

Creating safer cities to help drive greater economic growth

By [Roy Alves](#)

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The majority of the world's citizens reside in urban areas and when cities are managed effectively, they can provide their inhabitants with vital opportunities for economic development as well as improved access to public services. An important component of city management, especially within the sprawling metropolitan and urban areas within countries like Kenya, is safety and security.



Nairobi, Kenya. © John Wollwerth via [123RF](#)

By delivering efficient city surveillance systems for instance, governments are able to reduce crime, increase citizen safety, and stop vandalism. The latter is a major problem within the Central Business Districts of Kenyan cities such as Nairobi, which has been hit by a [spate of muggings and armed robberies](#) recently as well as public spaces like the [Kenyatta National Hospital](#).

In addition, Kenya is making considerable infrastructure investments to help boost the local economy such as the [expansion of fibre network access](#) across the country and these have to be protected from vandals and thieves.

When it comes to critical facilities like these, city management needs to be prepared for all sorts of threats. Everything from incidents and theft to terrorism and natural disasters can cause process disruption and safety hazard.

With the use of effective surveillance solutions, local government can manage some of these challenging situations – and make sure its infrastructure and facilities run as smoothly as possible.

For instance:

- Security staff will be able to detect, locate and identify intruders at the gate, along the perimeter and all the way into the critical areas, as well as record highly detailed video scenes with HDTV image quality for future analysis.
- In addition, these surveillance systems enable security staff to employ thermal cameras to detect people, vehicles and incidents even in complete darkness.
- City surveillance systems can help in these instances, because they help to reduce incidents of pickpocketing, vandalism, graffiti and illegal garbage dumping.
- Moreover, cameras used in a safe city project can be an effective support in creating a process for managing, assessing, and optimising emergency response in public places. For example, by utilising network cameras, city management can help measure the average response times for emergency services to respond to an initial distress call, which acts like an indicator of how well protected citizens actually are.

Cities can start off with a few small changes that make a big difference and by so doing, can move towards making their people and infrastructure even safer.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Roy Alves is country manager for Axis Communication Africa.

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