

World Cup 2014 To Use Bomb-Detecting Robots

Robots used to deal with roadside bombs and IEDs are to be part of the huge security operation at next year's football World Cup.

Battle-tested robots have become the latest addition to Brazil's tough security line-up for next year's World Cup. The government has bought a fleet of iRobot 510 Packbots - usually used to neutralise roadside bombs and to inspect buildings and people for traces of explosives. The \$7.2m (£4.74m) order will allow police to deal safely with any threats from a distance. It is also the same robot that examined the car allegedly hijacked by the Boston Marathon bombings suspects. Able to climb stairs and submersible in a metre of water, the robot is remote-controlled and features multiple high-resolution cameras. The World Cup starts in June 2014 and the Brazilian authorities are determined to have a robust show of security and set a precedent for the Olympics, held two years later. Cities such as Rio de Janeiro have long had a problem with violent drug gangs operating in the city's favelas, or shanty towns. Hundreds of millions of dollars are now being spent on extra equipment, with police also set to wear face-scanning glasses. The high-tech specs can scan 400 faces a second at a distance of 45 metres - ideal for plucking out potential hooligans at a football match. They analyse 46,000 points on a person's face and compare them against a criminal database. Brazil's next major security challenge before the World Cup is the visit of Pope Francis. He is visiting the country in July for World Youth Day - his first foreign trip as Pontiff.