



Africa

Kenya: On June 10, five police officers and a taxi driver were reportedly arrested in Nairobi on charges of extortion and kidnap. The officers detained a Chinese national in the Makongeni area on suspicion that he possessed an invalid work permit. The taxi driver then transported the victim to the Muthaiga police station. The officers demanded ransom from the victim in order to release him. The family of the Chinese national reported the incident to Thika police station and officers arrested the suspected extortion group. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)

Libya: On June 17, Rada forces – a Tripoli-based militia supporting the UN-backed Government of National Accord – reported that they had freed a kidnap victim. The hostage, Aseel al-Girwi, was abducted in Tripoli by a criminal gang and held in captivity for 45 days. A USD 2.2 million ransom was demanded by the kidnappers for his release. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)

Libya: On June 26, a student and volunteer for the “Tripoli Good Project”, an NGO, was released. The student was kidnapped in Tripoli on 21 June. The victim, identified as Mohammed Shaker, was abducted by an unidentified group while providing food for the disadvantaged and sick during the holy month of Ramadan. No ransom was reported to have been paid, however, it is likely Shaker was targeted due to his middle class background. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)

Mozambique: The nine year old grandson of a Beira businessman who owns a shop called Motichande, was kidnapped by between 3 and 5 masked gunmen from outside his home in the Ponta-Gea neighborhood of Beira at around 6:45am. The victim was preparing to leave for school in the company of his brother and another classmate. Three men in a car parked outside the victim’s home and two got out, grabbed the victim who was the closest and dragged him into their car. They also attempted to kidnap the victim’s brother, but he ran away. The kidnappers demanded the keys of the car the children were to travel to school in, but the driver refused to hand them over. The kidnappers shot him in the leg, stole the keys and the car and drove away. A family source confirmed that the victim had been rescued on 26 May, and photos of him being reunited with his family were posted on Facebook. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 25, 2016)

Nigeria: On May 18, a Chinese national working for a Chinese mining company was abducted while travelling to Abuja from a mining site in Nasarawa state. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)



Asia

Afghanistan: On May 5, the US Embassy in Kabul reinforced a warning to US nationals over the high kidnap threat targeting expatriates. A significant incident on May 2 pre-empted the statement; one US national and one South African national employed by the International Rescue Committee evaded an attempted abduction in Kabul owing to their driver's evasive actions. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)

Afghanistan: On May 10, a joint Afghan and US Special Forces operation rescued the kidnapped son of Pakistan's former prime minister in Giyan district, Paktika province. Al-Qaeda militants had abducted Ali Haider Gilani in May 2013 in Multan, Pakistan, reportedly with intentions of exchanging him for the release of imprisoned high profile militants. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)

China: Over 500 police officers were involved in a ten hour rescue operation to free Gui Baoshi, the billionaire Chairman of a prominent real estate group, in Datong City, northwest Shaanxi province. Gui was being held hostage by a gang who had demanded USD20 million in ransom. Two members of the gang were shot by the police. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 13, 2016)

China: Arrest of virtual kidnap gang in Cambodia highlights telephone extortion in China. Cambodian authorities announced 14 June 14, that they had arrested 27 Chinese and Taiwanese nationals in the capital Phnom Penh on suspicion of telecoms extortion of victims in China. The extortionists were resorting to virtual kidnap, whereby they claim to have kidnapped a loved one and demand a ransom for their release when in fact no kidnap has occurred, among other forms of extortion. Originating in Latin America, the virtual kidnapping phenomenon has spread to some countries in Asia and reports of individuals falling victim to the crime are becoming more frequent. In addition to China (including Hong Kong), virtual kidnapping is also relatively common in Taiwan and Singapore. (Control Risk, Country Update – 5 Jun 2016)

India: During the reporting period three separate kidnappings within three days occurred in the northern state of Rajasthan. On May 5, the 13-year-old son of a Mumbai businessman was kidnapped in Sanchore, Jalore for ransom. Earlier on May 4, criminals kidnapped a Mumbai businessman also in Jalore and demanded a high ransom, but settle for a smaller amount during negotiations. The kidnappers reportedly drove around for 30 hours until the ransom was eventually paid and the victim was released. On May 6, another businessman was reportedly kidnapped in Bikaner, Rajasthan and the perpetrators demanded an undisclosed ransom amount from his nephew. Local police were informed and managed to rescue the victim and arrest one of the perpetrators. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)



Malaysia: On May 23, Malaysia's incumbent Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Shahidan Kassim, reported that the Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) has successfully stopped 15 attempted kidnappings since 2014 and killed four Islamist militants who were reportedly linked to the Philippines-based ASG. An additional 67 suspected ASG militants have reportedly been detained for questioning since 2014. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)

Pakistan: Interviews with former kidnap victim Shahbaz Taseer provided insight into the treatment of hostages in Pakistan by militant groups. Taseer was abducted in Lahore in August 2011 and held in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region for five years by the Islamist militant group Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) until his release in February 2016 by the Afghan Taliban. The IMU is considered a ruthless organization, known for carrying out high-profile attacks in Pakistan, including on Karachi airport in June 2014. Taseer recalled the IMU had tortured and flogged him, cut his flesh and pulled out his nails, demonstrating unusually harsh treatment of hostages. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)

The Philippines: On May 22, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) released a new video showing what it described as "the final message" from three remaining hostages abducted from Samal Island in September 2015. The video's authenticity could not be verified, but appears to show Canadian national Robert Hall, Norwegian national Kjartan Sekkingstad and Filipino Marites Flor. The hostages appealed to Philippine president-elect Rodrigo Duterte to assist their release, and reiterated the earlier ransom demand of USD 6.4 million per hostage by 1500LT on 13 June. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)

Europe and CIS

Spain: On June 27, the National Police in Asturias warned of a spike in virtual kidnapping in the region. Media sources covering the alert reported that typical 'ransom' payments oscillate between EUR 1,000 (USD 1,100) and EUR 10,000 (USD 11,000). This alert highlights the growing reach of virtual kidnapping in Spain. A virtual kidnap typically involves an extortionist contacting an individual, claiming to have abducted a loved one and demanding a ransom. Media sources reported the arrival of the crime in Spain in early 2015. Unlike the perpetrators of kidnaps-for-ransom, virtual kidnappers do not need to be located in the same region or country as their targets, allowing the crime to spread beyond Latin America where it originated. (Control Risk, Country Update – 29 Jun 2016)

Ukraine: An unnamed French citizen was kidnapped for ransom near a hotel in the Perchersky district of Kiev. On May 09, the police reported that two people had been arrested in connection with the kidnapping after the victim was released outside Kiev. He had suffered injuries, but was able to give information to the police. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 6, 2016)



Middle East

Iraq: On May 09, a 53-year-old Kuwaiti national was released from captivity following negotiations and was safely repatriated to Kuwait. The victim, identified as a meat merchant, was kidnapped while on a business trip to southern Iraq in March 2016. Media reports citing the victim's brother suggest that the kidnappers had threatened to execute the hostage unless a ransom of USD 1 million was paid. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)

Iraq: On 07 June, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al- Thani formally asked the Iraqi government to intensify efforts to secure the release of the remaining 16 members of a Qatari hunting party kidnapped by a suspected Shia militia in southern Iraq in December 2015. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)

Syria: On May 07, three Spanish journalists arrived home after being held captive in Syria for 301 days. The journalists, who were experienced in hostile environments, were abducted in the northern city of Aleppo in July 2015 by the Syrian al-Qaeda affiliate, the Nusra Front. The circumstances surrounding their release were not disclosed, however, the Spanish government issued a statement acknowledging the roles of Turkey and Qatar in securing the release particularly during the final stages of the victims' captivity. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 7, 2016)

Turkey: Saleh Muhammad Katnani and Saher Ibrahim Katnani, Israeli medical students who had been studying in Armenia, were kidnapped during the night of April 28, near the southern city of Mersin after arriving in the area to buy gold. The kidnappers contacted the families of the two victims and initially demanded high ransom, but reduced the demand after negotiations and also threatened to sell the two victims to the Islamic State (IS) if the ransom was not paid. The two were released after three days once the ransom had been paid. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 1, 2016)

Yemen: On June 21, Reuters news agency reported a German national held hostage in Yemen had been released and evacuated to Muscat, Oman. According to the Omani foreign ministry cited by Reuters, Oman helped negotiate the release of the hostage. The identity of the German national was not revealed in open sources. In addition, it remains unknown who seized the victim and where or when the abduction had taken place. A separate source, London-based The New Arab online news portal, suggested the victim was held in Houthi controlled Sana'a. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)



Latin America and the Caribbean

Argentina: The 57 year old owner of “Envitap”, a canning and bottling factory, was kidnapped as he left his factory at Villa Lynch, Buenos Aires, to return home. Later on, the kidnappers contacted the victim’s twin brother and began ransom negotiations. After the payment, the victim was released. This incident was the second within 24 hours in Villa Lynch and the sixth in 50 days. In the previous case, the owner of a textile business was kidnapped and released also after a ransom payment. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 9, 2016)

Argentina: Lucas Coronado (29) was kidnapped at around 9:30pm while driving to a dinner appointment. The kidnappers made contact with three of the victim’s family members – his mother, his wife’s partner and his brother – and made ransom demands to all three. The family reported the incident to the police. A ransom payment was agreed, and once collected by the kidnappers, the victim was released. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 22, 2016)

Argentina: The police rescued a Paraguayan boy aged 10, who was being held in a hotel in Constitucion by a gang of kidnappers who demanded a high ransom from the victim’s family. The victim’s mother negotiated a lower amount and the police arrested two suspects when they tried to collect the ransom money. The boy was held captive for 48 hours during which time the kidnappers contacted the family at least 30 times to discuss the ransom. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 25, 2016)

Argentina: Another kidnapping case was reported in Buenos Aires, when a husband was kidnapped as he arrived at his home in Villa Luzuriga. The victim was released hours later after the payment of a ransom comprising money and jewellery. There have been in excess of 100 reported kidnapping incidents since the beginning of the year. La ministra de Seguridad de la Nacion, Patricia Bullrich, expressed concern at the increase in kidnapping cases. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 26, 2016)

Argentina: C5N, a TV News Channel, reported that the Parliamentary Representative for Mercosur, was kidnapped along with his wife and a son in Moron. The kidnappers demanded ransom and he was released after another son had negotiated a lower amount that was paid. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 27, 2016)

Argentina: On June 05, national newspaper *Clarín* reported that figures provided by the Attorney General’s Office show that the highest numbers of virtual kidnaps from the total of 196 in the first four months of 2016, were reported in three neighborhoods of the capital Buenos Aires. The article stated that virtual kidnappers look for wealthy victims who will have cash in their homes. (Control Risk, Country Update – 13 June 2016)



Brazil: A group of armed men in the early hours of 06 June stormed the home of a bank employee in Parambu (Ceará state), taking three adults and two children hostage, and abducting the bank employee at gunpoint. Some of the kidnappers then drove him to the branch where he worked and forced him to withdraw money from the safe. The victims, who remained captive throughout the ordeal, were freed once the money was handed over. This latest incident acts as a reminder of the ongoing and widespread tiger kidnapping threat. In the past year, there have been incidents in several states across Brazil, such as Minas Gerais, Ceará, São Paulo and Pernambuco. Tiger kidnaps, in which an employee's family or loved ones are held hostage while the employee is forced to steal cash or valuables from his or her place of work to give to the kidnappers, are becoming more frequent in Brazil. (Control Risk, Country Update – 21 June 2016)

Chile: On June 24, a 66-year-old woman was the target of a virtual kidnap at her home in the Las Condes area of the capital Santiago. Extortionists telephoned her early in the morning and convinced her that they had abducted her daughter before persuading her to make ten separate bank transfers, each to different accounts. One of the extortionists then collected the woman outside her home in a taxi and forced her to make further payments and purchases to the value of CLP 70m (USD 104,000). This incident acts as a reminder of virtual kidnapping in Chile. Since early 2015, Control Risks has also recorded Chilean gangs, some from within prisons in Santiago, using this scam to target people in Spain, further highlighting the spread of the crime. (Control Risk, Country Update – 29 June 2016)

Colombia: Following the government's continued peace negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the left-wing guerrilla group's self-imposed ban on kidnap for ransom, Colombia has become the clearest example of a former kidnapping hotspot. However, the country's now moderate threat from kidnapping stems from the National Liberation Army (ELN), another left-wing guerrilla group which remains hopeful of their own peace negotiations with the government but continue kidnapping for ransom to exert leverage, raise funds and raise the group's profile. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)

Colombia: The National Liberation Army (ELN) released a statement in which it denied responsibility for the kidnapping of Melisa Trilos (25), an attorney, in Ocana, Norte de Santander. On 15 May, the army rescued the victim and arrested one suspect who was assumed to be a member of the ELN. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 2016)

Colombia: Tulio Hurtado, president of la Asociacion de Mineros de Novita, was kidnapped while travelling in public transport along the Condoto-Novita road in Choco. El comandante de la Fuerza Tarea Conjunta Titan said that ten members of el Frente Che Guevara del ELN set up an illegal road block and stopped the vehicle in which the victim was travelling. Troops had been deployed to locate and rescue the victim. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 4, 2016)



Colombia: Military sources said that Salud Hernandez-Mora (59), a Spanish journalist working for El Mundo and Colombian newspapers, had disappeared, feared kidnapped, from El Tarra, Norte de Santander, while reporting a story on the illegal drugs trade. On 24 May, a reporter working for the private channel RCN Television, Diego de Pablos, and Carlos Melo, a freelance cameraman, also disappeared in the same area where they had gone to cover the kidnapping of Salud Hernandez-Mora. It was assumed they had also been kidnapped by the ELN. On 27 May, Salud Hernandez-Mora was released after being held for six days. She confirmed she had been kidnapped and had not been embedded with the ELN. Some hours later, Pablos and Melo were also released. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 2016)

Colombia: On 23 June, the Colombian government and The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) signed an historic ceasefire agreement. Despite the agreement, there remains a moderate threat from kidnapping for ransom posed by the National Liberation Army (ELN) and criminal groups operating predominately in the northeast. The ELN has refused to renounce kidnapping, and the tactic remains the group's main source of funding. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)

Honduras: Agents from la Unidad Antisecuestros de la Policia Nacional y la Direccion Policial de Investigacion (DPI) rescued Miguel Angel Lopez, a teacher, from a house in Berlin de Corquin, Copan, five days after he had been kidnapped, followed by the arrest of three suspects. The rescue operation was mounted after five days of investigation that resulted in the police locating the house where the victim was being held. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 5, 2016)

Mexico: A spokesman for Romeo Garcia Lopez, el presidente de la Camara Nacional de Comercio (Canaco), in Acayucan, Veracruz, said that a wave of violence exists with two businesses being robbed each day and a kidnapping per week. The targets of the robberies and kidnappings are predominantly ranchers and businessmen. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 1, 2016)

Mexico: The police in the northern state of Tamaulipas arrested two Texas men, residents of Hidalgo and Brownsville, and rescued an unnamed 28 year old American when they stopped a car at a checkpoint that was travelling near Matamoros in the state. The police said that the two kidnappers had grabbed the victim in McAllen on May 12, and driven him across an international bridge into the border city of Reynosa. The victim was kept in a safe house in Matamoros while the kidnappers made ransom calls to the victim's family. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 18, 2016)

Mexico: Agents from la Policia Federal freed a kidnapping victim who was being held in a kidnappers' safe house in Nezahualcoyoti, Estado de Mexico, and arrested four suspects. The kidnappers used public service vehicles to intercept their victims and then took them to the safe house before contacting the victim's family to demand a ransom. The gang operated in areas such as

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K&R AND EXTORTION INCIDENTS: JULY 2016



Nezahualcoyoti, Chimalhuacan, La Paz, Ixtapaluca and Valle de Chalco. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 25, 2016)

Mexico: Alan Pulido, the Mexican footballer who plays for Greek club Olympiakos, was kidnapped in the early hours of the morning from Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, after leaving a party with his girlfriend. His girlfriend was allowed to go free. Less than 24 hours later, the police announced that the victim had been rescued. It was later reported that the victim attacked the guard, snatched his pistol and cell phone and made three calls to the emergency services asking for help and giving his location. One suspect was arrested and at least three more were being sought by the police. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 28, 2016)

Mexico: Over the reporting period, a number of incidents reinforced the high kidnapping threat in the northern border states. Cartel violence between rival factions of the Zetas continues to affect Tamaulipas, with both sides utilizing kidnap for ransom to exert pressure over rivals, silence journalists and raise funds. One faction called Old School Z, supported by Grupo Bravo, and their rivals Cártel Del Noreste are accused of kidnapping, with numerous other groups taking advantage of the violence to target victims for ransom. Demonstrating the deteriorating security situation in the region, some US lawmakers have called for a review of US border security and the US Department of State continues to warn against all but essential travel to Tamaulipas. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)

Peru: After a police investigation into the kidnapping of the 7 year old daughter of Pablo Cesar Huayanay, the owner of a business selling furniture, it transpired that the mastermind behind the kidnapping was the businessman's best friend, Huaman Gomez. The kidnapers contacted the girl's father and demanded a high ransom. As a result of the carelessness of one of the kidnapers, the police discovered the house where the victim was being held, rescued her and arrested some suspects. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 15, 2016)

Venezuela: There continues to be a high threat from kidnapping throughout Venezuela amid widespread political instability and a worsening economic crisis. On 21 May, police rescued a one-year-old child abducted a day earlier from his parent's home in the La Rinconada area of Caracas. The police later reported that the child's babysitter, who was responsible for the child's well-being when the abduction occurred, had assisted the kidnapers. According to local media, the child's family had agreed to pay in ransom, but the child was rescued before the payment was made. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – May 2016)

Venezuela: A Portuguese husband (48) and wife (42) were kidnapped in Caracas by several armed men as they walked from their car to a house. They were driven away and it is believed that the husband pulled a gun on the kidnapers. The driver lost control of the vehicle and crashed, killing the



woman. The husband and one kidnapper were injured. The couple owned a restaurant in Caracas, but were preparing to return to Portugal because of the bad security situation in Venezuela. (Griffin Underwriting, Security Update – May 21, 2016)

Venezuela: The kidnap threat continues to increase across Venezuela, according to a report released in June by the Criminal Institute at Santa Maria University. The study shows the number of people reported to have been kidnapped in the first five months of 2016 increased by 170% compared to the same period in 2015. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)

Venezuela: On June 02, unidentified gunmen kidnapped the press secretary of the Popular Will political party, Johan Merchán, while he was driving around the Sebucañ neighborhood in Caracas. Merchán was released 30 hours later following an undisclosed ransom payment. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)

Venezuela: On June 22, a 12-year-old girl was kidnapped when three robbers broke into her family house in Caracas. The criminals tied up all family members, stole cash and jewelry, kidnapped the victim and demanded ransom for her release. The family reported the incident to the police, who rescued the victim and arrested the perpetrators. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)

Venezuela: On June 25, the Public Prosecution Office reported the bodies of Ericka Ares Luick and her husband Kumar Prasad Bhat have been found in the backyard of their house in Cumana, Sucre state. Authorities suspect the victims were kidnapped while they were negotiating the selling of their car. It is believed the perpetrators had taken the couple to their home to obtain a ransom before killing them at the scene. (NYA International, Global Kidnap Report – June 2016)