



THE INKERMAN GROUP



KIDNAP & RANSOM MONTHLY REVIEW

OCTOBER 2011

The Inkerman Kidnap & Ransom Monthly Summary provides an informative assessment of kidnap and extortion trends, broken down by region, to provide an overview of the global risk of being targeted for kidnap.

Also available: Inkerman Kidnap & Ransom Daily Bulletin
Inkerman Political Risk & Security Review

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GLOBAL OVERVIEW

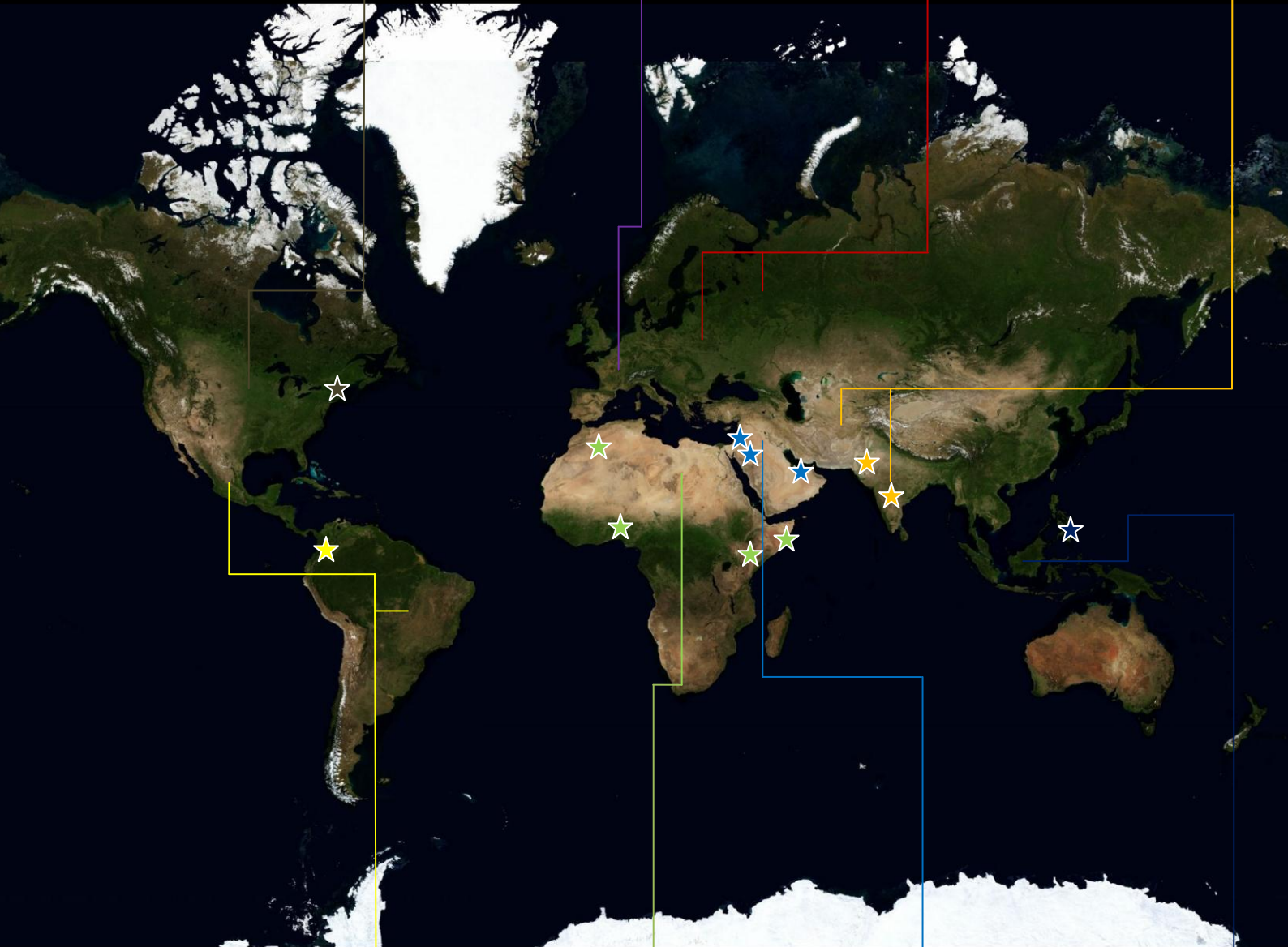
RISK LEVEL
 ↑ Increased
 ↓ Reduced
 — Unchanged

NORTH AMERICA
 RISK LEVEL: LOW —
 AREAS OF RISK: USA / Mexico border

WESTERN EUROPE
 RISK LEVEL: LOW —
 AREAS OF RISK: N/A

EASTERN EUROPE
 RISK LEVEL: MODERATE —
 AREAS OF RISK: Russia, Turkey

CENTRAL ASIA
 RISK LEVEL: VERY HIGH —
 AREAS OF RISK: Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Nepal



LATIN AMERICA
 RISK LEVEL: VERY HIGH ↑
 AREAS OF RISK: Mexico, Colombia, Honduras

AFRICA
 RISK LEVEL: VERY HIGH ↑
 AREAS OF RISK: West Africa, Nigeria, Sudan, Sahel region

MIDDLE EAST
 RISK LEVEL: MODERATE —
 AREAS OF RISK: Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Gaza Strip

ASIA-PACIFIC
 RISK LEVEL: HIGH ↑
 AREAS OF RISK: Philippines

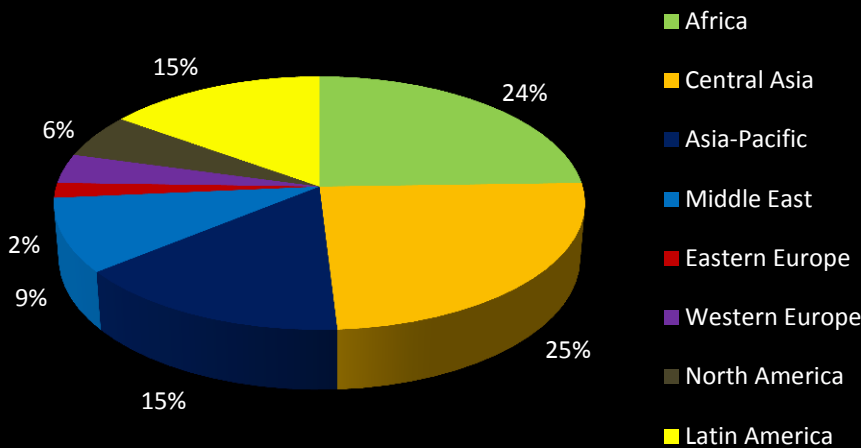
SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- ★ Iraq, 03/10/11 – Police hostages
- ★ Kenya, 03/10/11 – Disabled French
- ★ Afghanistan, 10/10/11 – Aid workers taken
- ★ Somalia, 12/10/11 – US and UK rescue
- ★ Nigeria, 17/10/11 – Gov official release
- ★ Colombia, 18/10/11 – Mayor daughter
- ★ Philippines, 19/10/11 – Soldiers kidnap
- ★ Lebanon, 19/10/11 – Army kidnap
- ★ Philadelphia, 20/10/11 – Kidnap plot
- ★ India, 24/10/11 – Train kidnap
- ★ Algeria, 24/10/11 – Aid workers
- ★ UAE, 27/10/11 – Woman snatched

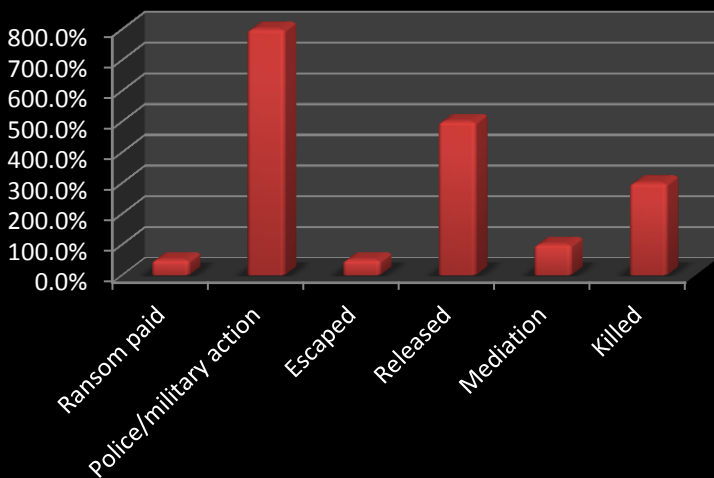
STATISTICS AND TRENDS

There follows a graphical representation and analysis of kidnap trends extrapolated from the Inkerman Kidnap & Ransom Daily Bulletin. It should be considered that the data makes no qualitative differentiation between kidnap events, and that local incidents are included alongside foreign and expatriate victims. Many kidnaps also go unreported, thus the data below should be interpreted as a guide only.

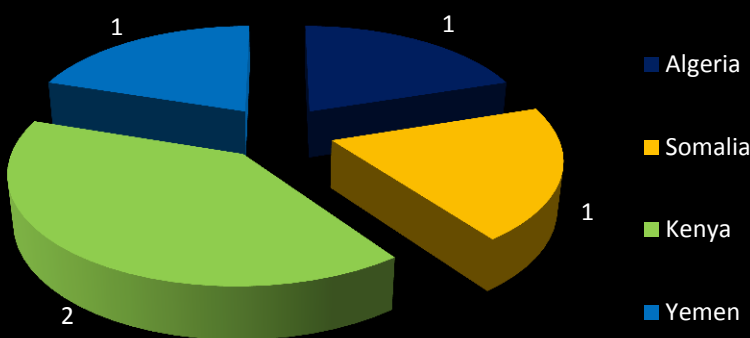
KIDNAP BREAKDOWN BY REGION



KIDNAP RESOLUTION BY VICTIM



FOREIGNERS KIDNAPPED BY COUNTRY



REGIONAL TRENDS

India, Afghanistan and Pakistan remain high risk kidnap locations, although the vast majority of victims are local people. Africa, in particular Kenya and Somalia, saw a high level of incidents involving foreigners. Mexico's drug war continues to contribute a significant number of victims to Latin America's representation. Asia Pacific saw a particularly volatile month, resulting in military operations being launched against the MILF.

KIDNAP RESOLUTIONS

Police action and release showed a high proportion of resolutions this month. A large number of victims were freed as a result of a ransom being paid. Interestingly incidents resolved following mediation were also on the increase this month.

EXPATRIATE WATCH

The incidents of expatriate kidnappings have risen this month. As indicated by the pie chart to the bottom left, in October 2011 four countries experienced kidnap-for-ransom cases which involved foreigners. In particular, Africa experienced a high proportion of aid workers being targeted, in addition to a further incident on the Kenya – Somali border resulting in Kenyan armed forces launching operation in the neighbouring country.

LATIN AMERICA

The major perpetrators of kidnap for ransom are drug cartels and other organised criminal organisations, motivated by profit, or by a political incentive. However, the vast majority of kidnaps are not reported, both for fear of reprisals and for fear of the authorities, many of whom are perceived to be corrupt. This is particularly the case in Ecuador, Mexico and Venezuela. This makes it difficult to document, and to ultimately combat this crime in the region.

AREAS OF RISK

VERY HIGH

Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Honduras, Haiti, Guatemala.

HIGH

Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador.

MODERATE

Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, Nicaragua, Panama, French Guiana, Costa Rica.

The face of cartel operations in Mexico continues to rapidly evolve both with regard to the tactics employed and the geographic areas of operation, and with it, so too do the risks posed to those in country. For its part, Los Zetas, widely viewed to be the country's most brutal drug trafficking organisation, has not played a particularly smart game recently: whilst cartels frequently engage in high profile operations to intimidate their rivals and the public at large, as well as to humiliate the authorities, it is a fine line between this and carrying out actions which attract too much attention from the authorities. Recent actions by the cartel, most notably the attack on a casino on 25 August 2011 which left fifty-three people dead and garnered widespread coverage both in the national and international press, have promoted Los Zetas as the primary target of the government's war on the cartels. It appears that Los Zetas' current strategy (or lack of), reflects the current undermining of its leadership. Recent months have seen a number of the cartel's leading members detained by the authorities, and in October 2011 its third-highest ranking member, Carlos Oliva Castillo, was detained in Saltillo, Coahuila State, in Operation Scorpio. Los Zetas was founded by defectors from the Special Forces Airmobile Group, and as a result it has benefited from strong, competent and organised leadership. Losses of such key members (there are now believed to be only six of the original members now at large) therefore have serious implications for the cartel and its operations, as it is extremely difficult to replace such "unique" skill sets. The degradation and necessary devolvement of the leadership structure means that the decisions made may be less strategic. Demonstrating this, it is believed that Martin Omar Estrada Luna, a relatively low level Zetas member, was responsible for orchestrating the mass graves in San Fernando, Tamaulipas. This incident, like the casino attack which is also believed to have been orchestrated by a relatively low profile cartel member, attracted far more high profile than was in the interests of the cartel, suggesting that they were carried out without a "plan" of senior members of the organisation. Supporting this are unconfirmed reports that in carrying out the massacres in San Fernando, Estrada was actively disobeying orders from the Zetas leadership to lower the violence in his town (thereby avoiding undue levels of attention by the authorities). This suggests that leadership has been devolved, and if it is the case, there may be an escalation of the drug-related chaos which has gripped many parts of the country. Arguably these recent ill-advised decisions are part of a self-perpetuating cycle: as the leadership is undermined, this prompts less strategic members of the cartel to make poor decisions, which attract more attention to the cartel, which lead to further government operations against it. In an effort to address this deficit, the cartel appears to be looking farther afield: in a testament to Los Zetas' international reach, it was this month reported that a number of former members of the Colombia Special Forces are now actively involved in training members of the cartel. A change to the cartel's leadership structure has a number of serious implications for actions committed by the cartels, particularly kidnap, as it makes the group and its cells more difficult to predict. In addition, while the dismantling of Los Zetas would be a positive development for Mexico, the cartel remains a formidable force despite the recent arrests, with no sign that a fatal blow has been dealt.

AFRICA

There is a considerable threat of kidnap against foreigners and business personnel in a number of countries, and personal security provisions are often necessary to mitigate this risk, especially in Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and the Sahara region. However, the majority of kidnaps in Africa go unreported and continue to be conducted by local people against fellow citizens. These include mass kidnappings in northern Congo-Kinshasa and kidnaps that happen as a result of tribal disputes.

AREAS OF RISK

VERY HIGH

Somalia, Kenya (border region), Benin, Libya, DRC, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Mauritania, Algeria.

HIGH

Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi.

MODERATE

Chad, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, CAR, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Djibouti.



As of October 2011, Africa continues to be plagued by kidnaps-for-ransom and piracy. Although the number of reported kidnaps (thirteen) remains the same across the continent compared to September 2011, it should be stressed that most go unreported. Evidence suggests there may in fact be a rise in kidnaps as Africa has been hit on a variety of fronts, including famine in the Horn, continued fallout from war-torn Maghreb, as well as the worldwide economic crisis, which has hit lower-income countries on the continent especially hard. Currently, there appears to be an alarming trend in the kidnap of foreign nationals, specifically within Kenya and neighbouring Somalia. Reports on 13 October 2011, indicated that gunmen kidnapped two Spanish doctors working for Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) from the Dadaab refugee camp along Kenya's border with Somalia. In a separate incident on 19 October 2011, a wheelchair bound French woman died after being held in captivity by pirates linked to the Islamic extremist Islamist group al Shabaab. The incidents only further embarrassed the Kenyan Government, which was already trying to recover from the media frenzy surrounding an earlier kidnapping in September 2011, in which gunmen shot dead British publishing executive David Tebbutt, before taking his wife, Judith, also a UK national, hostage. Reports indicate that Judith may still be in captivity in Somalia by pirates linked to al Shabaab. These incidents have devastated Kenya's tourism industry, and further damaged the shipping routes along the already pirate infested Indian Ocean. Following this spike in kidnaps of foreigners, on 17 October 2011, Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki announced his country's decision to initiate a major joint security operation with Somalia, in an effort to remove the region of al Shabaab. However, in a blow to bilateral relations, Somali President Sheik Sharif Sheikh Ahmed later lashed out at Kenyan officials, calling the country's decision to send its troops across the border into his country "inappropriate", despite the fact that the Kenyan Government apparently had official documentation to prove the two had agreed to the operation. The political entanglements only underscore the frustration on behalf of Kenya, who has strived to be a political leader in a region beset by such violence. Meanwhile, Somalia continues to be targeted by pirates, as expected, given its location along the prized Indian Ocean shipping routes, as well as the end of the region's monsoon season. Elsewhere in Africa, kidnaps conducted by al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) remain a threat to North Africa as perpetrators use the tactic as a means to finance the Islamic terror group. Kidnaps of this kind have been rampant in Algeria. On 22 October 2011, three aid workers, including two Spaniards and an Italian, were kidnapped from the Rabuni camp near Tindouf, which is considered to be a hub of the Polisario Front, a group which seeks the independence of the disputed Western Sahara. On 25 October 2011, Spanish Foreign Minister Trinidad Jimenez said she believed a combined Maghreb region effort was necessary to help secure the release of the victims. Moroccan Foreign Minister Taieb Fassi Fihri agreed with Jimenez's assertion, saying that although AQIM may have conducted the kidnaps, Algeria bore the brunt of the responsibility to improve its internal security issues. Such criticism shows that Algeria may not be doing enough to combat the threat of kidnapping in the region, thus indicating that Algeria may continue to pose a kidnap risk to foreigners.

CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asia is consistently one of the highest risk regions in the world for kidnap. The fraught security situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan puts local people and travellers alike in danger. Westerners are at significant risk in Pakistan, even in the major cities. In India and the surrounding countries, local people are regularly kidnapped by each other as a means to make money quickly. Incidents are also prominent in the 'stans' but very underreported.

India contributed a large proportion of the kidnap statistics to Central Asia during October 2011. The majority of kidnaps in the region are of a purely financial motivation, in particular, kidnappings tend to be of young children either by relatives or friends who are looking to make a 'quick buck'. In addition, children whose families are perceived to have a large amount of wealth due to their business status are also particularly vulnerable to attacks. Worryingly, during October 2011, a large amount of these types of incidents resulted in the death of the children who had been taken. There were four incidents of this kind recorded this month. It is difficult to say why so many cases of this nature end up in the death of the victim, but based on the incidents it appears that once the would be kidnappers have taken the child they become spooked by police investigations and often decide that there only way of escaping prosecution is to murder the victim.

Pakistan continues to be one of the highest risk areas in the central Asia region, particularly for foreigners. On a more positive note however, it was confirmed that eight Pakistani's who had been working for a US charity, were released on 18 October 2011, following two months in captivity. The victims had been working for the American Refugee Committee (ARC) when they were abducted in the Pishin district, about fifty kilometres north of Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province. They were being held in South Waziristan, part of Pakistan's lawless tribal belt which many believe is the headquarters of al Qaeda and Taliban militants fighting in neighbouring Afghanistan. In addition to this release news finally emerged on a Swiss couple who had been kidnapped by the Pakistani Taliban almost four months ago in July 2011. Two videos were posted on the website of FATA Research Centre, a Pakistani think-tank. The first video shows one of the couple speaking in English, calling on the US authorities to free Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani American scientist who was jailed for eighty-six years in 2010 after being found guilty of the attempted murder of American agents who were interrogating her in Afghanistan. They also request that the Pakistani authorities free some Taliban militants. The second video sees the couple speaking in German and features the familiar motif of four masked men with weapons standing behind them and features a request for Pakistani and Swiss Government to give into the kidnappers' demands, as their lives are in danger. Interestingly, it does not appear that any requests for a financial ransom have been made, this may reflect a growing trend of militants in the region trying to avoid requesting financial remuneration as they believe it is cheapening their cause and preventing them from being taken seriously as a political movement. However, what on the surface appears to be a rather principled trend could simply be due to an increase of funds from other sources of revenue, such as the spoils of an increased drug trade in Afghanistan being shared with militants in the region, or increased amounts of international aid being intercepted and sold. All of which means that militants could be becoming less reliant on funds from kidnap operations, (particularly those involving foreigners which will always draw large amounts of media attention), allowing them to further their cause. This also means that potentially this may not be a persistent trend and there may soon be a return to ransom demands on top of political ones.

AREAS OF RISK

VERY HIGH

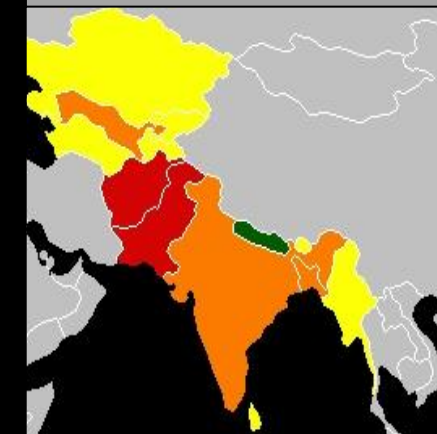
Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Kashmir, Kyrgyzstan

HIGH

Bangladesh, Uzbekistan.

MODERATE

Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka.



ASIA-PACIFIC

Asia-Pacific is typically a low risk region, with the notable exceptions of the Philippines and Indonesia.

Mindanao in the southern Philippines is one of the most dangerous areas in the world for the risk of kidnap. Islamist insurgents in Basilan have been responsible for kidnapping and killing Westerners in the past.

AREAS OF RISK

VERY HIGH

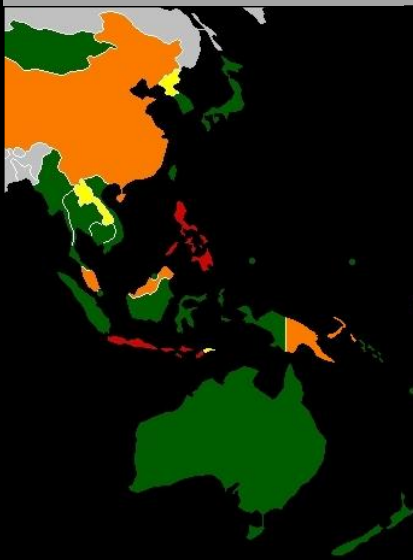
Philippines, Indonesia.

HIGH

Malaysia, China, Papua New Guinea.

MODERATE

Laos, North Korea, East Timor.



In a turbulent month for kidnap and ransom activity in the country with the highest proportion of kidnaps for the region, Philippine security forces launched combined air and ground assaults on a Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) hideout on Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay, Mindanao on 24 October 2011. The attack marks the first airstrikes carried out on the separatist rebels in the south of the country for three years and this change in tactics follows an increase in activity by some of the rebels including the death of nineteen soldiers in MILF attacks near al-Barka town on Baslin Island on 18 October 2011. The government have been involved in peace talks with rebel leaders since 2003 and are currently observing a ceasefire, but President Benigno Aquino has come under increasing pressure to end the agreement following increasing attacks committed by renegade MILF operatives lead by Waning Abdulsalam who has been extremely active on Mindanao this month. As a result Aquino launched the "mailed fist" policy which involved 200 commandos with support from around 3,000 US and Philippine marines as part of joint anti-piracy operations which began on 18 October 2011, and aims to have a demonstrable effect on the kidnap activities linked to the MILF. On 28 October 2011, it was reported that security forces had killed eighteen MILF operatives including the former leader Abdulsalam after they had located a MILF hideout in Payao. However, other reports allege that as no body was found that he and forty others escaped injured from the raid. Abdulsalam, one of the most wanted men in Mindanao, was a commander of the MILF which later disowned him when he and his men "resorted to a life of crime," including attacks in Zamboanga Sibugay a day after the Basilan bloodbath. The difficult with the raid is that Payao is part of its territory covered by its ceasefire agreement with the government. The recent fighting has displaced almost 3,500 local people and follows the MILF rebellion which began in 1978 which calls for the establishment of an independent Islamic state from the mostly Roman Catholic Philippines. The peace process has been at a stalemate for some time, despite the MILF declaring that it would now be willing to settle for limited autonomy rather than full independence. The MILF have however angered authorities, who have accused them of providing shelter for Abu Sayyaf militants. This latest incident is particularly serious and could see the already troubled southern region become even more unsettled, posing a significant threat to locals and foreign travellers alike. In other high profile kidnap incidents this month, a Taiwanese businessman, was rescued unharmed by police in Bulacan province, whilst two well planned and co-ordinated attacks occurred against mining firms in the southern Philippines which saw several mining officials kidnapped. The incident launched by 200 members of the New People's Army (NPA) rebels, disguised as policemen, stormed the base of the Platinum Metals Group Corporation in Cagdianao, Surigao del Norte, and the nearby compound of the Taganito Mining Corporation, disarming security guards and abducting officials. The NPA is an armed wing of the Philippine Communist Party, which has been fighting a guerrilla campaign against the government for over four decades. It is estimated that there are around 4,000 NPA rebels scattered across sixty provinces across the country. No specific demands have been made by the group but during peace talks with the government they have previously requested the release of members currently in prison.

MIDDLE EAST

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE have seen more kidnaps in recent months. However, regional incidents of kidnap are still relatively low with seven reported events featuring forty-one people this month. Stringent security precautions are necessary for Westerners to operate in the region.

On a comparative basis the rate of kidnaps remains low across the Middle East compared to South Asia or Latin America, however, this month has seen a marked increase in activity in the UAE, with two high profile incidents linked to kidnap gangs in Sharjah. Police estimate that ten kidnap gangs now operate in the area, largely linked to immigrants from the Bangladeshi community, after police arrested a seven-member gang in earlier in October 2011, and rescued a man kidnapped by a nine-member gang in May 2011 who had been held captive and tortured. Iran, Lebanon Saudi Arabia and Yemen all also saw kidnaps this month, but kidnappings remain rife in Yemen and are expected to continue as uncertainty remains surrounding the potential power transfer from President Ali Abdullah Saleh to his deputy whilst opposition factions, as well as a southern offensive against al Qaeda linked militants, using kidnapping of high profile members of the government and military apparatus to influence proceedings. On 18 October 2011, al Qaeda linked militants kidnapped seven Yemeni soldiers in Zinjibar, whilst on 24 October 2011, a Russian doctor working for a hospital in Shabwa, was kidnapped by a tribe in the east of Yemen. The attack follows a similar incident in March 2011, where a Russian doctor, who was also working in a hospital in the Shabwa town of Ataq, was taken under identical circumstances. Kidnappings by Yemeni tribes are common, they tend to try and target foreigners in order to put added pressure on the authorities to release detainees belonging to their tribes. In the last fifteen years more than 200 foreigners have been seized, with most being later released unharmed.

AREAS OF RISK

VERY HIGH

Yemen (east and Saudi border), Iraq, Gaza Strip

HIGH

Lebanon, Iran

MODERATE

Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Syria

EASTERN EUROPE

Dagestan continues to be subject to high levels of politically motivated kidnaps. Throughout the rest of Eastern Europe especially the Balkans, kidnap is seen as an essential part of the many organised crime gangs revenue streams, however the risk posed to foreigners remains a threat.

The situation in Eastern Europe is somewhat varied, although some areas, such as the Balkans appear to remain relatively quiet, this is due to many incidents being unreported or reported some time after the events occurs. Particularly in the Balkans, kidnap is related to many of the organised crime groups who operate in the who use using kidnap as a fundamental part of their revenue stream through human trafficking operations, they also use using it as a method of extortion and debt collection. However, one of the key differences between kidnap for ransom in Eastern Europe and other regions of the world is that the motivation is often of a political rather than a directly financial nature.

A prime example of this is the North Caucasus region where security forces, who many have long regarded as much of a threat as the organised criminals who terrorise the region, act with relative impunity. One area in particular which has an ever growing reputation as a powder keg within the region is the Russian Republic of Dagestan, which is now experiencing much of the insurgency and associated issues previously seen in neighbouring Chechnya. One such reported incident of what appears to be political kidnap apparently perpetrated by security forces occurred in Dagestan in October 2011. In Druzhba a resident and his friend were taken by armed men in civilian clothes on 17 October 2011. The victim however, was a devout Muslim and was reportedly on a police list of alleged "Wahhabis" and according to his son had previously been subject to a phoney drugs charge which saw police plant marijuana on him, in a case which fell apart when it reached court.

AREAS OF RISK

VERY HIGH

Dagestan, Turkey, Chechnya, Ingushetia.

HIGH

Georgia.

MODERATE

Russia, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, the Balkans.

NORTH AMERICA

The majority of kidnappings in the USA and Canada are a result of family disputes or crime-related, primarily drugs.

The violence in Mexico is, however, spilling over the border into the southern US, notably Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The primary

The risk of kidnap in the USA remains relatively low, with those incidents that do occur largely associated with other crimes, such as robbery, and domestic disputes, and in both instances they tend to be focused around deprived inner-city areas. The primary kidnap-for-ransom risk remains 'express kidnapping', which is more akin to violent robbery, typically involving the assailant(s) abducting their victim and forcing them to withdraw cash from an ATM. The risk of such a crime increases around midnight. As elsewhere, times of economic difficulty tend to precipitate an increase in financially motivated crime, including kidnap. In October 2011, police in Philadelphia began investigating a series of apparent kidnappings after four mentally-disabled people were found locked in a cellar. It is believed that the alleged captors imprisoned the victims in order to cash in their government checks. Philadelphia has now set up a special task force for an investigation which spans five US states: Pennsylvania, Florida, Virginia, Texas and North Carolina.

AREAS OF RISK

VERY HIGH

HIGH

USA/Mexico border.

MODERATE

Deprived inner city areas.

The threat of kidnap in North America remains largely associated with the operations of the violent drug cartels in Mexico. To that end, the US states of Arizona, New Mexico, California and Texas are the most affected, leading to a spike in kidnaps, as well as extortion, violent home invasion and also murders. The vast majority of victims of the crime in these states are themselves associated with the drugs trade and/or human trafficking. However, there have been a number of instances where legitimate businesses and families in the region have also been targeted, particularly in cases where they have family members in Mexico.

WESTERN EUROPE

Efficient policing and low poverty levels mean that kidnap-for-ransom is rare in Western Europe. However, so-called "tiger" kidnappings, in which the crime coincides with a robbery, are frequently reported in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. The Mediterranean may also see an increase in economic-related kidnaps in the future.

AREAS OF RISK

VERY HIGH

HIGH

MODERATE

Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Greece, Italy

In October 2011, Western Europe continued to remain a low risk area for kidnaps-for-ransom, with only two reported incidents. However, with the ongoing Eurozone crisis, as well as additional threats of a double dip recession, such risks may increase as a result of the anaemic economy. Greece, given its financial problems, proximity to Eastern Europe and porous borders, may prove to be fertile grounds for future kidnaps. Additionally, other countries along the Mediterranean, including Italy, may see an elevated risk level as these countries struggle to lift themselves out of the financial downturn whilst simultaneously dealing with an influx of migrants from war-torn North Africa. If not direct kidnapping, extortion may be a threat to these nations. Economic-related abductions have also been underscored by "tiger" kidnappings, which are becoming increasingly common in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland due to the island's financial woes. A case in point was a recent tiger kidnapping of a couple in Swords, Dublin, on 05 October 2011, when three men broke into their home and forced the woman to go to work as normal at Balbriggan Post Office, take out a large sum of money and await further instructions. However, a colleague notified the gardai, who intercepted the woman outside the post office. Gardai believe they had the couple under surveillance for some time. The botched tiger kidnapping was the third attack on a post office in the area in twelve hours. Elsewhere in Western Europe, politically motivated kidnaps remain rare, and most kidnaps are orchestrated by criminal groups for the purposes of criminal retribution or the abduction of children and young women.

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