THREAT MONITOR SURVEY 2021

MAY | 2022

INTRODUCTION

Public transport companies and organising authorities worldwide place a high priority on security on lines and in vehicles. In a period defined by the sweeping effects of COVID-19, and the various efforts to bring back passengers onboard public transport, a secure environment is a necessity. If public transport is perceived as not being a safe environment there is a high risk of passengers taking longer to return or choose not to do so altogether. In this context, UITP continued its annual exercise of tracking the types of threats reported by public transport operators (PTOs) who are members of the Security Committee. The frequency with which threats were reported on the various networks and systems is also recorded. Since threats differ across networks and modes operated in a city, the answers received are analysed separately by network. As such, a total of 27 PTOs responded, amounting to 51 networks in total: 14 metros, 17 bus networks, nine light rail transit (LRTs) and eight suburban and regional rail.

While the number of responses is similar to the previous year, the responding networks have changed, so please consider when making any direct comparisons.

The geographical coverage of the respondents is skewed towards European PTOs, with 20 out of the 27. Two PTOs each represent North and Latin America, while three PTOs are based in Asia-Pacific.

Despite the varied involvement between Europe and the rest of the world, we should absolutely promote the threat monitor into the other continents even if the way to apprehend the threat might be different from continent to continent.

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THE GLOBAL TOP FIVE

Compared with previous editions of the Threat Monitor survey, the major difference comes from the addition of two new threats: Cybersecurity incidents and fare evasion. Especially with working from home becoming prevalent in some regions of the world, cybersecurity incidents have been dramatically increasing with little chance of the trend reversing. While the 2020 edition of the Threat Monitor does not see cybersecurity incidents as a top-five threat, it is predicted to become one in the coming years. Moreover, several companies may be tempted to under-report cybersecurity threats due to the poor image caused to the company's management, and due to concern about the financial losses.

Fare evasion is not a typical security threat. However, it is interesting to treat it as such, as in this case the "damaged party" is the PTO itself and the fare income is potentially lost as a result. Furthermore, it offers insight into how customers see themselves in relation with the PTO.
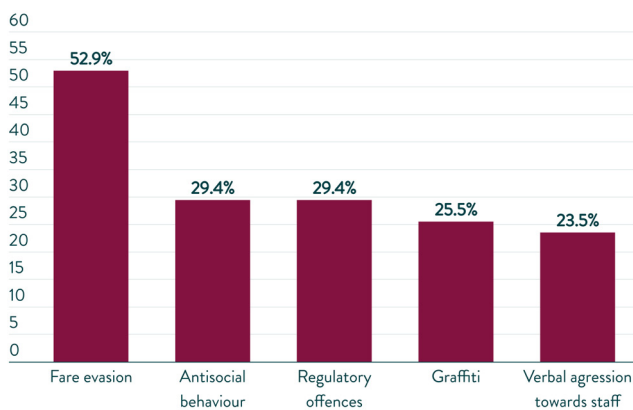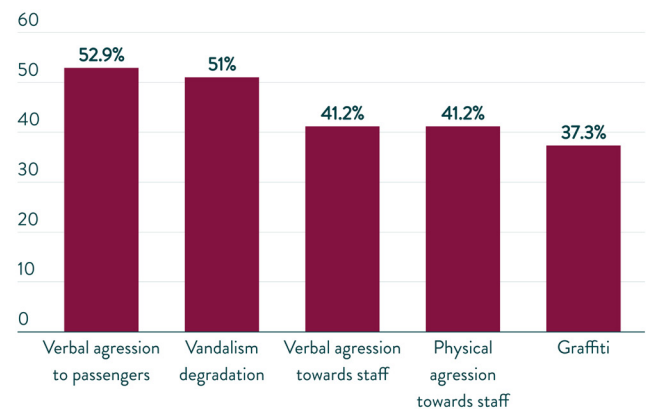
▶ *Figure 1: Top five threats reported daily, 2020*

Of course, fare evasion ranks top for the reasons mentioned above. More than that, operators are now focusing on how to avoid such losses with solutions leading to an increase of control activities together with legal follow-up.
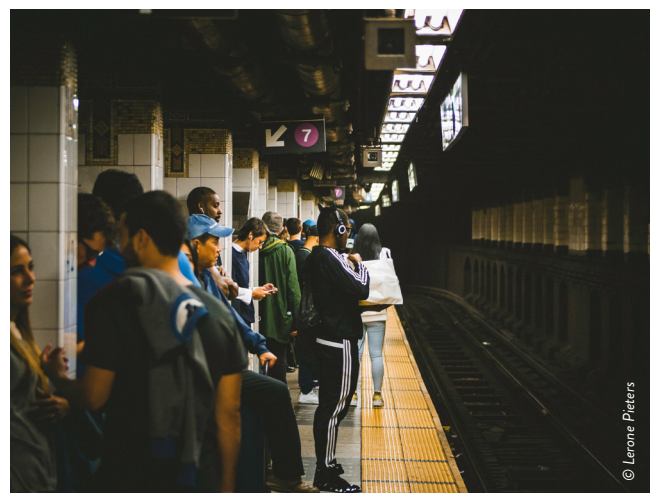
Antisocial behaviour and regulatory offences are second and third place respectively and can be considered as one problem. Uncivil actions from the population cannot be solved entirely by actions from the public transport sector, but rather is a question of education on a wider, national scale.
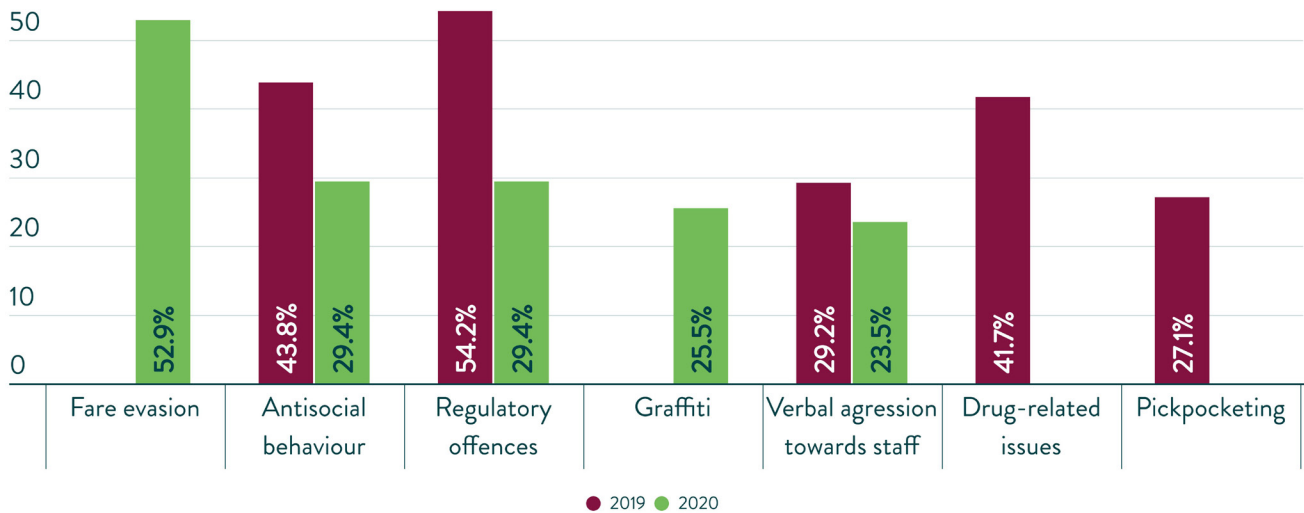
Graffiti, in fourth place, can also be considered as uncivil behaviour yet treating it only as such does not resolve the problem.

Finally, verbal aggressions are the fifth most reported daily threat, a level similar to that of 2019, which appears to have not been affected by the COVID-19 crisis.
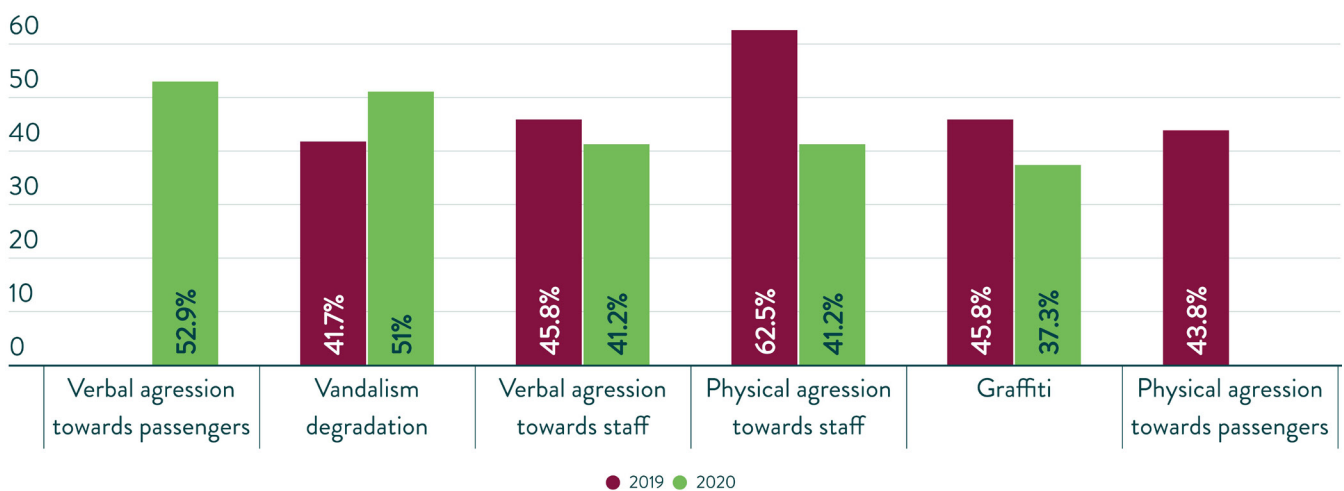
▶ *Figure 2: Threats reported once a month, 2020*

52.9% (Fare evasion)
43.8% / **29.4%** (Antisocial behaviour)
54.2% / **29.4%** (Regulatory offences)
25.5% (Graffiti)
29.2% / **23.5%** (Verbal agression towards staff)
41.7% (Drug-related issues)
27.1% (Pickpocketing)

● 2019 ● 2020

▶ *Figure 3: Threats reported daily, 2019-2020*

With the introduction of the Fare evasion, this significantly alters the most reported threats in 2020, with pickpocketing and drug addicts dropping out of the top-5. This does not mean that those two threats disappeared but that they are lower positioned. However, graffiti is increasing and, while not present in the top five 2019, they are positioned in fourth place in 2020.
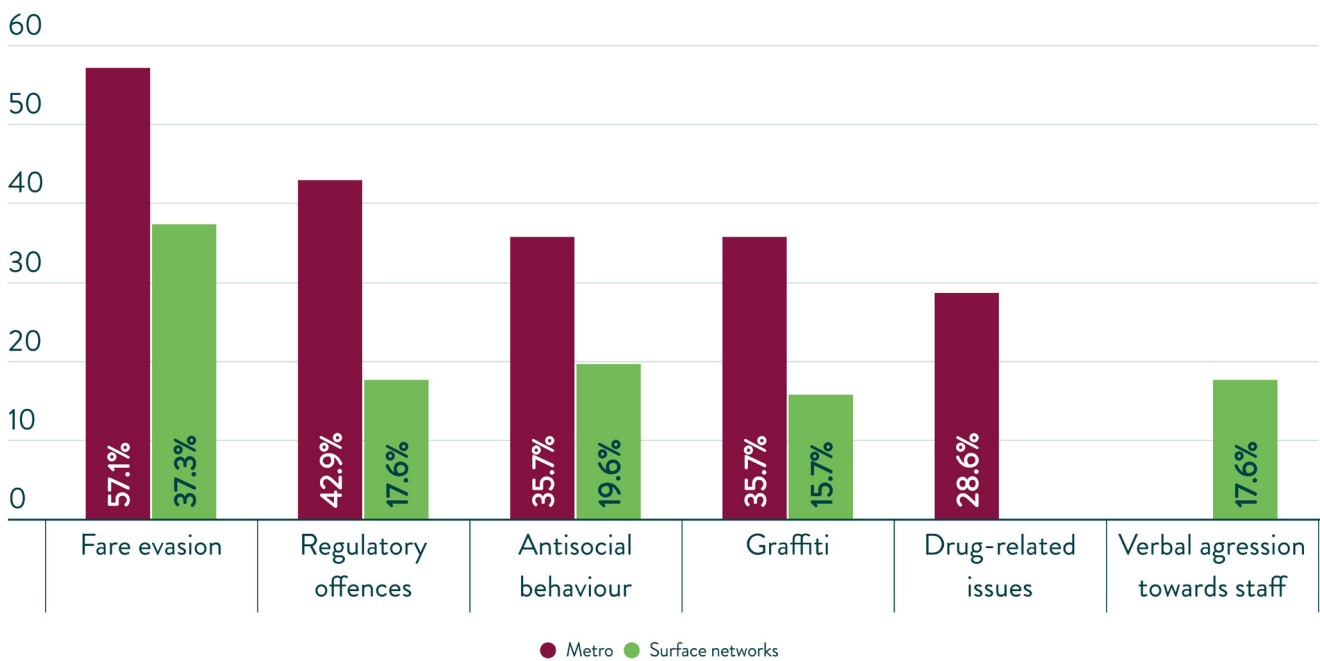

52.9% (Verbal agression towards passengers)
41.7% / **51%** (Vandalism degradation)
45.8% / **41.2%** (Verbal agression towards staff)
62.5% / **41.2%** (Physical agression towards staff)
45.8% / **37.3%** (Graffiti)
43.8% (Physical agression towards passengers)

● 2019 ● 2020

▶ *Figure 4: Threats reported frequently (more than once month), 2019-2020*

It is interesting to note that there is no significant change between the two years. These frequently reported threats remain largely the same, only the ranking varies slightly. The slightly lower incidence of reporting of physical aggression against passengers could be due to the lower numbers of passengers recorded during 2020.

COMPARISON BETWEEN TOP FIVE UNDERGROUND AND TOP FIVE SURFACE THREATS IN 2020

It is interesting to compare the situation of incidents reported in surface networks (train, bus, light rail) with the ones occurring underground (metro). This exercise has been performed for the 2020 data but could be easily extend to former years and even to compare the situations year to year.
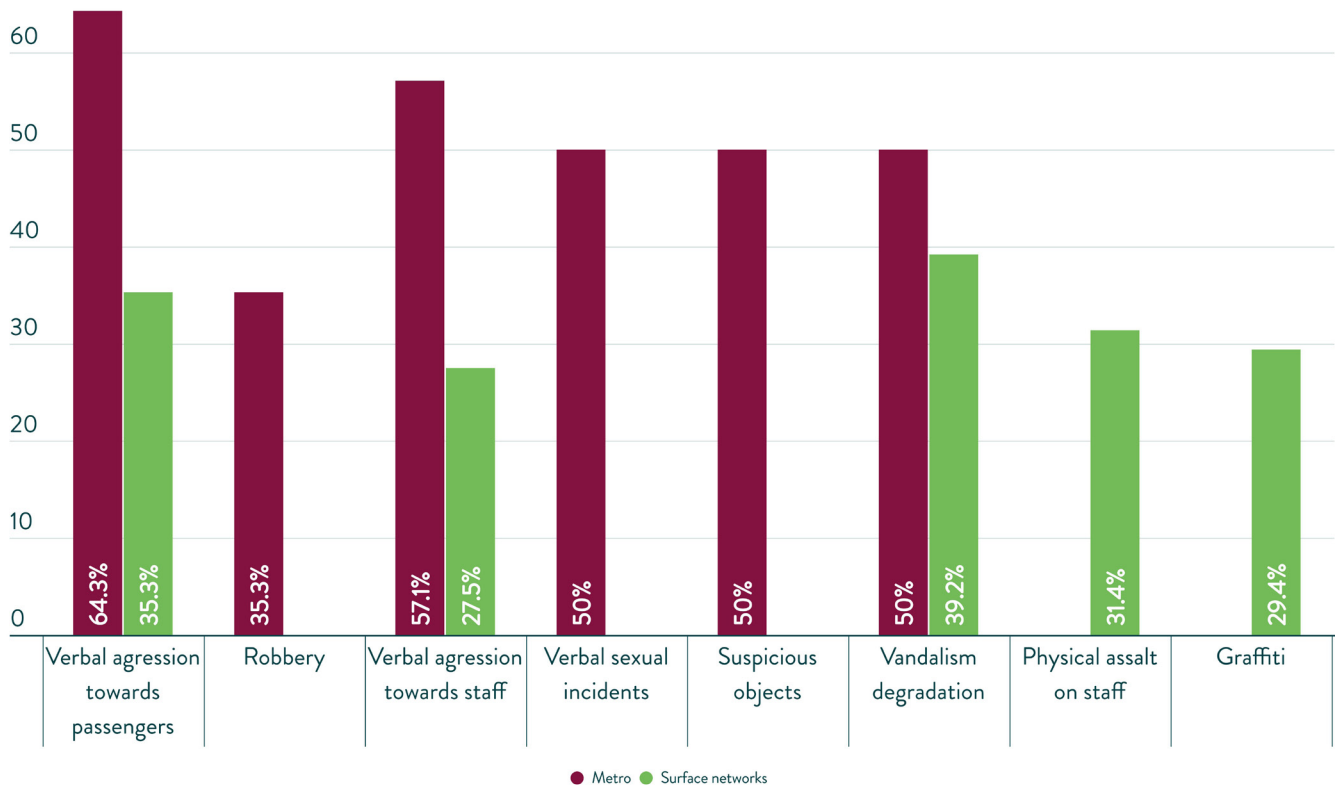

Figure 5: Threats reported daily, 2020

	Fare evasion	Regulatory offences	Antisocial behaviour	Graffiti	Drug-related issues	Verbal agression towards staff
Metro	57.1%	42.9%	35.7%	35.7%	28.6%	
Surface networks	37.3%	17.6%	19.6%	15.7%		17.6%

● Metro ● Surface networks

Four of the five major threats are the same; drugs is more present in the metro because the space is larger, and you can hide "activity" more easily. Verbal aggression on staff is more common on the surface networks, which can also be explained as physical contact between passengers and staff members is more common on the surface than in the metro, where most of the drivers are separated of the passengers by the driving cabin.

Fare evasion comes at the top in both type of networks but more so in the metro where the density of the crowd makes attempts easier. Additionally, as many of the metro networks are closed systems, the entry gates and turnstiles are obvious points where this type of behaviour can be detected.

Chart data (Metro / Surface networks):
- Verbal agression towards passengers: 64.3% / 35.3%
- Robbery: 35.3% /
- Verbal agression towards staff: 57.1% / 27.5%
- Verbal sexual incidents: 50% /
- Suspicious objects: 50% /
- Vandalism degradation: 50% / 39.2%
- Physical assalt on staff: / 31.4%
- Graffiti: / 29.4%

● Metro ● Surface networks

▶ *Figure 6: Threat frequently reported (more than once a month), 2020*

In this case, the ranking of incidents is quite different. If aggression remains the most common incident, physical aggressions on staff are quite common in surface networks possibly due to proximity between staff and passengers. This increase of violence is may also be due to the anxiety surrounding the COVID-19 crisis. Robberies happened much more often in the metro than in surface networks and this may be due to the density of people present within a restricted space. Suspicious objects are also mentioned more often underground, again possibly because of the anxiety of passengers.

Methodology

The security manager of each analysed transport system provided the frequency with which each threat was reported on their network during 2020. The frequencies of reports threats were placed on a five-point scale:

0 Never

1 Once

2 Seldom (happening more than once a year)

3 Frequently (once a month)

4 Daily

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CONCLUSION

The Threat Monitor survey provides a snapshot of the threats reported on the networks of PTOs, as well as the rate of these reports. While the responses received are worth exploring in detail, they are currently overwhelmingly coming from cities and systems in Europe. As UITP is looking to continue and expand this investigation, more responses from operators in Asia, the Middle East and North America are needed. We are looking to obtain a more detailed understanding of the threats observed and reported in these regions.

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This Statistics Brief was prepared by the Security Committee. If you are interested in more information, please reach out to Denis Luyten (denis.luyten@uitp.org).

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