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In the News

MULTI-HOUSING NEWS  
**MHN** ONLINE

## TODAY'S TOP STORIES

### [Q&A with General Aharon Zeevi Farkash: Multifamily Buildings Not Adequately Secure to Handle Risks Facing Us in 21st Century](#)



General Aharon Zeevi Farkash, a security expert who previously served as head of Israeli Military Intelligence, established FST21 in 2007 with the mission of providing preventive security solutions to increase safety and enhance tenant quality-of-life in residential, commercial & mixed-use buildings. Farkash talks to MHN about the importance of security in multifamily buildings and the new technology developed by his company that provides security through face, voice, license plate and behavior recognition.

### **Q&A with General Aharon Zeevi Farkash: Multifamily Buildings Not Adequately Secure to Handle Risks Facing Us in 21st Century**

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General Aharon Zeevi Farkash, a security expert who previously served as head of Israeli Military Intelligence, established FST21 in 2007 with the mission of providing preventive security solutions to increase safety and enhance tenant quality-of-life in residential, commercial & mixed-use buildings. He is the chairman & CEO of FST21 Ltd. based in Tel Aviv, Israel.

Farkash talks to *MHN* Online News Editor Anuradha Kher about the importance of security in multifamily buildings and the new technology developed by his company that provides security through face, voice, license plate and behavior recognition.

### **MHN: What is the reason security needs to be considered today in multifamily/multi-tenant buildings?**

**Farkash:** With the surge in urban dwelling—urban migration of one million people each week—population densities in our city centers continue to grow. In 2040, the population of the U.S. will be 400 million, with 80 percent of the growth in the next 30 years coming from urban centers. This acute urban migration trend has created over 20 mega-cities today, with the forecast for 2015 being 33. This, in turn, has led to infrastructure challenges with regards to energy, water, transportation and employment.



The current global recession and high unemployment has only served to compound the problem, leading to a growing gulf in the gap between rich and poor. This has led to an increase in crime, with an uptick in urban burglaries and criminal activity in the last year. Accordingly, the need for preventive security in multi-tenant buildings is stronger than ever before.

This growth in crime goes hand-in-hand with the mega city trend, and challenges one of the pillars of the Western world in which a man's home is his castle.

**MHN: What is the biggest challenge facing multifamily/multi-tenant building security today?**

**Farkash:** The challenge is to find the right balance between securing a project and providing a feeling of safety/security for the tenants, yet not interfering with the quality of lifestyle in modern day life.

**MHN: What are the most common multifamily security solutions in place today and where are they lacking?**

**Farkash:** Today, as has been the case in the last 100 years, the most advanced building security "solution" is human: concierge, doormen and security guards. As for technical solutions, there is a mix-and-match of disparate products including telephone/video intercom systems, digital video recorders (DVRs) and video surveillance cameras.

The main problem with the technical solutions is that they are better for verification of events after-the-fact, as opposed to identification and thwarting of criminal activities before they occur. Moreover, the above technologies do not represent a truly integrated and preventive solution. Standalone access control systems such as RFID-based readers and other biometric readers can, to a certain extent, replace the 4,000 year-old key, but do not provide an all-encompassing security solution that is preventive in nature.

**MHN: Are you implying that today's multifamily buildings are not adequately secure to handle the risks we are facing in the 21st century?**

**Farkash:** Given the huge financial and infrastructure outlays required to complete these projects, multifamily and multi-tenant building security need to be viewed as an investment for long-term operation and profitability. Accordingly, it is imperative that we view them as such and implement the appropriate security measures in mixed-use, commercial and residential settings. The solution should be preventive as opposed to reactive in nature, and this requires a holistic and integrated approach.

At a time when technological options abound, a combination of technologies is the ultimate solution.

**MHN: Is that what your product FST21 does?**

**Farkash:** Yes, the SafeRise solution we are now introducing represents a fusion of non-intrusive 2nd generation biometric technologies—face, voice, license plate and behavior recognition—that bring multi-tenant building security into the 21st century. This represents a paradigm shift in the approach to residential and commercial multi-tenant security. SafeRise makes the doorman much more effective, with the ability to manage and administer all of the entry points and common areas of a building or project. There is no need for any keys, cards or codes. You Are the Key.

**MHN: In your opinion, are owners, property managers and developers—as well as residents—open to this new approach?**

**Farkash:** Most definitely; both preliminary customer feedback and market research support this. In a recent market study by Parks Associates, nearly one in two multifamily executives are either offering or looking for technology products/services to differentiate them in the market. In a slow economy, differentiators such as technology are more important than ever. Furthermore, the study showed that one of the amenities most likely to positively influence the sale or rental of a unit is security.



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