

360-degree cameras in position in Istanbul parks



Back in the sixties, Iraq's Al Rasheed Street was the place to be and be seen. The sun-soaked streets were lined with cafes, brimming with poets, intellectuals, artists and politicians. It was a street drenched in glory, the heartbeat of a vibrant, buzzing city. The area's cafes witnessed some of the greatest poetic movements of Iraq's time. It was symbolic of Iraq's thriving cultural and intellectual centre right up until the 1970s. Today is it barely recognisable.

After nearly three decades of war and sanctions, Al Rasheed Street is a shadow of its former self.

It is in a state of poor repair on account of years of neglect. Buildings are in ruins, windows are smashed and covered in dust, and the street is virtually unusable. Shops currently close as early as midday, and armed gangs take to the streets – it is not even safe for policemen to patrol the area.

Now Baghdad Municipality plans to renovate the historic street as part of the largest Iraqi reconstruction project since 2003 – and 360-degree cameras are going to play a key part in the redevelopment of the area.

In a bid to entice people back to Al Rasheed Street a number of steps have been taken, including the planned positioning of 360-

Getting the full picture

We look at two very different uses of 360-degree cameras in the region – one in the planned redevelopment of Al Rasheed Street in Baghdad and the second in the busy municipal parks in Istanbul

degree cameras throughout the area. With a higher focus on security for the citizens of Baghdad, small, gradual, changes are taking place. Already there has been enough of an improvement to reopen the northern end of Al Rasheed Street, which leads to the Iraqi Central Bank, to traffic in order to ease congestion in other parts of the city – an area which had previously been clogged with barbed wire.

The al-Rasafa municipal council, working alongside the Baghdad Operations Command

(BOC) has ambitious plans to restore normal life to the old commercial hub. The rebuilding of Baghdad involves a plan to open 81 main streets in the capital, with eleven reopened to traffic so far.

It's difficult to imagine how this will be achieved without having a well-thought out security solution in place. The planned use of 360-degree CCTV demonstrates that the municipal council is serious about utilising the latest technology to prevent gangs roaming the streets at night, and deter stealing from shops and cafes.

Having a 360-degree solution in place allows the municipal council ►►

► to have total situation awareness throughout the city. Having the 360-degree cameras in place, not just on Al Rasheed Street but throughout Baghdad, will be instrumental in rebuilding this historic city.

And across the border, the vast number of parks and gardens of Istanbul in Turkey have witnessed their fair share of crime over the years – in the working class areas of the municipality there have been beatings, muggings and drug related incidents.

With some of the parks covering areas the size of several football pitch’s, perimeter control simply wasn’t going to provide an adequate level of cover. Local government officials knew their only real solution was to have 360-degree cameras installed as part of a wider security solution, and so turned to Oncam Global to consult on providing the level of surveillance the parks really needed.

The number of cameras required varies by location, but all are strategically placed throughout the parks to provide maximum coverage, Total Situation Awareness and to reduce the need for regular CCTV.

Canan Atasoy, Karthane Municipality environment protect and control manager, in Istanbul said: “Parks are very important areas to us. We wanted to decrease crime in the area and make people feel secure so we chose to install a 360 surveillance system. It’s good for people in the area to know their children are safe playing in the parks.

“We had a need for a total security solution – something that is simple, efficient and long-running. Oncam made it very easy for us, designing the entire system and removing the need for complicated solutions which require more maintenance and are not cost-efficient.”

Atasoy said that although the system is very new, they have already noticed a reduction in crime rates throughout the municipality. She added: “We have been able to monitor everything that’s going on from the control room we built in the municipality building – essentially



Above 360-degree cameras in-situ at Istanbul parks



Above 360-degree cameras are demonstrated to Iraqi ministries officials

IN MY VIEW

Ahmed Jawad, chairman of Oncam Global says that in the next few years, 360-degree cameras will become the norm in cctv installations

“People need to start looking at where the market is heading and how 360-degree solutions are going to be incorporated into their business model. I believe within the next few years 360 will become the norm in the security and CCTV industry.

“It’s more than just a camera – 360 is about intelligently integrating the whole process and turning it into a scalable solution. That’s the big difference. Having it and doing something with it, rather than just having a 360-degree camera in place for the sake of saying you’ve got one”.

“The overall 360-degree solution is about total situation awareness – knowing everything that is going on without the need for hundreds of cameras (and even with hundreds of cameras you still get blind spots). There is a growing emphasis around the phrase ‘total situation awareness’ and that is what we, at Oncam, pride ourselves in being able to provide to our customers.

“360-degree solutions can make a tangible difference to a facility’s security by the retrospective tracking of an incident. The cameras and the technology enable the acquisition and tracking of suspicious behaviour and the interrogation and verification of a potential threat or incident. It is this evidence that provides the necessary intelligence needed to make a measured response to any situation or potential threat.”

enabling us to anticipate and interrogate some things before they have the chance to happen, and provide the appropriate level of response.

“On top of that, using a solution that combines 360-degree and PTZ cameras enables us to verify an incident leading to higher levels of prosecution. There’s really no hiding from 360-degree cameras.”

Thanks to the success of the parks project, officials at the Istanbul Municipality have decided to roll out the solutions to other areas of the city, including street junctions and town centres, as well as adding more parks and gardens to the roster.

Atasoy said: “We’ve been so impressed by the improvement in the areas surrounding the parks and gardens since Oncam implemented their security solution that we are keen to take the 360-degree solution further afield. In the Kaithane Municipality we have 224 parks – and we are building 20-25 new parks every year. At the moment we have 214 Oncam 360-degree cameras in 132 parks, and we are looking to expand that, across more parks and also to cross-roads and junctions.”

Oncam Global has plans to completely refit the parks command and control area in Turkey so that it can adequately handle the monitoring of 140 areas across the region.

■ For more information visit: www.oncamglobal.com