



Thieves strike Guatemala Railways

GUATEMALA Railways (FVG), which was operated by Railroad Development Corporation (RDC), has had around 65km of rails and track materials, along with cross-members of three bridges, stolen.

While track materials could be replaced at a cost of around \$US 6 million, the bridges will be far more difficult. One of them was first set alight and then access roads were bulldozed underneath them to allow cross-members to be removed.

The railway has not operated since 2007 when the Guatemalan government controversially withdrew its concession. An arbitration panel from the International Settlement Centre for Investment Disputes (ISCI) has

been formed to mediate between RDC and the Guatemalan government, but no settlement has been reached.

RDC chairman Mr Henry Posner III said: "The systematic looting of an irreplaceable national asset is a crime in progress best documented in photographs. The photos speak for themselves as perhaps the most visible evidence of the effects of the declaration of "Lesivo" against FVG by the government of Guatemala. That this would occur in an era of high fuel prices, increased concern about the environment, and renewed focus on infrastructure as a driver of economic development speaks louder than anything that I could personally say or do."

Israeli passenger numbers rise

ISRAEL Railways recorded 10.5% growth in passenger numbers in 2008, helped by a 14% increase in business on

a reduction in the workforce.

Plans to electrify parts of the network have now been shelved in favour of