expect an external panacea to come to remedy this social plague. On the contrary, we all should act in our own domain. This is why we invite all actors involved to improve supply chain security in true Public- Private Partnership.



Martin Marmy  
Secretary General, IRU

## AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The International Road Transport Union (IRU) would like to sincerely thank all organisations who participated in this study, in particular the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), which initiated this study with the IRU.

The IRU would particularly wish to acknowledge the efforts and support of their member associations, and expresses its gratitude to the individual drivers, transport managers, and trade unions who provided their experience for the study.

The IRU thanks transport security consultant Frank Heinrich-Jones and his team for carrying out the survey and analysis.

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The IRU assumes full responsibility for the contents of this study. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and its member countries.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### The Problem

Since the tragic events in the United States on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, it has been increasingly recognised that all transport modes are at risk from terrorism and crime. Those involved in road freight transport also face a number of specific challenges, which include theft of goods and vehicles, attacks on truck drivers, illegal immigration, special risks related to the movement of dangerous goods by road, as well as smuggling. In addition to these often crime-related challenges, authorities and operators must remain vigilant to possible terrorist use or targeting of vehicles and infrastructure. These challenges – and their responses – pose serious daily problems for all actors involved in this sector: the drivers, transport companies, police / law enforcement agencies, authorities, politicians, trade associations, unions, insurers, truckstop operators and other players.

Road freight transport, a vital element of international production schemes, trade and economic relations across frontiers in Europe and elsewhere, faces this challenge of enhanced security requirements against the background of a highly competitive road freight market. The number of vehicle thefts and freight robbery incidents appear to be increasing in many countries. The need to protect drivers, their vehicles and the freight carried is now becoming an issue of increasing concern. It can however be noted with satisfaction that measures of protection and prevention have already proved efficient in a few countries.

Indeed, much work has already been done to address many of the multiple threats faced by the European transport sector. One type of threat in particular, attacks on international HGV drivers, has consistently been cited as a significant problem. To date, however, information needed to better understand the nature and scale of the problem and its consequences on transport drivers, companies and the sector as a whole has been lacking and only anecdotal evidence of attacks on drivers has been available.

The apparent reasons for this are varied: drivers frequently do not inform the police of the attacks for multiple reasons such as language difficulty and lack of trust in authorities and insufficient information about where and to whom the attacks should be reported. When they are reported, these incidents are very often not centrally recorded or properly responded to. Indeed in many countries a comprehensive policy and decision-making framework at local and national level is not yet in place to countervail spreading crime on the roads. The most effective measures to fight crime, such as for example, a wider use of protective devices on board vehicles, providing sufficient secure truck parking areas, setting up efficient and accessible incident reporting and recording structures, implementing intra-company preventive and protective security measures, raising awareness, improving training and so on, are, in most countries, not or hardly implemented.

## **The study**

To address these concerns the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) began in June 2005 a joint survey on attacks on international HGV drivers.

This study is based on a survey of international HGV drivers, their managers and competent authorities conducted in 2005 and 2006. The survey was conducted through an Internet based questionnaire and a series of random face-to-face interviews with HGV drivers in or near five locations: Berlin (Germany), Budapest and Szeged (Hungary), several locations near London (UK) and Turin (Italy) as well as several sites in Bulgaria. A total of 2 003 completed driver questionnaires have been analysed of which 1 275 were obtained from face-to-face (FTF) random driver interviews.

In addition to this experience, responses to specific questions were obtained from 248 transport companies and Authorities of 31 countries across Europe.

## **Objectives of the study**

This study sets out to better ascertain the nature and scale of attacks on international HGV drivers operating in Europe and how governments are addressing this problem. Evidence of the magnitude of the problem, the methods used to carry out the attacks and costs in terms of both commercial loss and human suffering are explored. The report proposes practical recommendations for consideration and implementation by each 'actor / stakeholder' concerned.

## **Note on methodology and limitations of data provided**

This document does not claim to be a broad scientific study. It presents the results of a survey carried out with 2,003 international drivers and supplemented by certain information from governmental authorities (31), companies (248) and some unions.

The findings of the study outlined below and more comprehensively in Chapter 9 should be considered in light of the limited quantity and – depending on the country – lack of robustness of the data provided. A general lack of *reporting* of attack incidents immediately after the event by drivers and transport companies to the Authorities has led to a lack of recognition among authorities of the extent of the problem. Not recognised in policy at an international level and at a national level in many countries, attacks on drivers of international HGVs are only tracked and monitored in half of the countries reporting in the survey.

Furthermore, because of the relatively small size of the statistical sample, the study cannot be considered representative of all attacks in the region; many countries particularly concerned by the international road transport business in the Europe-Asia corridors particularly frequented did not supply answers or did not take part in the survey. The results of this survey must therefore be analysed with consideration for the inherent limits of the methodology used.

## Summary of Findings

Taking into account the uncertainties of the information highlighted above, the key findings of the study include the following:

- Out of the total of 2 003 replies to the Questionnaire, 476 primary attacks on drivers were reported during the survey.
- 227 attacks were recorded during the random Face-to-Face (FtF) interviews.
- 1 in 6 (or 17%) of all 1 275 random FtF interviewed drivers had suffered an attack during the past 5 years.
- 30% of the attacked drivers reported they had been attacked more than once.
- The vehicle and its load were targeted in 63% of the attacks, and / or 43% of the attacks were related to the theft of the driver's personal belongings. Examples of drivers' possessions stolen include personal documents, money and credit cards, mobile phones, TVs, even clothing.
- 21% of drivers reported that they had been physically assaulted during the attack.
- 32% of the drivers subjected to primary attacks (476) reported that the attacks involved the use of gas – almost 1 in 3 of the attacked drivers.
- 42% of the attacks were reported to have occurred in truck parks and a further 19% of the attacks were at motorway service stations.
- According to drivers surveyed, countries that have the largest number of reported attacks *as compared to the international road freight traffic* they generate and receive include Romania, Hungary, Poland and the Russian Federation.
- 35% of attacked drivers said their experience had affected their working life and 25% reported that the attack had had an impact on their personal life, with 9% of the drivers seeking medical and / or psychological attention as a direct result of the attack.
- 30% of the attacked drivers did not call the police, citing lack of trust in authorities (12%), language difficulties (5%) and fear of consequences (1%) as some of the reasons. Whilst 21% of the drivers felt that the authorities paid 'no attention' to their reported attack and in only 2% of the attacks did police action result in arrests.
- 18% of the drivers reported that the support provided by their company was, in their view, adequate.
- The reported direct cost of the total primary attacks (476) recorded during the survey over the previous 5 years is estimated to be approximately Euros 12 million, including theft of vehicles, load and drivers' personal belongings.

- Identified loss findings have been used to extrapolate attack / incident and cost figures to the international driver population.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Political will, stakeholder engagement and industry involvement are required in *Public Private Partnership* to develop a better understanding of the problem of attacks on drivers with solutions tailored to local needs.
2. *Crime is moving fast* on to new or different targets, thus affecting transport and trade in many different and often unexpected ways. Latest crime trends, patterns of criminality and criminal modus operandi should be studied on a continuous basis drawing appropriate conclusions and improving tools of fighting against them. *Law* against crime should efficiently be enforced.
3. All stakeholders have a role in improving the *reporting, monitoring and recording* of attack incidents. Better data availability and reliability is needed in order to better ascertain the nature and extent of this problem.
4. National Police *Road Freight Crime Units* or similar types of organisational arrangements should be established to fight crime on the roads.
5. A network of safe and secure *truck parking facilities* at all appropriate locations, especially along key routes, should be established, sustained and operated.
6. *Transport companies, shippers* should agree on using secure routes, including parking areas, to protect their personnel and securely deliver cargo to destination. They should take the needed measures to secure drivers and protect vehicle and cargo.
7. *Transport security awareness* should be enhanced through driver training and providing useful information to *drivers, transport companies, truck parking area operators and all other parties* concerned with crime prevention and reduction on the roads. In this respect, the implementation of health and safety regulations should be improved.
8. *Vehicles* should be equipped with robust security devices.

*Working together  
for a better future*



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## **Attacks on Drivers of International Heavy Goods Vehicles Survey Results**

The Survey has targeted one of the specific concerns stemming from criminal activities: attacks on international drivers involving, almost systematically, the theft of the cargo, the vehicle and the driver's personal belongings.

The results of the survey presented in this report aim to increase understanding of the problem, clarify attack characteristics and dimensions, quantify the economic and other losses engendered by attacks and identify the best possible tools and means to protect international drivers' life and health as well as their vehicles and the cargo in the load compartments.

### **International Road Transport Union, Secretariat General (IRU)**

3, rue de Varembé  
B.P. 44  
CH-1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland

Tel: +41-22-918 27 00

Fax: +41-22-918 27 41

E-mail: [iru@iru.org](mailto:iru@iru.org)

Web: [www.iru.org](http://www.iru.org)

