

KIDNAP MONTHLY BRIEFING



ISSUE 99 | May 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11



This is the ninety-ninth 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 April, a brief on kidnapping in Caracas and a focus on Islamist kidnapping in Nigeria and Cameroon.

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

Prepared by **Control Risks**

for 
HISCOX

Note: Hiscox and Control Risks request that recipients do not forward the contents outside the distribution list. Any breach of this will lead to removal from the distribution list.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com



Americas



In **Paraguay**, around 15 members of the leftist guerrilla group Army of the Paraguayan People (EPP) on 2 April kidnapped the son of a Brazilian-Paraguayan farmer in Azotey district (Concepción department). Initially the rebels took both the farmer and his 16-year-old son as hostages, but the EPP freed the farmer so that he could warn the security forces that the group would kill the teenager if they were followed. This latest abduction of a member of the local business community does not reflect a heightened risk of kidnapping in Paraguay, where the kidnapping rate is significantly lower than in neighbouring countries such as Brazil. However, the incident is a reminder of the capabilities of the EPP in Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro departments. The episode is also indicative of the limits of the government's security-led response to the EPP; the deployment of more military officers has failed to neutralise the EPP threat.

In **Argentina**, theatre producer Ariel Diwan was kidnapped on 8 April 2014 while driving his children to his ex-wife's house in Castelar (Buenos Aires province). The victim's car was intercepted by two vehicles and he was forced to get into the kidnapper's car. The kidnappers called the victim's family and demanded a ransom payment totalling ARS 50,000 and \$8,500 (a total of US\$15,000). The ransom was delivered in two tranches, each in a different location, at the kidnapper's request. The victim was released near a highway in Castelar, reportedly the next day.

The threat of virtual kidnaps was underscored in **Mexico** where two separate incidents of Costa Rican tourists falling victim to such tactics were reported. On 15 March, a group of three tourists staying in Mexico City received a telephone call from an anonymous caller claiming to be a member of Los Zetas, a notorious drug-trafficking organisation that operates throughout Mexico. The caller claimed that two journalists were about to be killed in the hotel and that they would be in danger if they did not follow their instructions. The three tourists were instructed to buy prepaid mobile telephones so that they could each stay in continuous contact. The callers instructed two of them – two sisters – to leave the hotel and take a taxi to another hotel, where they were then instructed to wire MXN 1,500 (\$115) to an unknown bank account and to buy airtime, amounting to MXN 6,000 (\$450), for six different mobile telephones. The third victim was instructed to take a taxi to a different location. Meanwhile, the family of the victims was contacted in Costa Rica and told that their loved ones had been kidnapped in Mexico. The callers demanded a ransom of \$25,000 for their safe release. However, the family did not believe the claims and reported the incident to the Costa Rican authorities. The victims eventually began to suspect the credibility of the callers' claims and realised that they were the victims of a hoax. The two sisters and the third victim returned to their original accommodation.

In a second case on 31 March, a Costa Rican couple fell victim to a virtual kidnap while holidaying in San José del Cabo (Baja California Sur state). Shortly after the victims arrived at their hotel, they received a telephone call in their room, supposedly from the police, claiming that they were being investigated for trafficking drugs for the Los Zetas organised crime group. They were ordered to leave their hotel and relocate to another hotel, and told not to talk to anyone or to use their mobile telephones. They were also told to buy a Mexican mobile and inform the callers of the number as soon as they had bought it. During this time, the kidnappers telephoned the mother of one of the victims and claimed that the couple had been kidnapped. They demanded \$100,000 as a ransom and said that the victims would be killed and their organs sold if it was not paid. The family of the other victim was also contacted. The families reported the incident to the Mexican

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

police who located the two victims on 2 April as they left the hotel where they were hiding to take out the ransom money that had been sent to them by their families.

Also in **Mexico**, a Peruvian tourist was kidnapped in Acapulco (Guerrero state) in early April. The victim was abducted by a taxi driver and held for 12 hours. After the victim was picked up by the taxi driver another man got into the car and then proceeded to beat him and threaten him with a gun. He was then taken to a warehouse where he was robbed of all his possessions, including his bank cards, from which MXN 43,000 (\$3,300) was withdrawn. Over 12 hours, the kidnappers attempted to contact the victim's family in Peru to demand a ransom in exchange for his safety. After failing to do so, they drove him to the Barra Vieja area of Acapulco, where they stabbed him seven times and left him for dead. A passer-by found him and alerted the emergency services, who were able to save his life.

Meanwhile, Control Risks continues to rate the kidnap risk in **Haiti as HIGH**. Reports emerged regarding the kidnap of Syrian-US businessman Sami El Aziz, which took place on 17 February in the capital Port-au-Prince (Ouest department). The kidnappers made a ransom demand of \$1.3m. According to reports, Aziz was released on 21 February without a ransom being paid. Police believe that the kidnappers were members of the Baz Galil gang, a criminal organisation led by Woody Ethéard (also known as Sonson La Familia), who, according to some reports, is a close confidant of President Michel Martelly. The Baz Galil gang has reportedly carried out numerous kidnaps in the past; local newspaper 'The Sentinel' estimates they are responsible for 18 previous kidnaps.

Africa



There were a number of significant developments in the Sahel-Sahara region last month. Islamist militant group al-Murabitun on 12 April released video footage of Algerian diplomat Mourad Ghassas, who was kidnapped along with six colleagues from the Algerian consulate in Gao (Gao region), northern **Mali** in April 2012. In the video, Ghassas said that his colleagues were in good health and called on the Algerian government to enter into negotiations with his captors. Although unverified, the footage, which was allegedly filmed on 9 April, would constitute the first proof of life since January 2013.

In a separate development, five Malian aid workers were rescued on 17 April in a raid by French forces near Timbuktu (Timbuktu region) after being kidnapped on 8 February by the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) south of Anefis (Kidal region). Details of the rescue remain unclear, though both land and air capabilities were reportedly used in the operation, during which an unknown number of militants were killed. Less than a week later, MUJWA claimed that a French national it had been holding since November 2012 was dead. In a short statement to Agence France Presse, Yoro Abdul Salam, a spokesman for the Islamist militant group, said that Gilberto Rodriguez-Leal, aged 62, was dead, because France was an 'enemy'. Although his body has not been found, the French foreign ministry considered it likely that Rodriguez-Leal had died. However, it is not known whether he was killed in retaliation for the rescue operation or whether his death was linked to the poor conditions in which he was being held.

Two high-profile kidnaps underscored the persistent kidnap threat posed by Islamist militants operating in northern **Nigeria and Cameroon**. On 5 April, a Canadian nun and two Italian priests were kidnapped from their accommodation in the Tchéré area of Cameroon's Extreme North region, 12 miles (20km) north of the regional capital Maroua. North-eastern Cameroon's porous border with the Nigerian states of Borno and Adamawa has allowed Boko Haram to launch at least two known cross-border kidnapping operations in the past; the group was linked to the abduction of a French family in February 2013 and that of a French priest in November 2013.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

In north-eastern Nigeria on the night of 14-15 April, approximately 50 members of Boko Haram abducted over 200 female students from a boarding school in the Chibok Local Government Area of Borno state. The gunmen stormed the students' accommodation while they slept and are currently holding the girls in an unknown location, though an unknown number of victims are reported to have escaped. Although Nigerian Islamist groups have launched attacks on schools and universities in the past, the scale of this kidnap operation is unprecedented and highlights the persistent threat posed to local nationals – and particularly women – in areas of Boko Haram influence. Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau claimed responsibility for the mass abduction in a video obtained by Agence France Presse (AFP) and stated that God had instructed him to sell the girls. Subsequent reports suggest that many of the girls have been taken across into Cameroon and Chad to be married, attracting widespread international condemnation.

In **Libya**, diplomatic staff continued to be targeted by armed kidnapping groups. Unidentified gunmen on the morning of 15 April kidnapped the Jordanian ambassador to Libya, Fawaz al-Aitan, in central Tripoli injuring his driver and a guard in the attack. Two days later, a Tunisian diplomat was abducted near al-Kadissia square in the capital on his way to work. The security environment across the country remains poor; fragmented security provision, limited state control and arms proliferation in the wake of the 2011 civil conflict have created a permissive environment for the growth of kidnapping. Although most kidnap victims are local nationals, foreigners represent attractive targets for criminal gangs and militia groups seeking leverage with the authorities. Foreign diplomats have also been kidnapped on numerous occasions since the fall of former leader Col Muammar al-Gadhafi; demands most commonly involve the release of Libyan nationals held abroad.

The kidnapping threat in **Mozambique** remains elevated. Mozambican media on 16 April reported the abduction of a Portuguese expatriate in Matola (Maputo province). Prior to this, four armed men on 12 April abducted a local businessman from outside his residence in Macia (Gaza province). In an annual report reviewing the country's justice system, Attorney General Augusto Paulino stated that 44 criminal cases relating to kidnappings and 52 cases of extortion had been opened in 2013. In spite of the creation of a dedicated task force to tackle kidnapping, institutional corruption in the police force, coupled with high levels of wealth inequality in urban areas, mean that a swift reduction of the threat is unlikely in the short term.

Middle East



Several long-term hostages held in **Syria** were released in recent weeks. 'El Mundo' correspondent Javier Espinosa and freelance journalist Ricardo Garcia Vilanova, both Spanish, were released on 29 March after six months in captivity. They were kidnapped at a checkpoint in Tal Abyad (al-Raqqah governorate) on 16 September 2013 while leaving the country after a two-week reporting trip. Four French journalists who were kidnapped in two separate incidents in June 2013 were later released on 19 April. Didier François and Edouard Elias were reportedly kidnapped from a checkpoint in Aleppo governorate on 7 June 2013, while Nicolas Hénin and Pierre Torres were kidnapped in the city of Raqqah on 22 June 2013. All of the victims were thought to have been held by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The details of their releases, including whether a ransom was paid, were not clear.

Foreign nationals continued to be at high risk of kidnap in **Yemen**. A foreign national escaped a kidnap attempt in the capital Sanaa on 24 April by shooting his assailants. Prior to that, an Uzbek doctor was kidnapped from a hospital in Marib governorate on 13 April. He was released six days later, but the terms of his release were not made public. Additionally, a German student kidnapped in Sanaa on 1 February appeared in a video broadcast on a private television channel in Yemen on 31 March. The victim, Rudiger Schwidt, appeared in poor health and said he was suffering from lung cancer. The kidnapper also appeared in

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

the video and demanded a ransom of \$5m, threatening to sell Schwidt to al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula if the money was not paid.

Control Risks continued to record high volumes of kidnaps across **Iraq**. Victim types varied from government and security officials to civilians, including child dependants. In one incident, suspected militants kidnapped 24 employees of the North Refineries Company, part of the Ministry of Oil, on the road between Baiji and Haditha (Salah ad Din governorate). All the employees were later released. Separately, four gas plant workers were reportedly kidnapped from the Taji Gas Plant (Salah ad Din governorate) on 16 April 2014. The following day, militants kidnapped three workers from a concrete manufacturing company in the Jurf al-Naddaf area of Karrada in Baghdad (Baghdad governorate). More recently, gunmen wearing SWAT uniforms kidnapped a university professor in the al-Mustafa area of central Baqoubah (Diyala governorate) on 21 April 2014. The fate of the gas plant workers, concrete manufacturing workers and the professor remained unknown.

Asia



Kidnapping continued at a high rate in **Pakistan**. In a rare incident involving a foreign national, a Bahraini art student of Pakistani origin was kidnapped while shopping in Quetta (Baluchistan province) on 1 March. The incident was first reported on 16 April, at which point the victim, Amin Abdulla Abdulhameed, had been in captivity for 45 days. The kidnappers reportedly demanded a ransom of \$50,000 but subsequently increased the amount to \$200,000, possibly once they realised that the victim's immediate family lived in Bahrain. Kidnappers continued to target a diverse range of local national victim types; aid workers were kidnapped on several occasions. In one incident, three employees of a Saudi Arabia-based non-governmental organisation were kidnapped in Dera Ismail Khan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province) on 14 April. The victims, named as Touseef, Ghulam Mustafa and Islamuddin, were in the area to build houses. The kidnappers took their vehicles. No group claimed responsibility for the incident and the fate of the victims remained unknown. In another incident, two employees of Unicef were kidnapped in Karachi (Sindh province) on 17 April. Both were released on 22 April. The details of their release were not specified.

Two foreign nationals were kidnapped from a resort on the eastern coast of **Malaysia** on the evening of 2 April. A Chinese tourist and a Filipina employee were taken by boat by suspected members of the Filipino Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) from the Singamata Reef Resort in Semporna district (Sabah state). The ASG carries out on average one kidnap each year on the eastern coast of Malaysia. The most recent incident occurred in November 2013, when a Taiwanese tourist was kidnapped from a resort on Pom Pom Island. The kidnappers had reportedly demanded MYR34.6m (\$11m).

Kidnapping remains a risk in the **Philippines**, including to foreign nationals and not only in the troubled south of the country. The body of a South Korean student was found on 8 April more than one month after she had been kidnapped in the capital Manila (Metro Manila province). The victim was studying in the Philippines and had been living in the country for a number of years. She was last seen in a taxi in Metro Manila. The kidnappers reportedly demanded an unspecified financial ransom from her family before her body was found. One suspect was arrested on the same day. Kidnapping is relatively common in Metro Manila; the province accounted for 17% of kidnaps that Control Risks recorded in the Philippines in 2013. In another incident involving a foreign national, the three-year-old son of an Indian national was kidnapped from the compound of his family's rented apartment in the Barandal area of Calamba (Laguna province) on 17 April. The kidnappers had demanded an unspecified ransom and the family reportedly paid PHP 50,000 (\$1,100). The boy's body was returned to the compound on 18 April. It was likely that he had suffocated as his hands and feet were bound and he had been gagged. Police arrested the boy's aunt, her boyfriend and the apartment's caretaker in connection with the incident.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

Several kidnaps were recorded in the south of the country. Among the victims was school principal Benita Lotonio, who was kidnapped from a vehicle as she travelled through Sumisip (Basilan province) with other teachers at approximately 06.20 (local) on 31 March 2014. The kidnappers, suspected to be members of the ASG, reportedly demanded PHP 3m (\$68,000) for her release. The family confirmed that a ransom had been demanded but refused to give further details. Officials disclosed that prior to the principal's kidnap, the ASG had been exacting PHP 500 (\$11) per month from each of the teachers in Sumisip as protection money. The victim was released on 3 April but it was not clear whether a ransom was paid.

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA



KIDNAP RISKS IN CARACAS

Security has long been a major concern for residents of, and visitors to, Caracas, but the outbreak of anti-government protests in February of this year, and the security forces' response to the protests, has heightened tensions in the city and led to an increased atmosphere of lawlessness. As such, there is a strong likelihood that the city's long-standing kidnap problem will worsen before it improves.

EXPRESS KIDNAP THE MAIN RISK

The most common location for kidnaps in Venezuela is Caracas; 35% of incidents occurred here in 2013, according to Control Risks' records. While traditional kidnaps-for-ransom are not uncommon in Caracas, express kidnaps have become considerably more common in recent years. Both local and foreign nationals are at greater risk of being targeted for an express kidnap. According to some reports, about 40 express kidnaps occur every day in the capital. The perceived risk of express kidnap in Caracas is so great that some residents have established 'ransom funds' consisting of cash which they keep in their homes to use as a ransom payment. The reason for the growth in popularity of express kidnaps among Caracas-based criminals is that they are easier and less risky to carry out than traditional kidnaps-for-ransom, requiring minimal infrastructure or research on the victims. Ransom demands can be as high as \$15,000, but are usually much lower. The crime is severely under-reported on account of the public's lack of confidence in the police. Given the unstable nature of the current security situation, the number of express kidnaps in Caracas is unlikely to decrease in the medium term. The authorities do not have appropriate measures in place to deter or punish perpetrators of the crime and express kidnaps will continue to be a lucrative crime for both experienced and inexperienced criminal gangs.

CRIMINAL GANGS

The state of Miranda's National Guard's Anti-Extortion and Kidnapping Group (GAES) in April 2014 reported that there are currently seven kidnapping gangs operating in Caracas. Among the groups are 'El Wilmer', which operates in the east of the city, 'Los Kelvin', which mainly operates at night, and 'El Jairo', which also works in the east of the city and continues to operate despite its leader's detention in 2013. According to the report, a group called 'El Penko', known for targeting high-net-worth victims, is operating once again, despite four of its members being killed in a shootout with security forces in 2012. According to the report, these criminal gangs have varying levels of experience and expertise, and perpetrate both traditional kidnaps-for-ransom and express kidnaps.

POLICE CORRUPTION

Police corruption is a long-standing issue in Venezuela; there have been reports of both current and former police officers being involved directly and indirectly in carrying out traditional kidnaps-for-ransom and express kidnaps. The Venezuelan government admitted in 2009 that police were responsible for up to 20% of crimes committed in the country, including kidnapping. In an effort to clean up the dysfunctional and corrupt police force, in 2011 the government dissolved the notorious Caracas Metropolitan Police (PM) in favour of an expansion of the centralised national police force, the National Bolivarian Police (PNB). However, these reforms have not had the desired effect and the police continue to be involved in criminal activities. In April 2014, three members of the national police force were tried for kidnapping two victims from their home in the La Vega area of the capital. The police demanded VEF200,000 (\$32,000) in return for the victims' release. The victims were freed after the ransom was paid.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

OUTLOOK

President Nicolas Maduro recently announced the establishment of 'peace zones' in Caracas, where citizen security would be 'guaranteed', as well as the introduction of a new system of community policing. However, few details on how these goals are to be achieved have been made public and there is little sign of tangible progress. With no serious policy initiatives outlined by the new government, it is difficult to see the kidnapping and more general security situation improving in the short-to-medium term. As such, the kidnapping of locals as well as foreign nationals will continue to be a serious problem in Caracas during 2014, fuelled in part by the sense of impunity among criminal elements resulting from the pervasive sense of political instability.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

FOCUS ON



ISLAMIST KIDNAPPING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

Kidnaps perpetrated by Islamist militant groups have constituted a prominent security threat in Nigeria's northern and north-eastern states since 2011, when Ansaru – an offshoot of Boko Haram – began abducting expatriate workers. However, in the last three years, the intent, capability and geographic focus of these affiliated groups have evolved considerably. The most notable trend has been the increased willingness of Boko Haram – which formerly engaged in kidnapping-for-ransom only infrequently – to stage cross-border abductions of Westerners in northern Cameroon. Another trend to have emerged since 2013 has been the systematic targeting of local women by Boko Haram in its north-eastern strongholds. This overview explores these developments and provides a prognosis for the kidnapping threat in northern Nigeria and Cameroon in the run-up to the 2015 Nigerian presidential elections and beyond.

BOKO HARAM'S EVOLVING TACTICS

FOREIGN NATIONALS

Prior to 2013, the abduction of foreign nationals was not a core component of Boko Haram's militant campaign, which had largely domestic aims and targets. Kidnapping only emerged as a significant security threat in northern Nigeria when Ansaru – an al-Qaida-linked

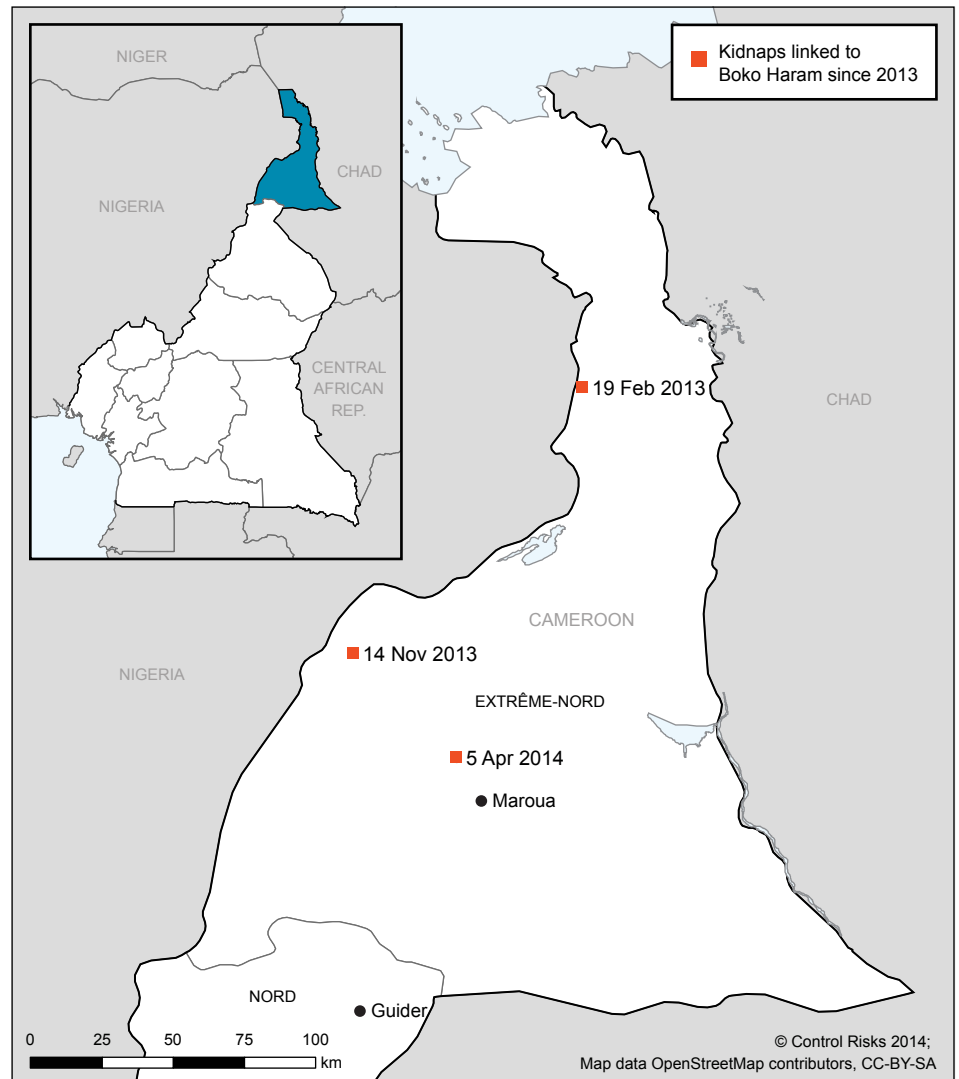


TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

splinter cell of Boko Haram – began targeting foreign interests as part of a strategically transnational agenda. Ansaru has not claimed responsibility for a kidnap for over a year, nor has the group issued any public statements in this time. Such a lengthy period of silence and inactivity may be an indication that senior members of the group's leadership have been killed during the ongoing military offensive.

Nevertheless, the apparent decline of Ansaru's operational capabilities has not resulted in a corresponding decrease in the threat to foreign nationals. Since the beginning of 2013 Boko Haram appears to have overcome its initial unwillingness to engage in kidnapping-for-ransom and has demonstrated a growing intent to target Western nationals in northern Cameroon, most likely in an attempt to boost its international profile, make political demands of the Nigerian authorities, and generate revenue through ransom payments. Boko Haram factions – with possible support from Ansaru operatives – have kidnapped Westerners in three cross-border raids in Extreme North region. The first of the incidents took place in February 2013, when a French family was kidnapped in Dabanga. All seven individuals were released after two months in captivity. This incident was followed by the abduction in November 2013 of a French priest, and in April 2014 of two Italian priests and a Canadian nun. Although the specific details of Boko Haram's demands in these cases remain unclear, the group has been known to make financial and political demands simultaneously, often relating to the release of Boko Haram members detained in Nigerian or Cameroonian prisons.

Boko Haram will continue to pose a significant kidnap threat to foreign nationals in areas of northern Cameroon close to the border with Nigeria, where the group is known to have active networks. Although there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of expatriate employees based in the northern Nigerian states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa since 2012, the few who continue to live and work in the region also remain at high risk of kidnap by Islamist groups.

LOCAL NATIONALS

Expatriate workers are not the only target group of Boko Haram and its affiliates. Islamist groups have kidnapped local nationals for a variety of political, ideological and financial reasons. Suspected Boko Haram operatives on 2 March abducted three polio vaccination workers in Darazo Local Government Area. Two of the victims were released on 3 March and the fate of the third remains unknown. Boko Haram is known for its extreme hostility towards vaccination drives in Nigeria, which they consider un-Islamic, and has previously attacked health workers. Local politicians have also been targeted on a number of occasions. Stephen Marama, a prominent local politician, was kidnapped on 5 April by suspected Boko Haram members while driving to Maiduguri (Borno state). The kidnappers demanded to speak to the Borno state Governor Kashim Shettima or Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume or they would kill the victim. The abductors subsequently demanded NGN 100m (\$ 620,000). The fate of the victim remains unknown.

Women and girls have been increasingly targeted by the group since 2013. The most high-profile incident this year took place on the night of 14-15 April, when Boko Haram operatives abducted approximately 250 teenage female students from a boarding school in the Chibok Local Government Area of Borno state. The gunmen stormed the students' accommodation while they slept and ordered them on to trucks, before transporting them to an unknown location. A small number of girls reportedly escaped by jumping from the moving vehicles; however, the fate of the remaining girls was unknown at the time of writing. Abubakar Shekau, leader of Boko Haram, claimed responsibility for the incident in a video obtained by the AFP news agency and stated that God had instructed him to sell the girls to Islamist militants. This incident, and the abduction of eight further girls from Waraba (Borno state) on 4 May, have provoked strong international condemnation of the group and led to offers of assistance from foreign governments in rescuing the kidnapped girls.

Boko Haram has in the past sporadically used kidnapping as a terror tactic to coerce Christians into abandoning certain territories, though the specific and large-scale targeting of women and girls constitutes a new and distinct trend. Boko Haram may have initially

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

adopted the tactic in retaliation for the government's security forces arresting the wives of Boko Haram operatives. However, in recent months, the practice seems to have expanded in scope, with a growing number of reports of Boko Haram factions abducting local women in order to sell them as slaves. In light of the sustained international publicity Boko Haram has received from recent incidents, the group currently has greater incentives to abduct young girls and we expect this trend to continue in the short-to-medium term.

OUTLOOK

It is now almost a year since the Nigerian government in May 2013 declared a state of emergency in the north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, deploying large numbers of troops in an attempt to put down the Islamist insurgency. With the 2015 presidential election approaching, the Goodluck Jonathan administration is under pressure to provide tangible proof that it is in control of the restive north-east and that its offensive against Boko Haram has borne fruit.

The military operations have gone some way to stemming the expansion of militancy in the states of the Middle Belt, but Boko Haram retains significant capabilities in the north-east. The audacious scale of the recent mass abduction of schoolgirls was likely to be intended as a sign to the Nigerian authorities that it remains committed to its long-term strategic vision and retains the ability to launch large-scale, co-ordinated attacks whilst evading government security forces. Further kidnaps of local nationals for political, financial and tactical ends are likely in the coming months.

The kidnap threat for foreign operators in northern Cameroon is also likely to remain high in the short-to-medium term. Despite the deployment of an elite Cameroonian army unit – the Rapid Intervention Brigade (BIR) – to the region, wholesale improvements in the security environment are unlikely in light of the size of the territory and porous borders. Boko Haram-linked factions will represent a persistent threat to the small number of foreign nationals that remain in Extreme North region.

In the longer term, the outcome of the Nigerian elections will be critical in shaping the trajectory of Islamist militancy in the north. A northern president would be likely to be more successful in appeasing militant leaders, potentially achieving ceasefires with Boko Haram factions. However, unless the core drivers of conflict – chronic underdevelopment, military abuses and widespread corruption – are addressed, the overall outlook in the north is unlikely to change. Consequently, it is likely that Boko Haram will remain the primary security threat and pose a significant kidnapping risk in the region regardless of the election outcome.

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL INSIGHT

Americas	1
Africa	2
Middle East	3
Asia	4

BRIEF ON LATIN AMERICA

Kidnap risks in Caracas	6
Express kidnap the main risk	6
Criminal gangs	6
Police corruption	6
Outlook	7

FOCUS ON

Islamist kidnapping in northern Nigeria and Cameroon	8
Boko Haram's evolving tactics	8
Outlook	10

ABOUT US

Control Risks	11
Hiscox	11

If you would like to provide us with feedback on the Monthly Kidnap Briefing or inform us of your interest in a specific country or theme that you would like us to cover in a subsequent issue, then please write to kr.guernsey@hiscox.com

ABOUT US



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 2,535 kidnap and extortion cases in 127 different countries, with 46,436 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