



GENERAL OVERVIEW:

Kidnap: It was announced the United States would hold an Aria-Formula meeting on 16 May 2024 at the United Nations Headquarters to discuss condemning hostage-taking in Israel on 7 October 2023 as a psychological tool of terrorism. The US Representative to the UN, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield would chair the meeting. It will be co-sponsored by Permanent Missions of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Malta, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom. A released hostage and hostage family members would also attend.

It was reported that on 17 May 2024 an unnamed Turkish-flagged product tanker had been boarded by 10 armed pirates while underway 363nm south-southwest of the Cape Verde Islands. This is beyond the normal operating range of Gulf of Guinea pirates. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) the pirates took control of the bridge, damaged communications equipment, ordered the crew to muster on the bridge and tied their hands and feet. The engineers were instructed to stop the engines and allow the vessel to drift. The pirates stole cash and other valuables. The crew were moved to the steering gear room, ordered to remain there for 2 hours and told the door was rigged with explosives. On exiting, the crew discovered there were no explosives, the pirates had gone, and no cargo or bunkers had been stolen.

May 2024 witnessed a series of significant security incidents across Mexico, underscoring the ongoing challenges faced by the nation in combating organized crime and violence. In Cozumel, the arrival of Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) members in 2021 has led to a dramatic escalation in violence as they battle local criminal groups for control of drug trafficking routes. The once-peaceful tourist island has seen homicides soar from just one or two per year to 36 in the past three years. The Financial Times reported that drug cartels now control around one-third of Mexico's territory, the most ever, according to U.S. military estimates.

Iran reported twenty-five crew members of "*MSC Aries*" that was seized by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in the Strait of Hormuz at the end of March 2024, were released. The vessel was still being held under "judicial detention". Hossein Amirabdollahian, Iran Foreign Minister, said the crew's release was a humanitarian act and they could return home. On 10

May, the previous report that the crew had been released was questioned when the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said that one of four Filipino sailors taken hostage had been freed. The DFA said it was working towards the release of the other three sailors.

Police in Jubaland, Somalia, arrested four suspected pirates along the coast. Cases of piracy continue to increase in Somalia. Officials said the pirates were planning to attack ships in Somali waters. The arrest operation was carried out about 70km south of Kismayo. Two further suspects managed to escape and were being hunted down. The commander of the Jubaland police said a list of people suspected to be funding piracy, had been obtained.

The Marshall Islands-flagged product tanker "*Chrystal Arctic*" reported being approached by a skiff carrying five or six men, ladders and weapons, at around 5:00am. The vessel was transiting the Gulf of Aden en route from Vadinar, India, to Suez, Egypt. The vessel was approached by a small, blue-hulled boat as the vessel was about 92nm northwest of Bosaso, Somalia. The captain changed course, sounded the horn and armed guards on board fired two shots. The skiff returned fire before withdrawing. A EUNAVFOR warship responded and arrested six pirates, some of whom were wounded. UKMTO advised all vessels to transit with caution and to report any suspicious activity. On 13 May, it was reported the EU warship had taken the pirates to the Seychelles where they faced possible prosecution. On 16 May, the six captured pirates were handed over to the Seychelles authorities to stand trial.

As concerns grow about new piracy attacks off Somalia in recent months, maritime sources said pirates may be encouraged by a relaxation of security or taking advantage of the chaos caused by attacks on shipping by the Yemen-based Houthis. Piracy off the Somali coast diminished after a peak in 2011 when there 237 reported attacks. According to the Oceans Beyond Piracy monitoring group, Somali piracy in the region at the time cost the world economy some USD7 billion – with USD160 million paid as ransom.

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Kenya agreed to help the European Union in dealing with maritime crime suspects in the region. The EU had asked Kenya for assistance in prosecuting suspected criminals captured in the region's waters. The Seychelles had already agreed to assist.

RANSOMWARE: The Brazilian federal cyber security agency reported gangs were increasingly stealing data and holding it for ransom. On 1 July 2024, a group called RansomHub began leaking stolen data from Sistema de Cooperativas Financeiras do Brasil (Sicoob) a week after Sicoob announced it had been hacked and its data was being held hostage. Almost half the attacks detected in 2024 involved some form of data being leaked. UNC5176 is a prominent cybercrime group in the country that has targeted banks throughout Latin America as well as in Spain. The group has malware called URSA Trojan or Mispadu. Among the gangs are, Grandoreiro and PINEAPPLE, a cybercrime group, that impersonates the country's federal tax service.

A ransomware group called Brain Cipher attacked 160 government agencies in Indonesia and demanded a ransom of USD8 million to unlock data before apologising and releasing the encryption key for free. The attack in June disrupted multiple government services including immigration and operations at major airports. Indonesian officials acknowledged that the bulk of the data had not been backed up.

ÁFRICA

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: According to local sources, an undisclosed number of Chinese nationals working at a mining site in Gofo, Basse-Kotto prefecture, had been kidnapped. The site is about 400 miles east of the capital, Bangui. Much of the country is controlled by rebel factions including the anti-Balaka, Seleka, Chadian Rebels, Misseria Arabs and Azenda AKG. No group had claimed responsibility but a local publication alluded to the Russian Wagner forces being behind the kidnapping.

ETHIOPIA: Over 100 students, the majority from Debark University, were kidnapped by gunmen near Garba Guracha town, North Shoa zone, Oromia, about 155km from Addis Ababa. The students were travelling in three buses, two from Debark and one from Bahir Dar. A student who managed to escape said armed men stopped the buses, made the students leave the buses, beat them with clubs and took them into the jungle. Other students who managed to escape described the experience as "horrific" and said the gunmen were "Shene" – members of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). One of the escapees said 56 passengers from the buses had managed to escape. In addition to the students, there were mothers with their children. A person who said his sister was among those kidnapped, said she had called to say the kidnappers had demanded 700,000 birr (USD12,500) for her release and told her she would be killed if the ransom was not paid. It was later reported the kidnappers had demanded up to 1 million birr (USD17,500) as ransom. On 10 July, the Oromia regional government announced the release of 160 students through "rigorous operation" by the security forces, but the families of the students reported their children had not been freed.

MOZAMBIQUE: The National Criminal Investigation Service (Sernic) detained three men suspected of involvement in kidnappings in Maputo. Two were suspects in the recent kidnapping of an 8-year-old child on 3 May in Jardim neighbourhood, Maputo, as she was leaving school. After her mother had made a report to the police, she was rescued on 5 May from the house of one of the suspects in Unidades 07, Maputo. There was an exchange of shots between the police and kidnappers during the rescue operation. The third suspect was arrested in connection with two kidnappings in November and December 2023. The victim in the December kidnapping was later rescued.

MOZAMBIQUE: At around 8:00am, eight men, four armed with AK-47 rifles, kidnapped Ali Mamade, a 29-year-old businessman, from outside one of his pharmacies on Avenida Joaquim Chissano, Maputo. The men were in vehicles and fired shots during the incident. This was the second case of kidnapping of a member of the business community in the last 15 days in Maputo and at least the fourth since the beginning of the year.

MOZAMBIQUE: The General Command of the Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM) admitted for the first time the involvement of agents in crimes of kidnapping



and robbery, and the use of firearms. Several Mozambican political analysts suggested there were serious flaws in the recruitment process and low salaries contributed.

MOZAMBIQUE: A 29-year-old man was kidnapped by eight armed men near one of his commercial establishments on Joaquim Chissano Avenue, Maputo.

MOZAMBIQUE: The British Government warned British nationals visiting Mozambique of the risk of kidnapping, especially in Maputo. In an update on the travellers advice website, the Foreign Office said "kidnappings-for-ransom have been recorded in Mozambique, mainly in the capital Maputo. Kidnappings are usually for financial gain or are motivated by criminality. Although most of the victims are Mozambicans, kidnappers can also target foreigners, and businessmen may be at increased risk"

MOZAMBIQUE: Another attempted kidnapping was reported. The targeted victim was the owner of fuel pumps near OMM Square, Maputo City. A South African entered the convenience store and tried to kidnap the owner but was prevented from doing so by the intervention of the Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM). The alleged kidnapper had entered the store on the pretext of buying sweets but people in the store became suspicious especially as there was a vehicle driving around the area. They called the police and, when they arrived, the kidnapper shot at them and was killed when they returned fire.

MOZAMBIQUE: The CTA business confederation said that about 150 business people had been kidnapped over the last 12 years and 100 had left the country for fear of being kidnapped.

NIGERIA: The kidnappers of Samuel Danbayi, Village Head of Bishini community, Kachia Local Government Area, Kaduna State, and his wife, increased their ransom demand from N16 million (USD20,500), two motorcycles and foodstuffs, to N32 million (USD40,100), and gave the family seven days to pay. When the family negotiator said the original demand could not be raised, the kidnappers' negotiator became angry and increased the demand. On 19 April 2024, the kidnappers had raided Chief Danbayi's palace and kidnapped him, his wife and five children.

NIGERIA: Goodnews Emuemu, better known as Gnewzy, a singer famous for his "Sneakers" single, who was kidnapped on 29 April in Ughelli, Delta State, was released by his kidnappers. The CEO of Eric Many Records, Gnewzy's record label, paid part of the ransom

but did not reveal how much ransom was paid. The kidnappers had demanded a ransom of USD200,000. The CEO of the record label criticised the police for their minimal support.

NIGERIA: In the early hours, gunmen invaded a community in the Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and kidnapped 13 people. According to a source, the kidnappers demanded a ransom of N900 million (USD1.15 million) to release the victims. A Fulani woman, a physically challenged head teacher and one other person were later released.

NIGERIA: A ferry boat carrying 20 passengers from Bonny to Onne was intercepted by pirates along the Onne River. The pirates robbed passengers before kidnapping seven of them. It was not known if the seven victims had been specifically selected or picked at random.

NIGERIA: Mansur Kaura, Manager of TAJ Bank, Zamfara Branch, was kidnapped by armed men who invaded his residence at Rajiyat Gabas, Gusau, Zamfara State, at around 1:00pm. He was heard yelling for help as he was driven away.

NIGERIA: Tigran Gambaryan, an American Binance executive, was reported to have been held hostage in the country for more than 70 days after being charged with tax evasion and money laundering. A colleague, Nadeem Anjarwella, was charged alongside him but managed to escape using a smuggled passport. Gambaryan is being held in Kuje after being detained in February. He had flown into the country to discuss compliance with Nigeria's SEC. There were claims his company had been asked for a USD150 million crypto bribe.

NIGERIA: Residents reported that more than 100 people had been kidnapped by gunmen during raids on three villages, Madomaw, Gora and Jambuzu, all in Birnin-Wagaji Local Government Area, Zamfara State. The victims were taken into the forest. On 13 May, five families of victims said the kidnappers had been in contact and were seeking negotiations with the Zamfara State government and not ransom payments.

NIGERIA: During the evening, bandits ambushed a bus carrying Dangote Cement Company Plc workers back from work at Okpella, Etsako West Local Government Area, Edo State. Dozens were kidnapped and several wounded. The kidnappers took their victims into the bush. On 14 May, the Edo State Police Command confirmed the kidnapping and said three injured workers had been rescued. On 22 May, the son of one of the



victims said the kidnappers had been in contact and had demanded initially a ransom of N15 million (USD19,250) before reducing the demand to N5 million (USD6,400) after negotiations, for his father's release.

NIGERIA: Comfort Alegy, former Special Adviser on Education to the government of Kogi State, was kidnapped by gunmen in Lukoja, Kogi State. The kidnappers followed her along a street and kidnapped her as she was entering her house. She was forced to make a video addressing her family and the state government which was sent to her family. The kidnappers demanded an undisclosed ransom of millions of naira (USD1.00 = N780).

NIGERIA: Members of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) Akwa Ibom Branch, withdrew their services in government and private hospitals in the state over the kidnapping of their colleague, Dr John Robbin Esu. Dr Esu was kidnapped from Oran Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, on 30 April 2024. The NMA statement announcing the suspension of services said "the withdrawal of services takes immediate effect and shall be reviewed after 72 hours".

NIGERIA: Kidnappers killed Johnbull Osagiede after collecting a ransom of N9 million (USD11,500) from the victim's family in Edo State. On 7 May, gunmen invaded Evbohen quarters, Idumebo community, Orhionmwon Local Government Area, Edo State, and kidnapped the victim. The kidnappers contacted his wife and demanded a ransom of N15 million (USD19,200). The family initially paid N3 million (USD3,800) and followed it with a payment of N6 million (USD7,700). The victim's body was found at Pipeline Road in the community.

NIGERIA: Lawyers belonging to all branches of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) in Anambra State, went on a one-day boycott of courts in support of their demands for the release of their colleague Chukwubuikem Azoro. He was kidnapped at Abagena, Njikoko Local Government Area, Anambra State, on 11 May 2024. The kidnappers have demanded an undisclosed ransom for his release. On 22 May, the lawyers extended their boycott of Courts for a further week.

NIGERIA: The Army reported that troops had killed some alleged members of the Indigenous People of Biafra's (IPOB) Eastern Security Network (ESN) fighters in Imo State. Troops has also foiled an attempt to kidnap a resident of Umuaka, Njabi Local Government Area, Imo State.

NIGERIA: Kidnappers of three children of a medical doctor at Unguwar Azala, Katari, Kachia Local Government Area, Kaduna State, contacted the children's parents and demanded a ransom of N30 million (USD38,500), foodstuffs and drugs. The family pleaded with the kidnappers to reduce the ransom demand to a level they could afford. The children had been kidnapped the previous week when the kidnappers invaded the doctor's residence.

NIGERIA: It was reported that the Army had rescued 386 kidnapping victims, mostly women and children, from the Sambisa Forest. Many had been held captive for ten years.

NIGERIA: Over the past eight months in a move to enhance the safety of students and teachers, over 4,000 primary and secondary schools across the country joined the Safe School Project. The project was initiated by the Federal Government with the National Response Coordination Centre at the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and aims to protect educational institutions. Two thousand personnel have been deployed as Desk Officers across the 774 local government areas.

NIGERIA: According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), between 29 May 2023 and 22 May 2024, 4,556 Nigerians were killed and 7,096 kidnapped. In the Northwest Region there were 4,343 abductions with 1,807 in Zamfara State. In the North Central Region, there were 1,321 abductions with 538 in Niger State.

NIGERIA: The traditional ruler of Tunburku Giwa Local Government Area, Kaduna State, Ashiru Sherehu, was kidnapped while returning from his farm in Fatika district. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of N100 million (USD128,200). The district has been under siege and farmers have been prevented from working in their fields for fear of kidnapping or death.

NIGERIA: In the early hours, Dr Tiri Gyan David, Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development, Federal University Dutsinma (FUDMA) Katsina State, was shot dead by kidnappers at his residence in Yarima Quarters, Low-Cost Estate, Dutsinma Local Government Area. Two of his children were kidnapped. The kidnappers contacted his widow and demanded a ransom of N300 million (USD384,600) for the release of her two children.



NIGERIA: An 18-seater bus operated by Big Joe Motors was hijacked at Okene, Kogi State, as it travelled from Benin, Edo State, to Abuja. All the passengers and the driver were kidnapped.

SOUTH ÁFRICA: Shansudeen Faki (68), co-owner and director of Dawood Frozen Foods, Dunswart, was kidnapped as he arrived at the business on the corner of Main Reef Road and Commissioner Street around 7:55am. He made his way to his covered parking slot when a white car containing four men drove in behind him. Men got out and dragged him into the back of the white car. A parking lot guard went to his aid but retreated when one of the kidnappers wearing a balaclava fired a shot in the air and everyone in the area ran into the shop. The kidnappers drove off over the Dunswart Bridge towards Van Dyk Road. On 13 May, the body of the victim was found in a veld near Dalpark Secondary School, Rangeview Road. On 16 May, the Gauteng police confirmed the victim's body had been found and said he might have had a heart attack as there was no sign of maltreatment, but the victim's hands were tied together. A witness had seen a red baccie dump the victim's body before speeding away. On 18 May, a Brakpan Community Forum Policing member said the kidnappers had contacted the victim's family and demanded a ransom of R50 million (USD2.75 million).

SOUTH ÁFRICA: Shepherd and Sekayi Adelpha Sikhosanna, husband and wife crypto currency dealers, were kidnapped in Pretoria by nine men, all South Africans, led by Moses Chademona (60), who claimed to be Interpol agents. The kidnappers smuggled the victims across the border into Zimbabwe in an attempt to steal USD134.9 million worth of crypto currency coins. The husband had been at the company of one of the kidnappers, Falcon Gold Digital Forensic and Crypto Recovery Services at Honeydew, Johannesburg, when confronted by the kidnappers. They interrogated him and asked why he was there. He explained he was trying to recover his wife's hacked crypto coins. The kidnappers then drove to the Sikhosanna's residence in Pretoria and kidnapped his wife. They took the couple in separate cars across the border into Zimbabwe. Chademona met them at the border and claimed he was from Interpol Harare before confiscating their cell phones. On 19 May, accomplices of Chademona in South Africa received information that the South African police were searching for the couple. The husband was instructed to turn on his cell phone and contact his relatives to say the couple were in Zimbabwe and all was well. He took the

opportunity to inform them about the kidnapping and pass details of where they were being held. Harare detectives rescued the couple and three suspects were arrested. Police were searching for other members of the gang.

SOUTH AFRICA: The South African Police Service (SAPS) warned Gauteng motorists not to stop for obstructions in the road as incidents of "vehicle spiking" were increasing at an alarming rate in the province. Criminals place spikes, rocks or clothing to resemble a person on the roads in the hope of getting vehicles to stop. They then swoop and rob the motorists. The Communications Manager for the Motor Industry Staff Association (MISA) said there used to be an incident once or twice each month but now there were several incidents each week. Most incidents happen in Pretoria and surrounding areas and more commonly at night on Fridays and the weekend. Criminals are now adapting their modus operandi to kidnap victims, extort money and even rape them.

SOUTH AFRICA: The police said four men had been arrested in connection with the kidnapping of Bangladeshi shop owners in Margate and Hibberdene on KwaZulu Natal's south coast. A spokesperson said a 36-year-old Bangladeshi man had been kidnapped on 26 April 2024 as he was on the way to his shop in Margate. The kidnappers contacted a relative of the victim and demanded a ransom of R800,000 (USD43,950). On 1 May, after negotiations, a ransom of R115,000 (USD6,300) was paid and the victim released. On 18 May, a 24-year-old Bangladeshi was kidnapped at Hibberdene. The kidnappers contacted his employer and demanded a ransom of R500,000 (USD27,500). A ransom of R100,000 (USD5,500) was paid and, soon after, three suspects were arrested and R94,000 (USD5,200) recovered. Investigations showed there was an identifiable link between the two incidents.

SOUTH AFRICA: At around 2:45pm, Dr. Bongani Qini (55), a General Practitioner (GP), was kidnapped from his surgery at Salamntu Street, Nelson Mandela Bay, by four armed men wearing blue surgical masks, and bundled into his own car. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of R500,000 (USD27,500). The victim's car was found in Kwazakheli. On 5 July, the victim was rescued. The Hawks did not confirm whether or not any money was paid.

SOUTH AFRICA: Two young Chinese ladies were kidnapped in Bramley, Johannesburg, as they were being



driven by their employer to purchase a camera. Two armed men approached and pointed guns at the party in the car before dragging the driver out, commandeering the car and driving off with the two victims. The car was later found in Alexandria. After a R20,000 (USD1,100) ransom was paid, the two ladies were released. The police were searching for the two gunmen.

SOMALIA: "MV Abdullah", bulk carrier. Hijacked and 23 crew kidnapped 550nm east of Mogadishu, Somalia.

TANZANIA: During a meeting at State House in Chamwino, President Samia Suluhu Hassan called on chiefs to condemn kidnapping incidents. There had been reports of various alleged kidnappings across the country including that of Edgar Mwakabela "Sativa" from Mbezi, Dar es Salaam, who went missing on 23 June 2024 and was found with injuries in Katawi Game Reserve on 27 June.

Asia and Australia

AUSTRALIA: Three men wearing balaclavas kidnapped an accountant as he entered his office in Silverware, Sydney. One of the men had a handgun. The police traced the two vehicles involved in the kidnapping. At 7:30pm, the police received a tip-off that led them to Grantham Park, south-west Sydney, where they found the victim. The police believed the victim had connections with Camachero bikies. It was later reported he would not cooperate with police investigations.

HONG KONG: The police said a 3-year-old boy had been kidnapped from a Tseung Kwan O shopping centre and stuffed into a suitcase. The following morning, a ransom demand for HK\$5.1 million (USD660,000) was received. In a raid on a Tseung Kwan O flat, the victim was rescued and two women arrested.

HONG KONG: A father and son surrendered to the police due to their involvement in the kidnapping of a crypto investor. While the two men were not directly involved, their car was used in the kidnapping. The father was said to have invested HK\$15 million (USD1.9 million) in crypto currency with the help of a woman, but, allegedly, could not retrieve his money. It was alleged four men were paid to kidnap and assault the woman's husband. This was the second reported kidnapping within 32 hours in Hong Kong. Early in 2024, the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission revealed a significant increase in crypto-related crimes over the past three years with cases totalling billions of yuan.

INDIA: Three men were arrested for allegedly killing Yogendra Sharmal (25) and burying his body in the Daraula area of Meerut. On 1 May, the victim's family lodged a report with the police that he was missing. His body was found on 3 May. The suspects had kidnapped him with a plan to demand a ransom of Rs.10 lakh (USD12,000) from his family. One of the suspects owned a car wash centre on land rented from the victim and had fallen into debt. He had called the victim under the pretext of paying the rent but, when the victim arrived at the location, the three suspects grabbed him, administered anaesthetic but, unfortunately, gave an excessive amount that killed him.

INDIA: A businessman was kidnapped from near his scrap business in Akola district, Maharashtra, and bundled into a car by two or three people. The kidnappers wanted to demand Rs.1 crore (USD119,800) but could not get through to the victim's family. On 15 May, he was rescued, and five suspects were arrested.

INDIA: A. Ramash Patra, owner of SLVN Modern rice mill, was kidnapped at around 8:00pm as he returned from his mill at Perahandi village, Borriguma, Koraput, Odisha. According to sources, the kidnappers intercepted his car near Perahandi Chowk. The victim refused to get out of the car so the kidnappers broke a window and dragged him out before driving away with him in it. The kidnappers initially contacted his family to report the kidnapping, and later demanded a ransom of Rs.70 lakh (USD83,800).

INDIA: Ajun Kumar (35), a flower trader, disappeared from Colonelganj market. His family registered a missing persons report with Gonda Police, Uttar Pradesh. On 25 July, the victim's brother received a telephone call from someone claiming to have kidnapped his brother and demanding a ransom of Rs.60 lakh (USD71,850). On 27 July, the police said Ajun Kumar had faked his kidnapping to repay a Rs.60 lakh loan.

PAKISTAN: Bandits kidnapped Dr Ghulam Sarwar Dashti from a private clinic in Kashmore, Sindh, and took him to the Katcha area. In a separate incident, two dumper truck drivers were kidnapped along the link road in Gwdalu, Sindh.

PAKISTAN: Gunmen kidnapped a British employee of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the troubled southwestern province of Balochistan.. Khalil Ahmad Dale was standing in front of his office in Quetta when armed men travelling in a Landcruiser snatched him. Kidnappings-for-ransom are a plague in Balochistan



and northwest Pakistan. Local criminals kidnap foreigners and locals and often sell the victims to the Taliban and al Qaeda-linked groups.

PAKISTAN: Islamabad police rescued a kidnapping victim after an exchange of fire with the kidnappers. Three suspects, including a woman, were arrested. On 8 May, Gull Akbar reported his son, Noman Akbar, was missing after receiving a video of his son and a ransom demand for Rs.20 million (USD72,350). The police formed a special team to investigate the incident that located the kidnappers' vehicle at Jhangi Saidan. An exchange of gunfire ensued in which one policeman was injured and another killed. No ransom was paid.

PAKISTAN: It was reported that Katcha area bandits had, ten days earlier, kidnapped a kulfi vendor (kulfi is a frozen dairy product often described as "traditional Indian ice cream") as he was sitting outside his house in Sardarpur, Macchko. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of Rs.10 million (USD36,175) for the victim's release from his poor family. The katcha area (riverine forests) along the Indus River in Punjab and Sindh has been a hotbed of criminals and a refuge for outlaws due to its difficult terrain.

PAKISTAN: Yasin Ahmed reported his brother-in-law, Riaz, had been kidnapped from Shahdara where he went to meet a friend in his factory located near Saggian. An unknown man contacted Riaz's wife and demanded a ransom of Rs.10 million (USD36,250). The caller issued a serious warning the victim would be killed if the ransom was not paid.

PAKISTAN: It was reported that dacoits had contacted the parents of Nadar Ali Banglani and Qadeer Banglani who were kidnapped in the Kacha area of Sindh province over Eid. The contact was made by telephone and the parents were informed one of the children had died. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of Rs.10 million (USD36,250) for the release of the other one. The family appealed to the government for assistance.

PAKISTAN: Zulfiqar Ahmed, owner of Mezan Group manufacturer of Cola Next and Managing Director of Paraxa Textile Mills, was travelling with a friend from his textile to Clifton when his car was intercepted by eight armed men in Mauripur Road, Karachi, travelling in a car without number plates. The kidnappers forced the two men out of the car and into their vehicle before driving away. After travelling some distance, the kidnappers released the victim's friend. Two senior staff members of Cola Next were subsequently kidnapped. On 29 July, it

was reported that the victim had returned home in Lahore. The two senior staff members had yet to be released. The victim's lawyer said he would provide further details once he had spoken to his client.

PHILIPPINES: Ten suspects, seven men and three women, all Chinese nationals, were arrested in an operation by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG)'s National Capital Region field unit during a raid on a house in Multinational Village, Barangay Moonwalk. The suspects were believed to have been involved in the kidnapping of seven Filipinos. The operation was mounted after one of the victims reported the seven Filipinos had been kidnapped and held for three days. The police reported the victims were being forced to engage in activities such as love scams and cryptocurrency fraud.

PHILIPPINES: The Philippine National Police Anti-Kidnapping Group (PNP-AGK) said during a press briefing, kidnapping cases over the period January to May 2024 had dropped by 31% when compared to the same period in 2023. This year, nine cases had been recorded against 13 cases last year. This year, there had also been nine "hoax" cases. There had been no casino-related cases.

PHILIPPINES: In July 2024 the authorities arrested a pregnant Chinese woman in Pasay City on suspicion of being the leader of a kidnapping-for-ransom gang that targeted Chinese nationals in the country.

THAILAND: Dan Wei Su (23), a Chinese student, was rescued in Chiang Mai after being kidnapped by a call centre scam gang. The scammers contacted her in Australia and claimed to be from the Chinese police. They coerced her into flying to Chiang Mai where she arrived on 30 April. She had been falsely accused of financial fraud involving her identity and told to go to Thailand to escape legal consequences. She was due to travel on to Chiang Rai to cross the border out of Thailand. The police were alerted and tracked her down to a hotel in Chiang Mai where they found her in the middle of a telephone conversation with the scammers. The police were hunting down the gang.

THAILAND: It was reported that, on 25 April 2024, five Chinese tourists were kidnapped from a hotel in Bangkok and had 2.5 million baht (USD67,650) extorted from them. Eleven men, including several current and former police officers, burst into the victims' hotel room and claimed to be police officers who had come to take the victims to a police station as they had violated certain



laws. The victims were taken in four cars and made to transfer money into a designated bank account. Seven suspects were arrested and three more were being sought.

THAILAND: It was said that 14 Moroccan nationals were being held by human trafficking networks. The victims had been tricked into leaving Morocco by promises of better financial reward and employment prospects by “companies” who claimed to be multi-nationals with headquarters in the Thailand/Myanmar border area. However, the “companies” operate cyber scams and recruit through local agents in victims’ home countries. On arrival in Thailand, the victims were flown to Mae Sot, a rebel-controlled border town in Myanmar, famous for illegal activities. On 27 May, three Sri Lankan Opposition Members of Parliament left Sri Lanka for Thailand to try to rescue 49 Sri Lankan youths and women being forcibly held in the camp of cyber criminals in Myanmar.

THAILAND: Syawana (29), an Indonesian national, was kidnapped from the Hat Yai district of Songkhla province and taken to a house in Phatthalung. The three Thai kidnappers recorded a video of themselves assaulting the victim and sent it to his sister with a demand for 2.3 million baht (USD63,500). The victim pretended to agree to the demand and asked the kidnappers for his phone so he could transfer the money. He transferred 80,000 baht (USD2,210) and secretly sent his location to his sister. On 15 May, the police raided the house, rescued the victim and arrested three suspects.

THAILAND: A Chinese student identified only as “Amber”, was rescued by police after a kidnapping gang lured her to Thailand and demanded a yuan 8 million (USD1.1 million) ransom against a threat to expose pornographic photographs of her and even sell her organs if the money was not paid. “Amber” who is studying at the Australian National University, had been missing for about one week before police found her.

THAILAND: The police rescued Wang Jia Bao (21), a Chinese woman, from a virtual kidnapping scam gang that had tricked her into staging her own kidnapping in order to extort money from her father in China. Her father received a call on 29 July ordering him to pay 3 million yuan (USD419,000) in China for the release of his daughter. He contacted his Thai business partner and instructed him to file a complaint with the Thai police. On 28 July, the victim arrived in Thailand from Japan where she is studying. The Thai police viewed airport CCTV coverage and identified the taxi she took. They

interviewed the taxi driver who told them where he had dropped his fare. Using the information, the police located the condominium where she was staying and rescued her. She told them she had been contacted in Japan by “Chinese police officers” who ordered her to transfer 2.5 million baht (USD69,000) and then to travel to Thailand in order to clear her name.

Europe and CIS

SPAIN: Two French nationals were arrested near Mijas, Malaga, on suspicion of being involved in the kidnapping of a man from Maghreb and holding him captive for 11 days at a finca at Torrox, Malaga. The kidnappers had sent a video of the victim being mutilated and a ransom demand for euros1.4 million (USD1.51 million) to the victim’s family. The incident was believed to be drug related.

UKRAINE: It was reported the country’s counterintelligence service had foiled a Russian plot to infiltrate President Zelensky’s security team in order to kidnap and assassinate him in an explosion. Two colonels in the State Guard of Ukraine were detained on suspicion of leaking information to Russia’s Federal Security Service. The two had been recruited before Russia’s invasion in February 2022.

UKRAINE: Ivor Klymenko, Minister of Internal Affairs, said “active hostilities” were taking place in Vovchansk, Kharkiv Oblast. He said civilians were being “kidnapped and herded into basements” before being killed.

UKRAINE: The Argentina President’s office announced Argentina planned to join the international coalition for the return of Ukrainian children forcibly deported to Russia. According to Ukraine’s Children of War database, at least 19,500 children have been confirmed as abducted by Russia since the start of the invasion. Less than 400 have been returned home.

UNITED KINGDOM: An international student studying at an university in Belfast, Northern Ireland, was believed to be Northern Ireland’s first victim of a “virtual kidnapping”. The young Chinese woman’s family was contacted by cyber criminals and informed their daughter had been kidnapped. The victim’s terrified parents paid a “significant” ransom. The Police Service of Northern Ireland were informed and launched a search during which they discovered the victim alone in a hotel room in Belfast. The student was believed to have been studying at Queen’s University. Although the incident had taken



place in August 2022, details had only just been made public for the first time.

Middle East

IRAQ: The Baghdad Operations Centre (BOC) announced the rescue of a kidnapped foreigner and the arrest of the kidnappers, including a woman, in Al-Karkh. The victim was working as a wheel maintenance engineer. After receiving accurate intelligence information, an operation was launched. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of USD4,000 from the victim's family. The gang of four foreigners, were arrested.

ISRAEL: Developments in the ongoing war and hostage situation in Gaza, included US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's arrival in Israel where he urged Hamas to accept the ceasefire proposal and Israel to do more for Gazan civilians. He met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu prior to an extended meeting that included American and Israeli officials. Prime Minister Netanyahu told the US Secretary of State that he would not agree to an end to the war as part of a hostage deal. Israeli officials were worried that, if the International Criminal Court prosecutes imposes warrants, it would have a negative impact on negotiations.

ISRAEL: In a poll of 500 Israelis, over 50% preferred a hostage swap to an invasion of Rafah. 79% of right-wing supporters were in support of a Rafah invasion and 81% of left wing/centrist supporters were for a hostage swap deal. Elyakin Libman who was thought to have been kidnapped on 7 October 2023, was declared dead after his body was found by the IDF in Israel. Israel gave Hamas one week to accept a hostage deal before the Rafah invasion would begin. An US official said the Secretary of State had told the Qatari Prime Minister to evict Hamas if it obstructs the hostage deal. The IDF continued to build up forces around Rafah. Despite appearing to reject the latest proposal, Hamas said it wanted negotiations to continue. US CIA Director William Burns arrived in Cairo to join the ongoing talks.

ISRAEL: A Hamas official said the first phase of the Egyptian mediation proposal, would be agreed within days, Israel emphasised it would not agree to an end to the war as part of any deal. In many cities across the country, tens of thousands of Israelis protested in support of a hostage/ceasefire deal. Hamas agreed to release 33 hostages during the first phase that would go

ahead although no agreement would take place without a complete ceasefire.

ISRAEL: Hamas insisted it would not make any concessions and claimed "ball in hands of the occupation" as its team returned to Doha, Qatar. There was a mass march of protesters in Tel Aviv demanding a ceasefire and hostage release.

ISRAEL: IDF released a video and photos it had found in the Gaza tunnel system, of Ela (8) and Dafna (15) Elyakim who were kidnapped by Hamas from their house in a kibbutz on the Israel-Gaza border on 7 October 2023. Their father, his partner and her son, were murdered. The two girls were released 51 days later. In the video clip that featured both girls, Ela said repeatedly: "I am Ela Elyakim. I am 8 years old and I am a hostage of Hamas".

ISRAEL: Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu rejected proposals by Israeli negotiators towards renewing indirect talks with Hamas. The proposals drafted a new offer to present to Hamas that would address its desire for "sustained calm" in any deal. Relatives of hostages clashed with Knesset (Israeli Parliament) members during committee meetings accusing them of not doing enough to secure the release of the hostages.

ISRAEL: It was reported Israel would hand over a new proposal to mediators for a hostage deal on 28 May. An official said Israel would wait to hear Hamas's stance before deciding on sending a team for fresh talks. Hamas sources said it would not participate in hostage negotiations after the Rafah attack. Yesh Atid's Member of the Knesset (MK) Meir Cohen admitted that, contrary to claims, Prime Minister Netanyahu was not preventing a prisoner swap from taking place.

ISRAEL: Foreign sources involved in hostage and ceasefire negotiations stated the expansion of operations in Rafah would make negotiations more difficult after the IDF struck a Rafah displacement camp and at least 45 people were killed. Israel gave Qatar, Egypt and the US an official, updated proposal for a possible deal.

LEBANON: Unidentified gunmen kidnapped three Syrian nationals in the Baalbek area of Savine. Two of the victims were named as Mahmoud Mohammed Ismail and Wafaa Khalouf but the third was unknown. Lebanese and Syrian nationals have been involved in tet-for-tat kidnappings while Lebanon has been plagued by kidnapping-for-ransom recently targeting wealthy businessmen and their family members.



LEBANON: Unknown gunmen kidnapped Mohammed Rifaat Yiha and his father from the family cherry grove on the outskirts of Maaraboun on the Lebanese-Syrian border. The two victims were taken into Syria where the kidnappers released the father after telling him to collect LBP150,000 to pay as ransom within 24-hours against a threat to kill his son. On 26 May, the victim was released in Syria after LBP50,000 was paid.

SYRIA: An armed gang stopped a car working on the Jordan route and kidnapped the driver. The kidnappers contacted the victim's family and demanded a ransom of USD10,000 for his release. The incident happened at Otman village, Darea countryside. The fate of the hostage was unknown.

SYRIA: The police said three Pakistani asylum seekers had been arrested on charges of kidnapping an Indian citizen who was an employee at a restaurant in Istanbul. They had sent a video of the victim with his hands and feet tied to his family in India and demanded a ransom of Rs.20 lakh (USD24,000).

SYRIA: A group of gunmen stormed the offices of the petroleum company in Al-Suwaidda city and kidnapped the company's director. According to the Syrian Observatory on Human Rights (SOHR), the director was kidnapped for non-compliance with the orders of the group which is known for monopolising fuels in Al-Suwaidda.

SYRIA: The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported two children who had been kidnapped by a gang on 13 June 2024 from Deir Ezzar countryside near the Syria-Lebanon border, had been released. The children's parents were travelling to Lebanon to work. The kidnappers sent a video of the children in Syria being tortured. The family paid a ransom of USD45,000 for their release which was 17 days after they had been kidnapped. The ransom money was collected by members from the Al-Qora'an and other tribes of Deir Ezzar.

SYRIA: The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported it had documented the kidnapping of 43 people, including three children, during June 2024, and the arbitrary arrest of a further 332 people, including 17 women and three children.

SYRIA: The Violations Documentation Center revealed that, to date in July, 28 citizens have been recorded kidnapped by mercenaries of the Turkish occupation state in the city of Afrin and its occupied villages.

Ransoms had been demanded for some of those kidnapped but the fate of others is still not known. Two kidnapping-for-ransom cases were: "National Army" mercenaries kidnapped Rashid Samir Ali (24), a Kurd, in Junders and demanded a ransom of USD25,000. Jiwan Hamid Hora (42) was kidnapped by members of the National Army "Military Police" and USD5,000 was demanded for his release.

Latin America and the Caribbean

BOLIVIA: Brazilian businessman Marcos Ferreira Paz, who works in the commercial area on the border between Acre and Bolivia, was kidnapped on 28 June 2024 in the Santa Cruz de la Sierra region. The kidnappers were reported to have demanded USD400,000 as ransom. The Bolivian police identified one of the kidnappers as a criminal who had cut off the fingers of a previous victim.

BRAZIL: In May 11 elderly 87-year-old man was kidnapped in Londrina, north of Parana. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of R\$1 million (USD194,900).

BRAZIL: Twin brothers kidnapped India Marley, a digital influencer, and her friend as they left a hotel at Joa. The kidnappers were dressed in fake Civil Police uniforms and demanded a ransom of R\$200,000 (USD39,000). After two friends had reported the disappearance of the victims, the police rescued the victims from a motel in the West Zone, Rio de Janeiro and arrested the twins.

CHILE: A report by la Fiscalía Nacional showed that from 2013 to 2024, the number of cases of kidnapping-for-ransom had increased by 135%. In 2013 there were 361 investigations into the crime followed by 2019 (492) with similar numbers in 2020 and 2021, 2022 (826) and 2023 (850). In 2023, the greatest number of cases were recorded in la Fiscalía Regional Metropolitana Centro Norte, followed by la Regional Sur Metropolitana Sur, with Valparaíso in third place.

CHILE: Ana María Morales, la Gerente de la División de Estudios, Evaluación, Control y Desarrollo de la Gestión, presented a report on kidnapping in the country in 2023. The number of cases had increased by 2.9% to 850 from 826 in 2022.

CHILE: A report released by the Attorney General's Office showed that kidnapping cases had increased over the last ten years from 361 registered cases in 2013 to 850 registered cases in 2023. The greatest annual increase was between 2021 (500 cases) and 2022 (820 cases), a 68% increase. This period coincided with Tren



de Aragua, Venezuela's most brutal prison gang, taking root in Chile.

COLOMBIA: The National Liberation Army (ELN) said it would lift its suspension on kidnapping as the government had failed to be lived up to agreements reached during peace talks by delaying the establishment of a multi-donor fund for a peace process. On 9 May, President Gustavo Petro slammed the ELN's decision to resume kidnappings and amid stalled peace talks. The government claimed there had never been an agreement to exchange the end of kidnappings for a fund.

COLOMBIA: El Gaula de la Policia Nacional arrested alias "Chirri" for his participation in the kidnapping of a merchant and his dog from el barrio las Mercedes, Palmira, Valle del Cauca. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of Col\$300 million (USD767,250) from the victim's family. The victim was released after being held for nine days but his dog was maltreated and subsequently died.

COLOMBIA: Yusly Tatiana Arevalo (27), a photographer, was kidnapped by armed men from a finca in Catatumbo, Norte de Santander, where the family were relaxing. The victim was taken away in a vehicle. It was not known who was responsible for the kidnapping, but Farc dissidents operate in the area.

COLOMBIA: According to a report, there were 334 recorded victims of kidnapping-for-ransom in the country in 2023, double the number recorded in 2022. Antioquia with 54 kidnapping cases in 2023 recorded the highest number, followed by Norte de Santander (48), Valle de Cauca (47), Narino (30) and Cauca (26). According to la Policia Nacional, cases of extortion had increased 33.5% between 2019 and 2023. Most of the crimes were attributed to armed groups like el Ejercito de Liberación Nacional (ELN), dissidents from las Farc and criminal organisations such as Clan del Golfo.

COLOMBIA: The authorities confirmed the kidnapping of a tourist in Jamundi, Valle de Cauca. The visitor disappeared in a rural zone of the area where dissidents from el frente Jaime Martinez de las Farc are known to be active. Units from el Gaula were investigating the tourist's disappearance.

COLOMBIA: Human rights organisations reported the kidnapping of 17 people, including four children, from several rural areas of Arauca, on the Venezuelan border. The kidnappings were attributed to members of el

Ejercito de Liberación Nacional (ELN) who operate in the area.

COLOMBIA: According to la Policia del Departamento de Arauca, at least 12 persons were being held as kidnapping victims of el Ejercito de Liberación Nacional (ELN) at present. ELN has controlled Arauca for some time.

ECUADOR: Two victims of kidnapping in Guayaquil over the weekend were rescued by police. One of the victims subsequently died from a heart attack.

ECUADOR: A man was kidnapped in Vinces, Los Rios, and the kidnappers demanded a ransom of USD10,000 for his release. After receiving information about the incident, on 26 May, in a joint operation la Policia Nacional and las Fuerzas Armadas mounted a rescue operation, rescued the victim, and arrested eight adults and one youth, members of the terrorist group "Los Lobos".

ECUADOR: La Unidad Antisecuestro y Extorsion (Unase) rescued a kidnapped man from the El Carmen and Estero Hondo area, La Mana. The victim had been kidnapped on 28 May 2024 along la via San Pablo de la Cruz, La Mana. The kidnappers contacted the victim's family and demanded a ransom of USD20,000. Four suspects were arrested.

ECUADOR: A man was kidnapped by a criminal group from el sector Miraflores, Cuenca. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of USD20,000. From the victim's family. La Policia Nacional located the building where the victim was being held in Totoracocha and rescued him. The kidnappers detected police activity and fled, abandoning the victim.

ECUADOR: A family was intercepted and kidnapped by armed men in two vehicles in San Pablo, Los Rios. The victims were taken to a house where they were held and the kidnappers contacted relatives to demand a ransom of USD50,000.

ECUADOR: Four suspects were arrested in connection of the kidnapping of a businesswoman in Guayaquil over the weekend. The police traced the victim to a house in el sector de Flor de Bastion, Guayaquil.

HAITÍ: Three nuns belonging to the Saint-Joseph de Cluny Congregation, were kidnapped by heavily armed men who invaded the La Madeleine Orphanage, Port-au-Prince.



HAITI: The CEO and co-founder of the LiveBeyond ministry said nearly a dozen gunmen had attacked the compound located 20 mile outside Port-au-Prince. Security personnel managed to repel the attack.

HAITI: Lucien Jura, a prominent Haitian journalist, was kidnapped from his home in Petion-Ville on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. The kidnappers contacted the victim's family but no details of the call were made public. The Secretary-General of SOS Journalists called the victim's cell phone and, in a brief conversation, the victim confirmed he had been kidnapped. On 21 July, the victim's brother said the victim had been released but did not provide any details.

MÉXICO: Agents from la Secretaria de Seguridad Pública del Estado (SSPE) rescued 104 immigrants, 100 adults and four children, who came from four central American countries. The victims were being held in a house on las calles Ricardo Marquina y Alfonso del Real, Ciudad Juárez, Estado de Chihuahua, close to the US border. Four members of a criminal gang were arrested.

MÉXICO: Three armed men kidnapped a man along 20 de Noviembre Avenue, Cancun, and forced him into a white van. The victim's wife reported the incident to the police who alerted mobile patrols. The National Guard intercepted the vehicle, rescued the victim, and arrested three suspects. The victim was reported to be involved with a local loansharking gang.

MÉXICO: The Increasing Risk of Kidnapping and Extortion that Mexico faces after the general elections: The aftermath of the recent general election has caused real concern about the increased risk of kidnapping and extortion in Mexico. For many years, the country has been troubled by problems of organized crime, corruption and violence, and these criminal activities certainly intensify in times when the people have to elect new authorities followed by probably political changes. The post-election period is particularly vulnerable as power dynamics shift, creating opportunities for criminal groups to exploit the situation to their advantage. In fact, it has been reported through different media outlets that around 200 public administration officials, including politicians and candidates, have been murdered or threatened in the period prior to the general elections on June 2, as the Candidates were removed from the ballot by death, and voting citizens were forced to elect the remaining candidates who were placed in line not to meet the needs of their communities, but of organized crime groups.

MÉXICO: In Nogales, Sonora, authorities captured "El Comandante Whisky," a plaza boss for the Salazar faction of the Sinaloa Cartel and right-hand man of "Cabo 10." Along with him, narcocorrido singer Daniel Alejandro Tapia and two others were arrested with an arsenal of weapons.

MÉXICO: In the State of Mexico, 15 CJNG members were arrested for the decapitation murders of 9 Uber drivers, including the subdirector of Public Security for Nicolás Romero and eight other municipal police officers. Two leaders, Hugo Adrián "S" and Joel Efrén "L," face charges of homicide, while the others are accused of obstruction of justice and resisting arrest. During the operation, a kidnapping victim was also rescued. Luis Eduardo "N", alias "El Bola", was arrested for allegedly being responsible for a violent robbery on a school transport vehicle in Coacalco earlier in the month. The incident, which was captured on video and widely circulated on social media, sparked outrage and renewed calls for action against the country's pervasive problem of violent crime.

MÉXICO: Several particularly notable events marked the month. In Macuspana, Tabasco, five people were killed and nine injured in a machete and knife attack at a clandestine bar on June 13th. The victims included customers and staff, with some having their throats cut. Earlier, on June 9th, in the same city, three decapitated bodies were left in front of a kindergarten along with a threatening message. In Tila, Chiapas, armed groups terrorized residents for four days starting June 4th, burning homes and killing at least four people before military forces finally intervened.

MÉXICO: A mass killing in La Concordia, Chiapas, on June 26th left 19 dead after an apparent confrontation between rival criminal groups. The bodies were discovered in and around a dump truck, with some victims wearing tactical gear, pointing to the militarization of criminal organizations in the region.

MÉXICO: In León, Guanajuato, a brutal massacre on June 9th claimed the lives of four women and two children (aged two years and three months). This horrific act of violence against a single-family highlighted the indiscriminate nature of cartel violence and its devastating impact on innocent civilians. Authorities later arrested two suspects in connection with the killings on June 16th.

MÉXICO: Election day violence on June 2nd included the theft of ballot boxes by armed men in several states. In



Puebla, 68 ballot boxes were burned, and one polling station could not open due to threats. In Michoacán, armed individuals stole election materials from multiple polling places. In Guerrero, the elected municipal president of Copala, Salvador Villalba Flores, was executed inside a passenger bus while returning from Mexico City.

MÉXICO: On June 16th, Ignacio Montoya Marín, a former mayor of Maravatío, Michoacán, was gunned down in his restaurant. The same day, Mario Lázaro Mendoza, a newly elected alternate councilman in Jacona, Michoacán, was killed in a shooting that also injured his pregnant wife.

MÉXICO: On June 22nd, Acasio Flores Guerrero, mayor of Malinaltepec, Guerrero, was found dead after being briefly kidnapped by residents. This incident appeared to be linked to long-standing land disputes in the region, showcasing how local political conflicts can escalate to deadly violence.

MÉXICO: The NGO 1800 Migrante based in New York reported 200 central American migrants had been kidnapped while travelling to Cuahatemoc, Chihuahua, on 4 July 2024. The kidnappers used WhatsApp to contact the victims' families and demand ransoms of USD10,000.

MÉXICO: The US Embassy and Consulates in Mexico warned of kidnapping on bus routes from Reynosa. The US Consulate General in Matamoros had received several reports of kidnapping-for-ransom on intercity buses departing Reynosa and Tamaulipas. The buses were operated by transportation company Omnibus. The US Department of State's Travel Advisory for Tamaulipas issued a Level 4 Alert: Do Not Travel due to crime and kidnapping.

MÉXICO: La organización Alto al Secuestro released its report for June 2024. There were 90 recorded cases of kidnapping-for-ransom against 66 cases in May, an increase of 36.3%. The states recording the highest number of cases were: Ciudad de México (12); Estado de México and Veracruz (9 each); Chihuahua (8); Michoacan and Puebla (6 each) and Tabasco and Quintana Roo (4 each).

MÉXICO: The kidnappers of Nain Gonzalez Acuna (27) demanded a ransom of USD14,000 from his parents in Nicaragua. He had left Nicaragua to travel overland to the US on 26 May and was kidnapped in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, on the US border, 20 days later. His parents had not released any information about his kidnapping

until they recently received threats to their son's life if the ransom was not paid. The victim was travelling to the US to set up house for his young family. A crowd funding website was set up to help his parents raise the ransom money.

PERÚ: Victor Zanabria, Policia Nacional del Peru (PNP) Director confirmed that Emilio Julca Huaman, a businessman in the mining industry, had been released by his kidnappers in Trujillo after being held for a week. The victim's family had paid a ransom. He added he did not rule out the criminal gang "Los Pulpos" being responsible.

PERÚ: Criminals dressed in police uniform kidnapped Jackeline Janine Salazar Flores (32), owner of gymnasiums in Lima Norte, in Los Olivos, Lima. Erick Moreno Hernandez, alias "El Monstruo or Chongito de Belaunde", was believed to be behind the kidnapping. At around 10:50pm, the victim was driving home after leaving her gymnasium in Razona de La Pascana, Camas, when her car was intercepted at la cudra 33 de la Avenida Alfredo Mendiola, Los Olivos. The kidnappers contacted the victim's family and demanded a ransom of S/2 million (USD536,200). On 16 May, the kidnappers sent an audio tape of the victim to her family in which she can be heard crying. She begs her family to pay the ransom before the kidnappers torture her and says they know the details of the properties owned by her uncles.

Rest of the World

THE NETHERLANDS: Princess Catharina-Amalia (20), heir to the Dutch throne, said she had moved secretly to Spain in 2023 citing a safety concern. In 2022, she had faced a kidnapping threat while studying at the University of Amsterdam. It had been reported at the time, that her name was included in messages between criminal groups.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: At around 5:50am, Anisha Hosein-Singh, daughter of the owner of Sauce Doubles, was kidnapped in El Dorado. Her husband was shot in the face when he tried to come to her aid. The couple were setting up tents for Sauce & Sons Doubles outlet along Eastern Road, El Dorado, when two armed men exited a vehicle, dragged the victim towards it and bundled her in the back seat before driving away. Later in the day, a male relative of the victim said: "If they make a call, we will pay the ransom. Whatever they want, we will give it to them. We just want her back safe and in one piece".



After a tip off, the police found the kidnappers' car at Lluengo Village, Maracas Valley, St Joseph, in a mountainous area. Sauce Doubles had been subject to a number of threats and incidents over the last few years. On 20 May, family, neighbours and well-wishers gathered in Acono Road, St Joseph, for a candlelight vigil. On 22 May, the police revealed an undisclosed ransom demand had been received but this was disputed by the victim's husband who posted on Facebook the report of a ransom demand was false. He also said no Proof of Life (PoL) had been received. At around 10:30pm, the victim was found by passersby on the road near the Caroni Crematorium. They took her to St Joseph Police Station. There was no confirmation if a ransom had been paid or if she had suffered any harm. On 23 May, the police did not respond to reports that two suspects had been arrested. It was rumoured the victim had been taken by the kidnappers into the mountains near St Benedict's Monastery. The police went to the area to search for suspects. The kidnappers confronted the police search party and, after a fire fight, four men were found "lifeless". The identities of the four were not released. Later at a press conference, the police confirmed that four men had been killed in the St Augustine area at around 9:45am. The four were among several others wanted for questioning.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: The US State Department and UK Foreign Office warned tourists about visiting Trinidad and Tobago. The UK Foreign Office issued a warning at the end of last week and the US State Department said: "Reconsider travel to Trinidad and Tobago due to crime. Exercise increased caution in Trinidad and Tobago due to terrorism and kidnapping. Some areas have increased risk. US government personnel are prohibited from travelling to the following areas in Port of Spain: Laventille, Beetham, Sea Lots, Cocorite and the interior of Queen's Park Savannah. After dark, US government personnel are prohibited from travelling to downtown Port of Spain, Fort George overlook and all beaches. Violence and shootings occur regularly in some areas of Port of Spain. Violent crime, such as murder, robbery, assault, sexual assault, home invasion and kidnapping is common". The UK Foreign Office said: "In Trinidad, there is a high level of violent crime. Gang-related attacks and shootings are increasing around the city centre of Port of Spain including Laventille, Morvant and Barataria".

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