

KIDNAP BRIEFING

MONTHLY



ISSUE 101 | July 2014

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This is the 101st issue in a series of kidnap-focused reports prepared by **Control Risks** on behalf of Hiscox. The Monthly Kidnap Briefing is distributed to select clients in order to keep you informed of the trends in kidnapping worldwide and assess the risk of kidnapping to your business.

This issue includes an overview of kidnapping-for-ransom trends worldwide in June, a brief on kidnapping in Libya and a focus on the future of kidnapping in Colombia.

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Prepared by **Control Risks**

for
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Americas



In **Mexico**, new guidelines issued by the government doubled prison sentences for kidnapping. As of 4 June, those convicted of the offence will now face a prison term of between 40 and 140 years. Maximum sentences, applied to kidnapers who kill their victims, rose from 50 to 140 years.

Public security officials convicted of a kidnap now face up to 100 years in prison. Kidnappers will also have to pay heavier fines, rising from MXN 68,000 (\$5,250) to MXN 1.6m (\$125,000). The new guidelines also apply to express kidnaps, which involve the abduction of a victim who is forced, under threat of violence or death, to withdraw funds from an automated teller machine (ATM – cash machine). Mexico has topped Control Risks' global kidnapping rankings for the past two years.

The acceleration of kidnapping rates in **Mexico** was underlined by the Observatorio Nacional Ciudadano (National Citizen Observatory – ONC) in its latest report, which highlighted the upward trend in the country's kidnapping rates. Using official statistics from the Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública (National Public Security System – SNSP), the ONC revealed that in April alone there were 169 reported cases of kidnap in the country, translating to one kidnap every five hours. According to their findings, 2014 has seen an average of 143 kidnaps reported each month; in 2013, there was a monthly average of 141 cases and, in 2012, 118 incidents each month.

The ONC report also revealed that extortion was the crime that increased most between February and March this year. In March alone, there were 613 reported cases, meaning one extortion incident every 73 minutes. In April, there were 622 cases filed with the authorities. Furthermore, incidents of extortion have grown in comparison to last year: in the first quarter of 2013, there were 1,725 reported incidents of extortion; over the same period in 2014, there were 1,824 cases, representing a rise of 5.75%.

In **Brazil**, police arrested a gang who were planning a tiger kidnap in Negrão de Lima, in Goiânia (Goiás state) in April 2014. The kidnappers planned to hold members of a bank manager's family hostage, strap explosives to the bank manager and force him to take money from the bank's safe. Police had placed the gang under surveillance since 2013 when one gang member was involved in a similar robbery in Nerópolis.

Africa



Sudan's restive Darfur region has experienced a spate of kidnaps affecting both local and foreign aid workers. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs on 13 June announced the release of Irfan Jaffrey, an Indian IT engineer, who was kidnapped on 11 March by a group of armed men shortly after leaving a restaurant in El Fasher (North Darfur state). Jaffrey was employed by Trigyn Technologies – a multinational software company contracted by the UN – and had been living in Sudan for four years. The kidnappers demanded approximately \$54,000 for his release, though the details of any ransom settlement remain unknown. More recently, on 18 June, two Sudanese aid workers for the Irish charity GOAL and a worker for another agency were kidnapped by armed men en route to Kutum airport (North Darfur state). In a separate incident on the same day, 14 aid workers for the Sudanese organisation SAK were

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kidnapped in Kutum. Twelve of the men were released after payment of a ransom though a senior manager and an engineer remain in captivity. NGO workers and UN personnel are also seen as especially attractive targets by militant and criminal groups seeking financial or political leverage. Further kidnaps in the short-to-medium term are likely.

The persistent kidnap threat from transnational Islamist groups operating in the **Sahel region** was underscored by the release on 3 June of a video showing Serge Lazarevic, who was kidnapped by al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali in November 2011. The video – dated 13 May 2014 – was broadcast on Dubai-based Al Aan television and constitutes the first proof of life in two years; in it, Lazarevic appeals to French President François Hollande to negotiate for his release. Lazarevic is the last French citizen in captivity in the region, after the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) announced the death of Gilberto Rodriguez-Leal, whom it had been holding since November 2012.

In **Somalia**, 11 crew members of the MV Albedo were released on 7 June after nearly four years in captivity. The sailors – seven Bangladeshis, one Indian, one Iranian and two Sri Lankans – were kidnapped from the Malaysian-owned cargo vessel in November 2010, 1,500km from the Somali coast. Seven of the ship's crew of 23 were released in 2012 after payment of \$1.2m and four others reportedly drowned. Unconfirmed reports suggest that one victim was killed soon after the vessel was hijacked.

Asia



Kidnappers continue to consider foreign nationals high-value targets in **Afghanistan**. A 47-year-old Indian aid worker, identified in media reporting as Prem Kumar, the country director of Jesuit Refugee Service, was kidnapped on 2 June while visiting a school in Sohadat village (Herat province). He had been in Afghanistan for four years. Other foreign nationals remain in captivity. Two videos sent by kidnappers to the families of US national Caitlan Coleman and her Canadian husband Joshua Boyle in July and September 2013 were made public in early June 2014. Boyle was 29 and his pregnant wife Coleman was 27 when they were kidnapped from the Kabul-Ghazni highway in Syedabad (Wardak province) on 11 October 2012. The couple's baby was reportedly due in February 2013 and would be almost 18 months old now. A Taleban commander confirmed the abduction. During the clips, Coleman appealed to the US government for help but no explicit ransom demands were delivered. The family decided to release the videos following the publicity surrounding the release of Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, in the hope that the US government would assist in negotiating the pair's release. Bergdahl was released on 31 May after almost five years in Taleban captivity. The negotiations were reportedly mediated by Qatar. In exchange for Bergdahl's release, the US government transferred five former Guantánamo bay detainees to the custody of the Qatari government. Bowe Bergdahl, then aged 23, was abducted by militants near Melech (Paktika province) on 30 June 2009. Reports conflicted over how the soldier had been abducted.

A Chinese tourist and a Filipina employee who were taken on 2 April from a resort in Semporna district (Sabah state) in **Malaysia** were released in the **Philippines** on 30 May after almost two months in captivity. The kidnappers, believed to be members of the Philippines-based Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), had reportedly demanded \$11m from the Chinese victim's family. Malaysian and Philippine authorities denied that a ransom was paid to secure their release. However, some sources contradicted that information, reporting that a large ransom was paid, but not specifying the amount.

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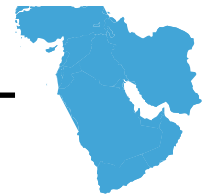
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Middle East



As part of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)'s offensive in north-central areas of **Iraq**, the group has reportedly carried out several mass abductions. In addition to abductions of local nationals, the following incidents involving foreign nationals were also recorded:

DATE	VICTIMS	OUTCOME
Mosul governorate		
10 June 2014	31 Turkish truck drivers	Released 12 June
11 June 2014	49 Turkish nationals from the consulate in Mosul	Not known
Mid-June 2014	16 Georgian employees of an Iraqi telecoms company	Not known
18 June 2014	40 Indian construction workers	One victim escaped 20 June; others remain in captivity
Diyala governorate		
18 June 2014	Three Turkish engineers and their Iraqi driver	Not known
Salah ad Din governorate		
18 June 2014	60 foreign construction contractors, including 15 Turkish nationals and unknown numbers of nationals from Nepal, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. They were travelling in a convoy from al-Dour (Salah ad Din governorate) to Kirkuk (Kirkuk governorate).	Four of the Turkish nationals were reportedly released; fate of others not known.
20 June 2014	Four Nepali nationals kidnapped in Tikrit.	Released

Foreign nationals are being increasingly targeted in **Lebanon's** Bekaa governorate. Egyptian national Mohammed Saeed Ibrahim Mahmoud, 32, a resident of Baalbek (Bekaa governorate), was kidnapped from his vehicle on 7 June while travelling home with his wife. Media reporting indicated that the family secured his 11 June release through the payment of LBP 40m (\$26,500) and \$8,000-worth of jewellery. The kidnappers were likely to be criminals motivated by financial gain. In a separate incident, a group of three Syrian nationals, one Turkish national and six Lebanese nationals were kidnapped while working at a quarry near Ras Baalbek (Bekaa governorate) on 10 June. All of the foreign nationals and two of the Lebanese nationals were released on 11 June. Three Lebanese nationals had escaped earlier. The remaining victim was thought to be a local quarry owner. Media reporting indicated that the kidnappers of the quarry workers were Syrian militants, possibly affiliated to Jabhat al-Nusra. Kidnapping is prolific in neighbouring Syria and cross-border incidents are common.

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BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA



THE FUTURE OF THE FARC IN SANTOS'S SECOND TERM

After a close-run election that was billed as a referendum on the ongoing peace process, Juan Manuel Santos was re-elected as president of Colombia in June 2014. The very tight result demonstrates the extent of political polarisation in the country, which shows no signs of abating. Peace talks will continue, increasing the likelihood that an agreement will be signed over the medium term and bringing the future of the FARC into question.

PEACE TALKS POLARISE PUBLIC

Santos's government began formal talks with the FARC in late 2012. With preliminary agreements on three of five points already reached, the negotiations have gone further than all previous efforts to end the conflict. In the week leading up to the election, Santos announced that the government had also begun preliminary talks with the National Liberation Army (ELN). Santos's opponent Óscar Iván Zuluaga – who had the support of Santos's predecessor Alvaro Uribe (2002-10) – was critical of the peace talks during the campaign, arguing that Santos's apparent willingness to make concessions to the FARC risked plunging the country back into the instability of the pre-Uribe days. Santos was not re-elected with a comfortable margin, so he cannot afford to ignore the concerns of those who voted for his opponent. Zuluaga, whose electoral platform included jail terms for guerrilla leaders, won nearly half of all votes cast. Although Santos has said that impunity for the guerrillas is not on offer, FARC leaders have said repeatedly that prison terms are not on the table, identifying the issue as a deal breaker.

The public perception of the talks has been damaged by the fact that they are shrouded in secrecy. After two years of peace talks in Cuba, negotiations continue. There has been little discussion of what the agreements reached on issues such as land reform, drug-trafficking and political participation entail, or how they will be implemented. The opaque nature of the discussions has left many Colombians concerned that the Santos administration may be making too many concessions to the guerrillas. Ultimately, the Colombian public will have their say, as Santos has said that the signed agreements will be subject to a popular referendum before they officially come into force.

WHAT WILL THE FARC DO AFTER AGREEMENT?

A peace agreement would leave around 8,000 FARC members, all well-versed in criminality, with no employment and no source of income. Some, particularly the upper echelons of the group, will undoubtedly move towards mainstream politics. Others may choose to continue fighting. There has been some internal disagreement within the group about the peace talks. There are many remote fronts that have not seen a member of the FARC Secretariat for over a decade. Command and control has been greatly weakened in recent years. Some argue that the government is only talking to certain elements of the group. The team in Havana (Cuba) is an overwhelmingly political one and, apart from chief negotiator Luciano Marin Arango, no military commanders or leaders who have serious credibility with the fighting rank and file are present. The FARC still considers itself as a principally military organisation and giving up fighting will be a very tough proposition for many. If agreement is reached, it is possible that a breakaway military-focused faction will continue to operate under the name of the FARC.

Given that many FARC members are accustomed to handling large quantities of money and have very few skills that are legally marketable, other options for the group in the wake of a potential peace agreement are limited. Those who do demobilise as part of any peace agreement will be likely to follow in the footsteps of other paramilitary groups that have laid down their arms in the country, such as the AUC or Movement M-19, and form criminal gangs dedicated to drug-trafficking, kidnap and extortion. Demobilised FARC guerrillas may choose to drop the group's political ideals, but retain its reliance on criminal acts for

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revenue, ensuring that the country's kidnap and extortion rate is unlikely to fall despite any peace agreement. Small, local-level criminal gangs, along with these new criminal structures formed out of old politically aligned paramilitaries, are now responsible for the majority of kidnaps and extortions in Colombia, so that we are unlikely to see a significant reduction in kidnaps and extortions in the country after any agreement is made.

CRIMINALISATION INEVITABLE

The risk of FARC elements criminalising once a peace agreement has been signed and demobilisation has occurred is almost inevitable. The only way for the Santos administration to minimise this risk is to aid the FARC in its transition from a guerrilla army to a political party. This transition must involve gainfully employing the group's former members and supporting demobilised rebels during the immediate post-conflict period.

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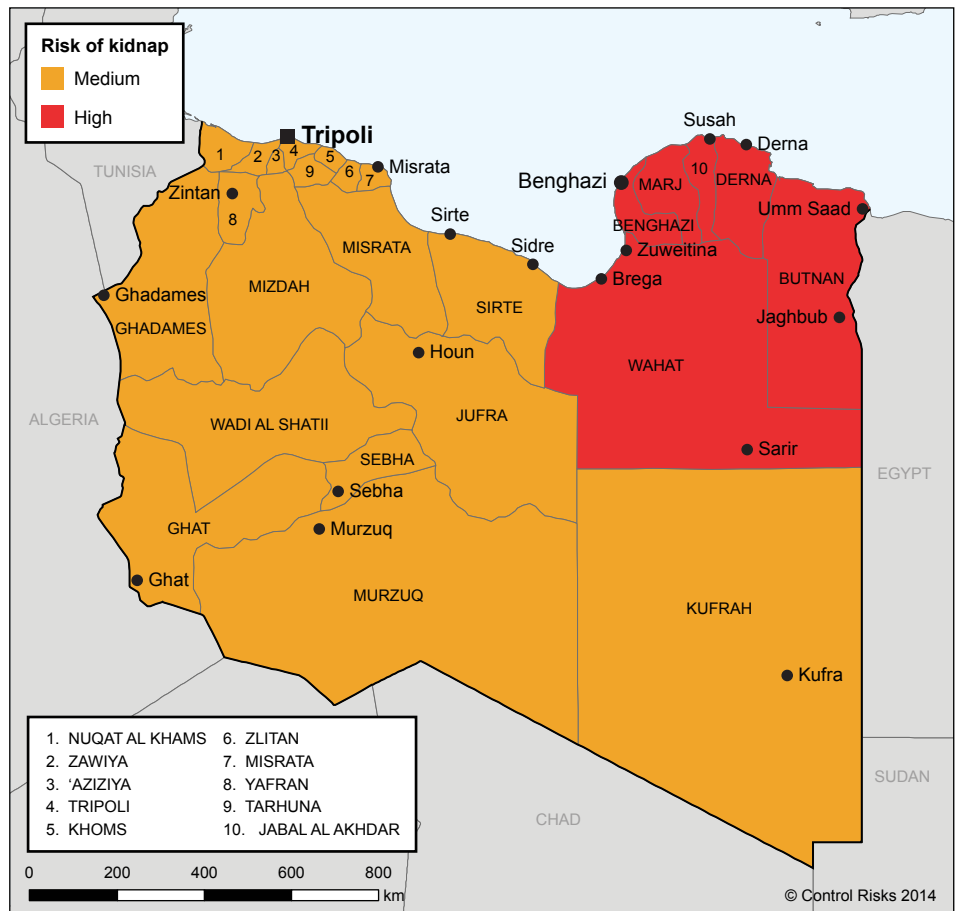
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KIDNAPPING IN LIBYA: A GROWING THREAT TO BUSINESS

The security situation in Libya has deteriorated in recent months, with fresh outbreaks of violence between pro- and anti-Islamist factions competing for power and influence. Against this backdrop of escalating violence and political instability, kidnapping-for-ransom has emerged as a significant security threat to local and foreign commercial operators throughout the country. This article outlines the broad range of actors with the intent and capability to stage kidnaps in Libya and explores regional variations in the threat level.

Militia groups have proliferated in post-revolutionary Libya. Armed factions have regularly detained Libyan politicians – including the then prime minister, Ali Zeidan, in October 2013 – for short periods, though they rarely made explicit demands. However, a new trend emerged in early 2014 when militias began kidnapping diplomatic staff to extract specific political concessions from foreign governments. Militias have been successful in coercing foreign governments into releasing prisoners on at least two occasions. Five Egyptian diplomats were abducted on 25 January in retaliation for the arrest by police in Alexandria of Shaban Hadia – the head of the Libyan Revolutionaries' Operations Room. The diplomats were released unharmed in exchange for Hadia's release from custody in Egypt. More recently, the Jordanian ambassador to Libya, Fawaz al-Aitan – who was kidnapped on 15 April in Tripoli – was freed and returned to Jordan on 13 May after his government agreed to release Mohamed Dersi, a Libyan Islamist militant serving a life sentence in the kingdom on terrorism charges. Laroussi Kontassi, a Tunisian diplomat, and Mohamed Sheikh Rouhou, the secretary to Tunisia's ambassador to Tripoli – abducted by an Islamist group in Tripoli on 17 April and 21 March respectively – were freed on 29 June. Their captors demanded the release of Islamist militants from Tunisian prisons, though the details of the deal made to secure their release remain unknown.



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The perceived willingness of foreign governments to meet kidnappers' demands will increase militants' incentives to engage in kidnapping, thereby extracting political concessions over the coming years. However, diplomatic staff are likely to remain the favoured targets, rather than business personnel. As diplomatic missions adopt more robust security measures – or evacuate from Tripoli altogether, as the Algerian embassy did on 15 May – it is credible that militias could target expatriate foreign business personnel to extract political concessions from their countries' governments, though this would be unprecedented.

In recent weeks, specific nationalities have been declared *personae non gratae* by militia groups. The governments of Turkey and Qatar have been accused of engaging in covert activities in eastern Libya, and on 21 June, General Khalifa Haftar ordered all citizens of these countries to leave Libya within 48 hours or face 'arrest'. Haftar's threat was followed on 24 June by the kidnap of two Turkish construction workers in Tripoli. The threat to all foreign nationals from politically motivated kidnaps and extra-judicial detentions is currently elevated, but particularly for Turkish and Qatari nationals.

The widespread availability of weapons coupled with chronic shortfalls in security provision has resulted in a dramatic increase in **financially motivated criminal activity** in Libya's coastal population centres. Unlike militia groups, who select their targets based on an assessment of the political leverage available, the targeting decisions of criminal gangs are driven by the perceived wealth of the victim. For this reason, any individual – regardless of nationality or industry sector – who appears to be valuable can be targeted. The threat to foreign operators from criminal groups is particularly acute in north-eastern Libya. Since January, approximately 35% of kidnaps recorded in Libya's north-eastern districts have involved foreign nationals. Incidents involving Indian, Italian, Iraqi, Bangladeshi, Lebanese, US, British and Egyptian nationals have been reported.

Western expatriates employed by multinational corporations are seen as attractive targets. The first reported kidnap of a Westerner occurred on 17 January, when two Italian employees of an engineering firm were kidnapped on the road between Derna and Tobruk. The men were released three weeks later in unclear circumstances. This incident was followed by the kidnap on 22 March of an Italian engineer near Tobruk. The fate of this victim remains unknown. In both incidents it is likely that criminal groups – rather than politically-motivated militants – were responsible, though the details of any financial ransom remain unclear. Victims are most commonly abducted in transit and, though the majority of kidnaps recorded in the north-eastern districts take place in built-up urban environments, a significant number of incidents have taken place on semi-urban and desert roads, demonstrating the willingness of criminal groups to move outside of city centres to attack high-value targets.

A lower-level threat emanates from **tribal and communal groups**. Although the capability of these groups to engage in kidnapping-for-ransom is high, they have not demonstrated a strong intent to target business personnel. Tensions between communal groups and tribes exist to a lesser or greater degree throughout Libya; however, the issue is perhaps most severe in the south-eastern Kufra district, where kidnaps regularly occur in the context of a long-running conflict between the Tubu ethnic minority and the Arab Zwai tribe. Five Zwai soldiers in the Libyan army were in December 2013 kidnapped by an armed Tubu group from the Alowianat checkpoint at the Sudanese border. The victims were released following negotiations with tribal elders, in exchange for two detained smugglers. Suspected Zwai militants also staged an armed assault on an agricultural project-site north of Kufra, in which a Tubu project manager was kidnapped. Although communal groups and tribes almost exclusively target members of rival communities, the incidental threat to expatriate workers is significant, as these groups have been known to erect roadblocks along major routes and seize individuals from passing vehicles.

Finally, **transnational Islamist groups**, such as al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its affiliates, pose a significant threat to business personnel, though they have yet to stage a kidnap in Libya. Operation Serval – the French military intervention that dislodged al-Qaida-linked factions from northern Mali in 2013 – has pushed significant numbers of militants back into sparsely populated areas of the county's south-eastern districts.

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High-ranking commanders of extremist Islamist groups – including the alleged instigator of the January 2013 attack on the Tigantourine gas facility in neighbouring Algeria, Mokhtar Belmokhtar – are currently thought to operate in Libya, further raising the likelihood of terrorist activity, including kidnapping-for-ransom. At present, the operational capabilities of al-Qaida-linked groups in Libya remain unclear. However, ransom payments constitute a central plank of these groups' financing strategies and they have actively targeted foreign nationals across the broader Sahel-Sahara region. Foreign expatriates – particularly Westerners working on remote project sites in southern Libya close to the border with Algeria and Chad – are at elevated risk from these groups. Should an Islamist extremist group prove capable of launching a kidnap in Libya, the incident is likely to involve protracted negotiations and multi-million dollar demands. For this reason, they pose a significant threat to business operations.

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Control Risks' services are exclusively retained by Hiscox. In the event of a kidnap, detention or extortion incident covered by Hiscox, clients will benefit from Control Risks' services as part of their insurance policy.

CONTROL RISKS

Control Risks is a leading international business risk consultancy. It offers a range of integrated political risk, investigative, security and crisis management services to corporate, government and private clients worldwide.

Since its foundation in 1975, Control Risks has advised clients on the resolution of 2,561 kidnap and extortion cases in 128 different countries, with 46,575 person-days aggregate duration. Cases have ranged from traditional kidnaps-for-ransom, express kidnaps, hostage takings, ship and aircraft hijacks to political detentions, product extortion and contamination and other threat extortions. Control Risks has a full-time team of Response Consultants, available for immediate deployment in response to a crisis anywhere in the world. Response Consultants will advise on negotiation strategies and on how to manage the various interests of the victim, family, employers, the media, the government and local law enforcement agencies.

The Response Division has its own dedicated team of research analysts. As well as supporting consultants deployed on cases, they maintain the International Kidnap Online Service (IKOS) which follows the trends in kidnapping worldwide and allows clients to assess the risk to their business. In addition to IKOS, Response Research produces commissioned kidnap and extortion analysis of any country or sector. If you are interested in any of these services, please write to response_research@controlrisks.com

For more information about Control Risks, please visit our website at www.controlrisks.com

HISCOX

Hiscox is the world's largest provider of specialist kidnap, detention and extortion insurance, with a market share of 60-70% by premium income. We cover companies and individuals against all forms of extortion and can protect your assets from illegal demands and the consequential associated expenses.

Our clients include multinational companies operating in high risk regions of the world, key executives working in commercially sensitive positions and individuals whose wealth or fame may attract the attention of criminals.

Hiscox kidnap and ransom underwriters are the most experienced in the field. Our knowledge of the sector enables us to make quick decisions on cover, no matter how unusual the request. We are highly skilled in handling what may be a very difficult and sensitive emergency. Our specialist policies can be tailored to suit individual needs and circumstances.

We have underwriting teams based in Guernsey, Paris, Cologne, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and at Lloyd's of London.

For further information, please contact us at kr.guernsey@hiscox.com