



Africa

Libya: On June 23, authorities announced they had secured the release of three Turkish engineers who were abducted in Ubari, in November 2017; all three worked for the Turkish construction company, Enka. A dual German-South African national was also kidnapped and has yet to be released, despite the arrest of at least ten people in connection with the kidnapping and the release of the Turkish hostages. It is unclear if a ransom payment was made to secure the release of the victims. Unknown armed men ambushed and abducted the victims while they were traveling from the airport in Ubari to a construction site, where Enka was contracted to build a gas-fired power plant. Enka evacuated at least 93 of its staff contingent on November 9, 2017. Amid the ongoing instability and lack of a central government, the kidnapping of Libyan nationals and foreigners is relatively common. Islamist militant kidnappings are an ongoing nationwide threat; and Ubari has been the scene of recent counterterrorism operations. (WorldAware, KRE Global Monitor Newsletter - June 2018)

Libya: Four engineers, three Libyan and a Romanian, were kidnapped from the National Oil Corporation (NOC) owned Station 186 of the Sharara oil field in the south of the country at around 6:30am. The victims were kidnapped by an unidentified armed group as they left an accommodation site for a sub-site. NOC later stated that two of the victims had been released. On July 15, NOC evacuated staff and shut wells for safety. It was expected that output at the country's largest field would drop by about half (160,000 barrels a day) as a result. Sharara is operated by a joint venture between NOC, Total SA, Repsol SA, OMV Ag and Equinor ASA. (Constellis, Kidnap and Ransom Insight – July 2018)

Madagascar: The State Secretary for the National Gendarmerie said the government had increased security across the country after the kidnapping the previous week

of four employees of the mining company, Kraoma, from their residence in Brieville Tsaratanana about 240km north of the capital Antananarivo. The four victims were released on July 26, after the kidnappers had been paid the huge ransom they had demanded. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 31, 2018)

South Africa: Kidnapping for ransom is on the rise. Whilst foreign entrepreneurs, particularly those of south Asian origin, are commonly targeted, this problem also affects the local business community and their dependents. On May 20, Katlego Marite, the 13-year-old son of a local businessman, was kidnapped from a playground near his home in Witbank, Mpumalanga province. His kidnappers reportedly demanded a ransom of 15 Bitcoin (roughly USD 113,000) from his parents. The demand was to be paid in instalments, the first for 1 Bitcoin by May 21, with the remaining 14 bitcoins to be paid by May 27. The kidnappers threatened to kill Katlego if their instructions were not followed. The boy was rescued by the police on May 24, after the car used by the kidnappers in the abduction was located. It is unknown if any of the ransom was paid. This was the first known case in South Africa where a ransom was demanded in Bitcoin. (Constellis, Kidnap and Ransom Insight – June 2018)

South Africa: A police spokesman said that police negotiators had worked tirelessly to obtain the release of a kidnapping for ransom victim who had been kidnapped on June 29 from Chatsworth suburb of Westcliff, Durban. The male victim was approached by four suspects who took him away by force. The victim's family reported the incident to the police after the kidnappers had contacted them and demanded an undisclosed financial ransom. A ransom was also demanded from the victim's brother in Uganda who deposited USD 1000 into a bank account of one of the suspects. Two suspects were arrested and information from them led to two further arrests. The



victim escaped from a house in Mandeni. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 3, 2018)

Uganda: Heavily armed men in civilian clothes kidnapped two employees of MTN Uganda, the country's top telecoms company, in Kampala, and later forced them to grant access to the company's data centre at Mutundwe. The intruders tried several times to log in to MTN Uganda's servers but were unsuccessful. MTN Uganda said no data was accessed. The intruders withdrew when their efforts were rebuffed. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 2, 2018)

Asia and Australia

China: On June 13, nine employees of Skycoin Holdings reportedly took the founder and CEO of Skycoin, the crypto-company, and his wife hostage in Beijing. The victims were detained in their home and forced to transfer 18.88 Bitcoin (approximately USD 1,6M) and 6,466 Skycoin (approximately USD 43,000) to the assailants. The suspects are believed to have been apprehended by the authorities. (WorldAware, KRE Global Monitor Newsletter - June 2018)

India: N Jamal Mohammed (53), a sea food exporter, was kidnapped in the coastal village of Kottaipattinan, near Pudukottai, by six men travelling in a car as he went to a nearby mosque. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of Rs.1 crore (USD 144,700). Within four hours, the police had rescued the victim and arrested five suspects. A further suspect, the leader of the gang, was arrested later. He had taken out a loan of Rs.25 lakh (USD 36,200) to revive his business and had refused to repay the loan when approached by the victim. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 15, 2018)

Malaysia: The police arrested a Singaporean and eight other men in connection with the kidnapping of two Indonesians in Bukit Gambir, near Tangkak, Johor, on June 27. The kidnappers had contacted the wife of one of

the victims and demanded a ransom of RM 450,000 (USD 110,600). The suspects were arrested after a series of police raids across Johor. Investigations revealed the arrested suspects were part of a drug syndicate that operated in Malaysia and Indonesia. One of the victims had sustained back injuries that were supposedly from hot water that was poured over him. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 14, 2018)

Pakistan: Saad Awan, who runs an auto showroom in Rawat, was kidnapped from the premises by over a dozen armed men who arrived in two SUVs. The victim's brother received a telephone call from the victim who told him to collect Rs.2 million (USD 17,270) and be prepared to deliver the money to a location that would be revealed later. The family reported the kidnapping to the police who, after an investigation, mounted a number of raids on July 14, rescued the victim but did not arrest any suspects. The police suspected that the incident was connected with a business dispute. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 12, 2018)

Europe and CIS

Armenia: Sergey Budagov, a Russian Armenian businessman, was kidnapped by an armed group of men. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of 20 million roubles (USD 321,500). During a special operation on the night of July 13, law enforcement agents rescued the victim. Four suspects were subsequently arrested. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 10, 2018)

United Kingdom: The Chinese Embassy in London issued a warning that a telephone scam that persuades people to stage their own kidnapping before blackmailing their family into handing over thousands of pounds could be on the rise in the UK. The warning added that "several cases" had been recorded. The scam which has mainly targeted Mandarin speakers, is now operating in English. It begins with scammers imitating senior officials from



embassies and anti-crime organizations. The victims are told they are implicated in a serious crime and must cut off all contact with family and friends. They are also told to photograph themselves tied up or record a video of themselves seemingly in distress. The photographs or videos are then sent to the victim's family with a ransom demand. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 23, 2018)

Ukraine: On June 25, armed criminals abducted the son of a financial attaché of the Embassy of Libya in Kiev. According to reports, the kidnappers forced the victim into a vehicle before driving away to an unspecified location. Police launched a search operation and located the victim at the intersection of Grigorenko Avenue and Darnitskoye Highway later that day. Reports suggested that the victim was abducted, beaten, and robbed of money. Two Egyptian nationals were charged for orchestrating the kidnapping. Financially motivated kidnappings orchestrated by criminal gangs occur sporadically in large urban parts of the country such as Kiev. The circumstances surrounding this incident suggest the abduction was premeditated and the kidnappers planned to abduct the son of a high-profile attaché for ransom, due to the perceived financial capabilities of the victim's relatives. (WorldAware, KRE Global Monitor Newsletter - June 2018)

Serbia: Police found Milaslav Radislavljevic (85), grandfather of Jelena Djokovic, wife of tennis player, Novak Djokovic, tied to a power pole close to his house in Ljig, 30 miles south of Belgrade. It was reported that two masked men had broken into the victim's house at 3:00am and taken him to the field after he refused to give them money. It was also reported that the kidnappers had contacted Jelena's uncle and demanded a ransom of 2 million euros (USD 2.32 million). The victim was rescued from the field after a neighbour responded to his cries for help. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 26, 2018)

Middle East

Iraq: According to the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs, on July 8, Iraqi security forces rescued two Philippine nationals, two days after their kidnap by a financially motivated criminal group, as they travelled between the governorates of Diyala and Kirkuk. (Control Risk, Iraq Country Update – July 11, 2018)

Israel: On July 11, the kidnappers contacted the victim's family and demanded NIS 4m (USD 1,099,000) for his safe release. The kidnappers reportedly moved the victim between locations to avoid arrest. On July 12, police arrested several suspects before rescuing the victim the following day. The abduction is likely to have followed a financial dispute between the victim's family and the kidnappers. (Control Risk, Israel Country Update – July 17, 2018)

Lebanon: It was reported in Beirut, Lebanon, that the Islamic State (IS) had recently kidnapped 20 women and 16 children from al Shobki village in the Al Sweida Governorate after massacring over 250 people in the province. According to military sources in Al Sweida, IS sent text messages with photographs of some of the victims via WhatsApp to the families of the victims demanding they pay a ransom or else they would burn all their captives alive. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 28, 2018)

Syria: Jumpei Yasuda, a Japanese freelance reporter who often covered war zones and who went missing in Syria three years ago, appeared in a new video aired on Japanese television. He is believed to have been taken hostage by el Nusra Front which has since changed its name to Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, a group known to kidnap foreigners for ransom. Nippon News Network said it had obtained the video from a person connected with Hay'at Tahrir al Sham but would not name the contact. In the video, Mr Yasuda noted that it was October 2017, so it

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was not clear whether it reflected his current condition. His hair was greyer and his beard longer since his previous video appearance in 2016. He said: “I hope all of my family are fine, I want to see you. Don’t forget. Don’t give up”. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 6, 2018)

Latin America

Overview: Mexico reclaimed the number one global and regional hotspot in Q2, following a series of politically-motivated and for-ransom kidnappings. The states of Michoacán, Santiago, Baja California, Veracruz, and Cauca were hotspots. Ransom demands ranged from USD 100,000 – USD 200,000, with most kidnapping groups agreeing to 10 percent of the initial demand. Captivity periods were under a week, and 60 percent of victims (predominately government and businesspeople) were rescued. Brazil and Colombia also featured this quarter. Ransom demands ranged from USD 50,000 – USD 80,000. Payments were higher, around 20 percent of the initial demand. Captivity periods were longer, up to three weeks. In 65 percent of regional cases recorded by Unity, the victim was taken while leaving their workplace. The highest ransom demand was for a San Narciso businessman taken by a criminal gang for one million Belizean dollars (USD 498,000) in June. He remains missing. (Unity Resources Group, Crisis Monitor – 2nd Quarter Report 2018)

Argentina: The 24 year old son of a well-known businessman was kidnapped from his home in Jardin Village, Dorrego, along with a domestic help, when armed men forced their way into the house. They released the domestic help soon after and contacted the father of the victim with a ransom demand. The victim’s father paid a ransom and his son was released soon after the payment. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 11, 2018)

Brazil: The daughter of a farmer was kidnapped by three men as she arrived at a church in Santa Tereza do Tocantins, Tocantis State. She was rescued the next day in Taquaruçu. During the drop, the police managed to rescue the daughter and recover the ransom money. Police allowed the kidnappers to escape to avoid a shootout while trying to rescue the victim. (Unity Resources Group, Crisis Monitor – 2nd Quarter Report 2018)

Brazil: A woman was the victim of a “virtual kidnapping” in Campina Grande that lasted 15 hours. The scammers contacted the lady and claimed to have kidnapped her son. They told her to meet them in a hotel in the centre of Campina Grande and over 15 hours forced her to make three payments. Eventually she was able to speak to her son and discover he had not been kidnapped. She told the police two days after the event occurred. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 10, 2018)

Brazil: The police foiled the attempted kidnapping of Rosangela Freda, mother of international Brazilian footballer, Taison, who plays for Shakhtar Donetsk in Ukraine. The incident occurred at Navegantes, Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul, near the house of the footballer. Security TV coverage showed the victim being lured to the security gates in front of the house by a man delivering flowers and bundled into a car. The police found the kidnappers’ car parked outside a house in Monte Bonito, which they surrounded. One kidnapper escaped and four were arrested during the rescue operation. The victim was found with her hands tied behind her back in a garage at the back of the house. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 16, 2018)

Brazil: Between June 4 and August 6, police in Minas Gerais arrested 14 members of a sophisticated tiger kidnapping gang that had targeted bank managers in rural areas of the state. Tiger kidnapping usually involves a sophisticated criminal gang abducting an employee’s



family members, before forcing the employee to steal cash or valuables from his or her place of work. In Brazil, bank managers are the principal targets, but employees of any businesses that store cash or valuables on site – such as retailers, lottery houses and post offices – can be affected. According to media reports, the Minas Gerais gang was the largest tiger kidnapping gang operating in Brazil, and had reportedly netted more than BRL 3m (USD 760,000) since the beginning of 2018. Because tiger kidnaps target financial institutions, the reward is on average higher than the ransom sum achieved in a traditional kidnap-for-ransom. Tiger kidnaps frequently result in hauls of cash and/or valuables worth hundreds of thousands of US dollars. This opportunity for larger reward will ensure that tiger kidnapping will continue to flourish across the country in the coming year, despite periodic successful dismantling operations. The crime is becoming more widespread across Brazil: we have recorded tiger kidnaps in 15 states since the beginning of 2017, compared with ten states in 2016. (Control Risk, Brazil Country Update - August 22, 2018)

Chile: On July 29, express kidnappers in Zapallar (Valparaiso region) broke into the house of a 72-year-old businesswoman and forced her to show them her bank statements and hand over her car keys, before driving her to an unreported location. According to Chilean newspaper *BioBio*, the victim transferred CLP 8m (USD 12,500) into several different nominated bank accounts before the kidnappers released her that evening. Some unconfirmed reports claim that the kidnappers also contacted the businesswoman's family, demanding a further ransom for her release. (Control Risk, Chile Country Update - August 1st, 2018)

Chile: Since the beginning of 2018, there were kidnappings in Chile in which the victims were at home when they were abducted. Incidents involving express kidnappers breaking into a victim's home are also recorded across Chile, and are typically carried out by

more sophisticated criminal gangs that have studied their victim over a period of time before the incident. The number of express kidnaps recorded in Chile will remain among the lowest across all of South America, for both local and foreign nationals. However, both victim types will remain vulnerable to the crime as express kidnaps are typically opportunistic. Despite Chilean media reporting infrequently on the crime, express kidnapping will remain more prevalent across the country than kidnapping-for-ransom. The crime will continue to be exclusively perpetrated by criminal gangs, with incidents rarely lasting longer than a day. Cases that last longer than 24 hours will typically be to allow the kidnapper to withdraw a new daily cash limit from an ATM. Express kidnappers in Chile will also continue to use sophisticated tactics. (Control Risk, Chile Country Update - August 1st, 2018)

Colombia: In early July, two bodies were found in a rural area of Tumaco, in the Colombian department of Nariño. Forensic investigations determined the remains belonged to the Ecuadorian couple kidnapped from an area near the Colombia-Ecuador border on April 11. The Colombian authorities determined that Oscar Villacís and Katty Velasco were murdered on the first days of their detention and that they suffered a “violent” death. The Oliver Sinisterra Front was also responsible for the kidnap murder of other three Ecuadorians, including two journalists, in the same month. (Constellis, Kidnap and Ransom Insight – July 2018)

Colombia: According to a document titled “Logros de la política de defensa y seguridad Todos por un Nuevo País” published by el Ministerio de Defensa, in 2017 there were 195 recorded kidnappings in the country, and 29 cases were recorded in March 2018 compared to 54 in March 2017. Another document titled “Una verdad secuestrada, cuarenta años de estadísticas de secuestro” published by el Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica y Cifras y Conceptos, stated that, between 1970 and 2010,



there had been 39,058 kidnappings, of which 18,410 were committed by guerrillas groups – FARC, ELN, EPL and M-19. The number of kidnappings in 1995 was 509 the figure peaked at 3,572 in 2000 before dropping steadily to 195 in 2017. La Fiscalia General de la Nacion reported that during the years of conflict, FARC were responsible for at least 8,263 kidnappings that earned the group Col. \$6 billion. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 3, 2018)

Colombia: The war crimes tribunal, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) called 31 former FARC guerrilla commanders to trial for their alleged role in the kidnapping of thousands of people. According to the prosecutor general’s office, FARC were responsible for at least 8,163 of more than 27,000 registered kidnappings since 1970, making the group the primary perpetrator of this war crime. Over the years, FARC are estimated to have received USD 2 billion in ransom payments. FARC officially denounced kidnapping in 2012. Among the leaders who will have to appear in court are six of the 10 members of FARC who are expected to take a seat in Congress on July 20. If the leaders refuse full cooperation with JEP, they could be called to trial before a civilian court and sentenced to prison for a maximum 20 years. If they do cooperate, the JEP will not seek prison sentences but punishments that directly benefit the victims. The majority of kidnappings, 56%, were carried out for financial gain, in 36% members of the security forces or government officials were kidnapped to consolidate FARC’s social or territorial control, and in 6% the kidnappings were for political motives. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 6, 2018)

Colombia: Ibes Trujillo Contreras, a renowned social leader in the north of Cauca department, was kidnapped along with a companion from Agua Blanca, Suarez, Cauca, by two men and a woman. The victim’s companion was released shortly afterwards. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 10, 2018)

Colombia: Marco Tulio Caceres Herrera (56), a trader in vegetables, was kidnapped while travelling along the road to Guaca, Garcia Rovira, Santander department. The kidnappers took the victim into the hills. And demanded a ransom of 1,000 million pesos (USD 344,800). After an investigation, la Gaula Militar mounted a rescue operation near Chucuri, Piedecuesta, Santander, shot Inocencio Leon Osmar, aka “Cesar” or “El Indio”, second in command of el frente “Efrain Pabon Pabon” of the ELN, arrested three members of the group and rescued the victim 32 hours after the kidnapping. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 21, 2018)

Colombia: Jair Henao Catano, owner of a sand quarry at Cantarita, Villa Rica, Cauca department, was kidnapped by armed men from the quarry during morning hours. Initially, the criminals kidnapped Henao and five workers, but later released the five workers. El Gaula carried out an investigation into the kidnapping. On July 25, el Gaula arrested three suspects including “Chaval” aka “Veneno” who had been involved in two previous kidnapping incidents. The authorities believed the kidnappers belonged to a criminal group that subsequently sell their victims to dissidents from el sexto frente de las FARC. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 24, 2018)

Colombia: In a second kidnapping in 10 days in Santander department, Guillermo Enrique Guerrero Torres (54), a merchant, was kidnapped from his finca at Puente Nacional at 6:30am by eight armed men. The victim was driven away in his own car, which was later found abandoned a few kilometres away. The local police chief said that common criminals from Boyaca were responsible for the kidnapping. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 30, 2018)

Ecuador: According to la Policia Nacional, 43 kidnapping cases were registered in 2017 in the country, of which 15 are still being investigated. The cities where

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the incidents occurred were Quito (26), Guayaquil (16) and Ibarra (1). The most popular locations and times for kidnapers to abduct their victims were on arrival or departure from their homes, leaving social gatherings, at night or in the street. Express kidnapping is the most common form although longer duration kidnaps for money do occur. Criminals use social media to obtain personal details, wealth and the identity of family members who are likely targets. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 8, 2018)

Ecuador: Jesus Vargas Cuajiboy, aka “Reinel”, was arrested at Santander de Quilichao, Cauca Department, Colombia, on suspicion of having been involved in the kidnapping and subsequent killing of Ecuadorean journalists Javier Ortega and Paul Rivas, and their driver, Efrain Segarra, on March 26 on the Ecuador-Colombia border. A group of FARC dissidents under the leadership “Guacho” are believed to have been responsible. On July 18, it was announced that Gustavo Angulo Arboleda, aka “Cherry”, had been arrested in Tumaco, Narino department, Colombia, in connection with the kidnapping of the El Comercio journalists and their driver. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 8, 2018)

Ecuador: After an operation codenamed “Impacto”, mounted by la Policia Nacional, fifteen members of a gang dedicated to kidnapping for ransom were arrested. The gang operated in Guayaquil and Duran, and used licensed taxis to kidnap victims and take them to ATMs to withdraw money. The first arrests were made during May 2018 when the gang kidnapped a policeman in the north of Guayaquil and released him in Avenue Barcelona after he had withdrawn money and given it to them. Four suspects were arrested as a result of this incident. On July 7, 2018, a victim took a taxi in Melcon and, after withdrawing money, was released in La Prosperina. Two suspects were arrested as a result of this incident. A further nine suspects were subsequently

arrested. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 20, 2018)

México: The family of Guillermo Rodriguez Silva, “El Memito”, accordion player with the backing group to the singer Javier Rosas, reported that he had been kidnapped at around 2:15pm from outside his house by three armed men. He was forced into a vehicle and was driven away. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 3, 2018)

México: Isabel Miranda de Wallace, the president of the Alto al Secuestro, said that during the 67 months of the administration of President Enrique Pena Nieto, 11,268 kidnappings had been recorded. She also reported that during June 2018, 130 kidnapping incidents had been recorded compared to 127 in May. The number of kidnapping victims in June was 145 compared to 157 in May. The number of suspects detained rose from 133 in May to 150 in June. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 16, 2018)

México: Mexico City police got a surprise when they mounted an operation to rescue a six year old child who had been kidnapped on July 17 in Ecatepec, Mexico State. The kidnapper who showed up to collect the ransom of 35,000 pesos (USD 1,750) from the nominated location was a 13 year old boy. They arrested the boy who then identified three associates waiting nearby who were also arrested. The kidnapers had originally demanded 50,000 pesos (USD 2,500) before settling for the lower amount. The six year old victim was returned to his family. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 21, 2018)

México: On May 25, Mexican authorities rescued a kidnapped businessman in the city of Tuxpan, Veracruz State. The 83-year-old motel owner was kidnapped on May 23, with his kidnapers subsequently demanding a ransom of 10 million pesos (over half million dollars). Four suspected kidnapers were arrested during the



rescue operation. The authorities identified the detainees as members of a well-known local criminal group characterized by its high level of violence, and which has been linked to at least five other kidnapping cases in the northern area of Veracruz state. (Constellis, Kidnap and Ransom Insight – July 2018)

Mexico: Mexican authorities reported the disruption of 6 kidnapping rings in July; a figure which is slightly higher than June, but it is still on par with the last 12 months. These groups were operating in Chihuahua, Tabasco, Tamaulipas (2 groups), and Veracruz (2 groups). A police operation in Tabasco resulted in the rescue of one victim and the arrest of 12 individuals. Three kidnapers were killed by state police during one of the incidents in Reynosa.

Mexico: Kidnap victims were also rescued in several additional incidents:

- In one case, state police rescued a businessman who had been kidnapped in Cuitláhuac, Veracruz.
- Another victim was rescued by state police in Ixtlahuaca, Edomés.
- State police rescued a 20-year-old woman in Tihuatlán, Veracruz. She had been kidnapped from inside an Oxxo store a few days earlier in Tuxpan, Veracruz.

Mexico: There were also several failed kidnappings reported this month.

- In one case, a merchant marine captain was able to prevent the kidnapping of his granddaughter from their vehicle in Tuxpan, Veracruz.
- Seven assailants attempted to kidnap the owner of an automobile business in Guadalupe, Nuevo León. The intended victim shot and killed one of the attackers.
- Assailants attempted to kidnap a Pemex worker in the parking lot of a shopping center in

Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz. A nearby police officer was able to frustrate the kidnapping.

Mexico: In other cases, the condition and whereabouts of the kidnap victim remain unknown:

- For example, an attorney and his spouse were kidnapped in Coatzacoalcos. Another attorney was kidnapped a few days later in Coatzacoalcos.
- A hospital administrator was kidnapped while dining in Coatzacoalcos. A physician was kidnapped in Veracruz.
- A school teacher was kidnapped in Catemaco, Veracruz and another school teacher was kidnapped in Acayucan, Veracruz.
- Several gunmen kidnapped a U.S. citizen from a bar in Monterrey, Nuevo León. A Pemex worker was kidnapped in Agua Dulce, Veracruz.
- Another Pemex employee was reported missing in Minatitlan, Veracruz.
- A truck driver was kidnapped in Nanchital, Veracruz.

Mexico: There were also several reports of kidnap victims being killed by their captors:

- For example, an employee of the Cuatrotolapan sugar mill was kidnapped and ultimately murdered in Veracruz.
- A Pemex worker and his wife were kidnapped and murdered in Coatzacoalcos.

Paraguay: It was reported that a 12 year old boy had been kidnapped in Luque. The victim's mother told the police that he had gone to el Colegio Manuel Dominguez to collect his 7 year old brother but never arrived. A short time later, the victim's father, a doctor, received a telephone call demanding ransom. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update –July 5, 2018)

Peru: A government employee was express kidnapped on June 28 after hailing a taxi in the capital Lima (Lima province) and brutally attacked until she revealed her bank details. Express kidnapers abducted the 48-year-

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old woman shortly after she boarded the taxi in the upper class neighborhood of San Borja. A few minutes later, the taxi suddenly stopped and two armed men entered the car. They brutally attacked the victim and forced her to give her bank cards and personal identification numbers (PINs). Once the kidnappers had withdrawn an undisclosed amount of money from the victim's account, they released her along an abandoned road in the Lima neighborhood of Salamanca. (Control Risk, Peru Country Update – July 3, 2018)

Peru: Although not as commonly reported in Peru as traditional kidnaps, Control Risks records multiple express kidnaps in the country each year, particularly in Lima. National newspaper Peru 21 reported on July 1 that Nicasio Zapata, the head of the National Police Kidnap Unit, blamed the majority of express kidnaps on financially motivated criminal gangs and claimed that they typically used unlicensed taxis to stage the crime. Zapata also claimed that the majority of incidents involving unlicensed taxis took place in Lima, making it the hotspot for the crime. (Control Risk, Peru Country Update – July 3, 2018)

Puerto Rico: The Puerto Rican rapper Bryant Myers and his mother were kidnapped on June 5. The perpetrators initially demanded ransom for their release but abandoned their victims when they realized the police were closing in. A shootout ensued, and Myers and his mother were rescued unharmed. Myers is understood to have known one of his kidnappers. (Unity Resources Group, Crisis Monitor – 2nd Quarter Report 2018)

Venezuela: An Italian businessman was rescued just hours after he was abducted on June 4, in the Simón Bolívar municipality of Zulia State, Venezuela. Aquiles Marinelli was driving with his wife and a son when criminals intercepted them. The woman and child were soon released so they could gather the (undisclosed) demanded ransom. The plan was foiled after a few hours,

when the authorities located the criminals, who released the victim before escaping. (Constellis, Kidnap and Ransom Insight – July 2018)

Venezuela: Agents from el Comando Nacional Antiextorsion y Secuestro (Conas) de Ciudad Guayana, rescued a 13 year old boy from a finca on the old Ciudad Bolívar-Puerto Ordaz road. The victim had been kidnapped on June 15 when returning with his family from an outing to a bull running contest. The kidnappers demanded 15 kilos of gold for the victim's release. After an investigation, Conas identified the location where the victim was being held, rescued the boy, and arrested two suspects, killing another. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – July 12, 2018)

Venezuela: On August 1, kidnappers shot dead an Italian businessman in Maracay (Aragua state) when he contacted a relative after being abducted. The two assailants intercepted the Italian national as he arrived in his car at his business premises in San Agustín, Maracay. The perpetrators reportedly got into the victim's car and forced him into the back. They then shot and killed the victim when they realized he had phoned a relative. Police later killed two suspects in a shootout. Most kidnaps will continue to target local nationals, especially wealthy businesspeople and employees. Control Risks also regularly records kidnaps of foreign nationals. Expatriates, particularly commercial business owners, will remain attractive targets given their perceived wealth and access to foreign currency. Perpetrators will continue to rely on the established routines of expatriates to facilitate abduction. The kidnap of the Italian businessman suggests that the perpetrators studied the victim's routines and specifically targeted him as he arrived at work. Perpetrators will continue to capitalize on the predictable routines of their victims. (Control Risk, Venezuela Country Update – August 6, 2018)