

KIDNAP+ RANSOM INSIGHT

GLOBAL SUMMARY

FOCUS
ARTICLE

FEMALE TRAVEL SECURITY

March

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY

This issue of Constellis' Kidnap for Ransom Insight Report covers global kidnapping incidents and trends for the months of January, February and March 2020. The information is derived from multi-source analysis of kidnap for ransom activity and where known, the outcome or resolution of the events. The report covers current kidnap for ransom hotspots at regional, national and provincial levels, with a particular focus on areas where kidnap for ransom activity is increasing.

Statistical analysis of data for January and February 2020 is included on page 13, which displays kidnap for ransom trends by region, victims by nationality and employment sector, as well as identifying the Top 10 countries for the kidnapping of foreign nationals over the reporting period. Additionally, 12-month statistical information (March 2019 – February 2020) can be found on page 17.

The Global Piracy Update gives an overview of the piracy threat by region, providing trend analysis for January and February 2020. It also offers sample cases that took place during those months to illustrate identified trends.

The Cybersecurity section examines current issues affecting companies and individuals in the realm of IT security. This edition will provide an insight into Coronavirus-themed cybercrime. Cybercriminals have sought to take advantage of the Novel Coronavirus crisis. Through the creation of

fraudulent websites and emails, claiming to be from authentic medical sources or alleging to selling test kits and 'cures', hackers steal individuals' personal information and credentials, and implant malware on victims' devices. Organisations have also been targeted from coronavirus-themed phishing emails, in addition to Business Email Compromise (BEC)-style coronavirus-related attacks. As the viral outbreak spreads further and maintains a prominent position in the public eye, cybercriminals will inevitably continue to attempt to exploit vulnerable individuals and businesses.

The Focus Article examines the subject of female travel security. As women came to represent nearly half of all business travellers, corporations also began to recognise the need for safety and security training for their female colleagues. However, this has often been viewed as an amplified version of the same safety advice for men, thus failing to recognise the unique safety issues faced by female travellers. Increasing awareness of these specific security issues will not only help organisations protect their female employees more effectively, but will also contribute to their happiness and productivity, and ultimately support the continued success of the organisation itself. Constellis' female consultants provide special safety and security briefings exclusively for female employees and travellers: for more information, please contact [Mark Allison](#), Constellis VP Crisis and Risk Services.

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GLOBAL OVERVIEW

AMERICAS

The Americas accounted for 26% of all foreign kidnap victims recorded by Constellis over the first two months of 2020, with regional numbers once again led by Mexico and Venezuela. Of note over the reporting period however has been the deterioration of the security situation in Haiti. Political instability prevalent since September 2019, and worsening since the withdrawal of the UN mission in the country (MINUJUSTH) in October the same year, has been characterised by high levels of civil unrest and violence. This has resulted in an exponential surge in criminality as the security forces find themselves overstretched. In particular, this had had a direct effect on kidnapping rates, which have seen a sharp increase since January 2020. Kidnapping has been a chronic problem in Haiti, affording it a spot among the kidnapping hotspots in the world during its peak in the late 2000s. While the current situation has not yet reached the levels observed during that period, all the same destabilising elements are present. As such, a return to the earlier state of affairs is possible. In this context, and following a number of kidnaps targeting foreign nationals on the Island-state – at least 13 between December and the first week of March –, the US increased its advisory level on 5 March, advising against all travel to Haiti. The majority of kidnappings in Haiti occur in Port-au-Prince and its environs, with the area of Delmas particularly being a hotbed for this activity.

CASES:

- ▶ A French national working for the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) was released on 27 February, two days after she was kidnapped by unknown individuals in Port-au-Prince. According to a WFP's spokesman, the unnamed woman was released unharmed without a ransom having been paid. The organisation did not give further details on the incident.



Armed off-duty police officers protest over pay and working conditions in the Haitian capital on 23 February 2020. (Photo: The Guardian)

- ▶ The member of congress for Port-Salut, Sinal Bertrand, was kidnapped on 20 February in the Delmas area of Port-au-Prince while driving in the company of a relative. According to local media, the kidnappers demanded a ransom of USD 50,000 for the freedom of the two victims. The deputy was released in less than 24 hours, allegedly following a payment of USD 40,000. It is unknown if his relative was also released.
- ▶ Meanwhile in Mexico, foreign nationals continue to be affected by the enduring violence in the country. On 9 February, the severed head of a Polish national, who was reported missing since 4 February, was found outside the man's place of work in the western city of Guadalajara. The head was accompanied by a poster (*narcomanta*), containing a threatening message by an organised criminal group. The name of the organisation claiming responsibility for the kidnap and murder was not released and it is currently unknown what may have led to the foreigner's targeting. His family denied he had any links to any criminal outfit, while some reports suggested the business where he was employed had been the object of threats by the perpetrators.

In Mexico, extortion is the second most common crime, with at least 33 million cases reported to the authorities in 2019. One of the most popular forms of this activity is virtual kidnapping. In this extortion scheme, criminals, through psychological violence and other social engineering methods, convince an individual that they are in imminent danger and have to follow their instructions to avoid it. Instructions may range from going incommunicado to taking photos or video pretending they have been kidnapped. Meanwhile, the criminals contact the individual's family, convince them he/she has been kidnapped, and demand a ransom for the person's release. Some of the most elaborate schemes, carried out by organised gangs, take place at hotels, targeting both domestic and foreign tourists. These are often conducted with the involvement of hotel staff, who identify victims, provide personal information to the criminals and even participate in the calls, or just turn a blind eye to suspicious activity in the hotel. Most rudimentary forms of virtual kidnapping may only involve one person randomly dialling numbers, often from prisons. Such attacks have also been transnational, with Mexican and other Latin American criminals targeting Spanish speakers abroad, particularly in North America and Europe. US authorities have reported an uptick in these incidents in recent months, with criminals targeting US residents reportedly becoming more sophisticated, gaining access to personal information through online hacking.

CASES:

- ▶ Monterrey-based Mexican boxer Alma Ibarra and her coach were victims of a virtual kidnapping in Boca del Rio, Veracruz state, where she was to participate in a national eliminatory tournament for the 2020 Olympic Games. The visitors received threatening calls made to their hotel room in the early hours of 6 February, in which the criminals instructed them to transfer to another hotel without informing anybody and to remain there until instructed otherwise. The victims' disappearance was noted when the boxer missed her weigh-in appointment for the competition, with organisers being unable to communicate with her or her coach. It soon transpired that the relatives of the victims had been contacted by the criminals, who demanded a ransom of MXP 300,000 (nearly USD 15,000). The incident was reported to the authorities, who soon located the victims by tracing their mobile phones.
- ▶ On 11 February, a 64-year-old woman in Providence, Rhode Island, received a phone call from a man who claimed he had kidnapped her daughter in Miami, and threatened to harm her if she did not wire him USD 1,000. After withdrawing the money from a bank, the woman made the transfer at a Western Union inside a convenience store. She was then

ordered to go to a hardware shop and remain there. The woman stayed at the shop from 11 am until 8 pm, with the criminal keeping her on the phone the whole time. Meanwhile, the perpetrators also called her daughter and claimed they had kidnapped her mother. The daughter however reported the incident to the Miami police, who after four hours located the elderly woman by pinging her phone. According to the FBI, these kind of calls often emanate from Mexico and seek to extort sums ranging between USD 1,000 and 2,000.

- ▶ A woman was arrested in Santiago de Chile while she was going to withdraw the money paid by a victim of virtual kidnapping in Madrid, Spain. The suspect is accused of at least five other such incidents in Spain, for which EUR 2,300 (USD 2,600) were paid in total. The latest of these events occurred on 27 February, in Alcorcón, Madrid. After being made aware of the incident, the Chilean authorities were able to trace the payment of €600 euros (nearly USD 700), which had been made through a money transfer concessionaire. They also managed to stop the payment and recover the money. The police additionally set up an operation for the arrest of the woman at the collection point.

EUROPE

In line with established trends, Europe accounted for the lowest number of foreign kidnap victims recorded by Constellis over the first two months of 2020, with only 3.5% of the total incident pool. Incidents recorded over the reporting period had a variety of motivations, ranging from crimes of opportunity and kidnap for ransom to unlawful detentions. Relations between Russia and the West (and its allies) have been particularly tense in recent years due to a series of geopolitical issues. These include Russia's occupation of Crimea, its military intervention in Syria, its alleged interference in other countries' domestic affairs, as well as issues of economic character, such as its policies regarding oil prices. The Russian government has been known to conduct espionage against foreigners to allegedly protect the country's national security, which could eventually lead to detentions. Detainees in many cases have allegedly been the victims of set-up operations. This threat increases in periods of particular tension between Moscow and other powers, with Russia known to frequently engage in hostage diplomacy.

CASES:

- On 27 January, Moscow announced that it had summoned Japanese diplomats and handed them a note of protest after a Japanese national was allegedly caught spying. The incident occurred on 25 December, when Russian police detained the Japanese national in Vladivostok, allegedly attempting to obtain 'classified information about Russia's military potential in the Far East'. The detainee, who was not identified and was in Russia on a media visa, received a warning and was ordered to leave the country, the Russian foreign ministry said. The man reportedly left Russia the next day. It is not clear why the announcement was made a month after the incident took place. However, it came a day after Japanese police arrested a local national for allegedly stealing proprietary information from a telecoms company and giving it to Russian officials. Japanese officials said the man is suspected of having obtained trade secrets from a computer server at his workplace on 18 February 2019, in violation of Japan's Unfair Competition Prevention Law. Authorities did not identify the firm, though Japanese media speculated that it was mobile carrier SoftBank Corp., a unit of the SoftBank Group. Japanese media also alleged that the police suspect the involvement of Russian trade officials at Moscow's diplomatic mission in Tokyo. The Russian Embassy has refuted the allegations, while the Japanese foreign ministry declined to say whether the two incidents were related.

- Unknown men abducted and robbed a Chinese restaurant owner in Petersburg, on 17 February. The foreigner was walking his dog on the embankment of the Smolenka River when two unidentified men suddenly grabbed him, pushing him into a car with two more people inside. The man was then robbed of all his valuables and money, as well as the keys to his apartment. The criminals then went to his home to ransack it. The act was interrupted by the victim's friend, who had come for a visit. However, he also became a victim of the criminals, being assaulted and robbed of his belongings. The assailants then returned to their car, taking the two victims with them. The two men were eventually thrown out of the vehicle far from the crime scene.



Russian diplomatic officials in Tokyo suspected of being involved in the 2019 Softbank Corp. espionage case. (Photo: South Morning China Post)

In Spain, as in other countries in Western Europe, violent crime rates remain relatively low, with petty crime constituting the primary security threat. This type of crime has increased in Spain since 2018 and is typically concentrated in large urban areas such as Barcelona and Madrid. A notable crime trend has been the exponential increase in the number of virtual kidnappings recorded in the country. According to the Statistical Criminal System of the Spanish Ministry of Interior, 1,474 virtual kidnappings have been registered in Spain in the last five years. Half of them occurred in 2016, when 765 cases were reported to the authorities. The next years saw a slight decrease in this activity; however, 2019 experienced an upturn, with a 30% increase in relation to 2018. Notably, in five years the authorities have only been able to arrest or investigate 17 individuals for these crimes. The reason behind this low prosecution rate is that the majority of such incidents originate outside Spain, particularly in Latin America. Over 2020, the Madrid community of Alcorcón has emerged as the national epicentre of this activity, with at least 35 incidents recorded so far this year. Sums demanded typically range between 1,000 and 10,000 euros.

CASES:

- On 28 February, in the locality of Alcorcón, greater Madrid, police stopped the payment of €3,000 to criminals carrying out a virtual kidnapping. The event had not been reported, but was discovered by a police officer, who noted the distressed behaviour of a woman at a bank as she was about to make the transfer. Upon questioning, the woman revealed that she had received a call by a man claiming that he had her daughter captive and that she would be killed if a ransom was not paid. With the help of the police, the woman was able to locate her daughter, safe and sound, at work.
- Express kidnappings are another type of crime of opportunity increasingly being reported in Spain and elsewhere in southern Europe. For instance, on 5 January, members of the Spanish National Police found a kidnap victim inside the trunk of a car in southern Madrid. The discovery took place during a search of the vehicle, which was stopped for reckless driving and attempting to escape. The victim told the police that he had been abducted at gunpoint from the garage of his house. He was then forced to hand over his bank cards and reveal their PINs before being forced inside the trunk of the perpetrators' car. Before departing, the criminals told him they would take him to withdraw money from ATMs.

- While rarer, kidnaps for ransom occur on occasion in Western Europe. For example, on 16 January, an 18-year-old high school student was kidnapped in Paris' 10th arrondissement. The kidnappers took the victim to Angers and later demanded €50,000 from the young man's father, a merchant who owns several shops in the French capital. The father alerted the police, who advised him on how to proceed. The criminals were arrested on 19 January in Paris' Porte d'Italie, when they showed up to collect the ransom. While in police custody, the two kidnappers disclosed the location of the victim, who was subsequently rescued.



Police in Madrid thwarted the ransom payment in a virtual extortion case which originated in Chile. (Photo: Telemadrid)

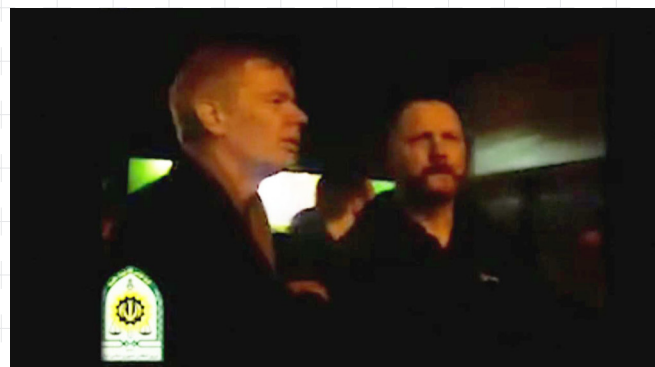
MIDDLE EAST

Over January-February 2020, the Middle East saw a decrease in the number of kidnapped foreigners, mainly linked to a reduction in the number of incidents in Iran. Nonetheless, Iran continued to record the highest number of foreign victims, with the February seizure of a foreign vessel and detention of its 13-man crew, accused of smuggling oil. The incidence of these events is expected to reduce even further over the next reporting period as a result of the spread of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), which has brought the country to a virtual standstill, being one of the most affected countries in the world. In view of the health crisis, which has even affected the highest political circles, Iranian authorities decided to release tens of thousands of prisoners in an attempt to prevent the spread of the virus in the country's crowded prisons. As of 9 March, 70,000 prisoners who tested negative for the virus had been reportedly released, with the judiciary not discounting further releases in the coming days. However, these measures do not seem to directly apply to foreign prisoners and those with dual nationality who are being held for political reasons, imprisoned to be used as bargaining chips. It has been suggested that Western governments are currently considering sending economic and medical assistance to Iran on the condition that they release these foreign prisoners. According to media sources, there is currently a list of ten high-profile political prisoners who will soon be released temporarily, and which includes two dual nationals - a British and an American citizen - whose identities were not revealed. Most of these high-profile prisoners are being held in Evin Prison, where reports suggest a number of COVID-19 cases have been confirmed.

CASES:

- On 17 February, Iran's Foreign Ministry announced the release of Ahmad Khalili, an Iranian national who had been detained in Germany since 2018 over accusations of violating US sanctions. According to the statement, Khalili was released the night before, following 'extensive diplomatic consultations and with effective cooperation of Iran's Judiciary and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC)'s Intelligence Organisation'. The German authorities confirmed the information on 19 February, adding that Khalili's release was part of a prisoner exchange deal with Tehran. In exchange, a German citizen who was held on spying charges was released from Tehran's Evin prison. The German citizen in question was not named, but is known that had been sentenced to three years in prison for 'taking pictures of sensitive locations'.
- On 11 January, Rob Macaire, the UK ambassador to Iran, was briefly detained by Iranian authorities, accused of participating in anti-government protests in Tehran. The Iranian police additionally accused

the ambassador of having used a shop in front of Amirkabir University to organise the protest. Macaire denied the claims, saying he had attended what was advertised as a vigil, and left after it began to turn into a protest. The police later released a video of the British ambassador at the protest, just before his arrest. The ambassador was released shortly afterwards by Iranian diplomatic officials. In the aftermath of the incident, the FCO reminded British citizens to stay away from political protests in Iran.



Still of video released by the Iranian police allegedly showing UK Ambassador Rob Macaire participating in protests in Tehran in January 2020. (Photo: Sky News)

In Iraq, despite the overall frequency of protests declining in February, mass unrest has persisted, with several violent escalations, as well as attacks against activists and journalists, continuing to be registered. From the beginning of the nationwide anti-government protest movement in October 2019 until February 2020, at least 80 associated abductions were recorded, with 56 victims remaining unaccounted for. Though unverified, it is believed that Iranian-backed militias are behind most of these incidents, in their attempt to discourage the protest movement and calls to limit Iran's influence in the country. Similar politically-motivated abductions by militias have also been reported in recent months, including foreign nationals as targets. The vast majority of militia-related incidents have been reported in Baghdad, particularly in Tahrir Square, which remains the epicentre of the protest movement. Additionally, over the reporting period, Islamic State (IS) militants increased kidnap operations against civilians, conducting multiple abductions in north-central Iraq. While most recent militant kidnappings have been intended to intimidate local populations, many of them have a financial motivation, with considerable ransoms being demanded.

CASES:

- On 18 February, a paramedic aiding injured protestors in Tahrir Square was kidnapped by suspected militiamen. The perpetrators reportedly sent a video to his family, showing the victim being physically assaulted, in an attempt to dissuade protestors and other health workers supporting them from continuing their activity. A ransom demand was also issued, demonstrating that even politically-motivated abductions can include financial demands.
- Four aid workers employed by a French Christian charity were reported missing in Baghdad on 20 January, after they failed to attend a meeting. The French authorities were informed of the incident on 22 January, after several failed attempts to locate the victims. SOS Chrétiens d'Orient confirmed the incident, saying that their employees – three Frenchmen and an Iraqi national – went missing near the French embassy while conducting 'administrative tasks'. The NGO added that the missing team had a 'thorough knowledge of the crisis areas' and had 'followed a security protocol adapted for the region'. While no group has publicly claimed the abduction, the organisation blamed it on Iranian militias. The charity said at the end of January that no ransom demands had so far been made. Baghdad has refused to comment on the case.

- On 16 February 2020, IS released two Kurdish civilians who had been abducted in the Garman district of Sulaymaniyah. The victims were allegedly released after their families paid a USD 70,000 ransom. The men had reportedly been in IS custody for six months. Two days later, IS militants released another Kurd following an alleged ransom payment of USD 50,000. The man had been in captivity for a month after his abduction near the city of Kara Tapa in the province of Diyala. At the time, it was reported that the group was still holding other five victims in the area. A sixth member of the kidnapped group was believed to have been executed.



Three French aid workers were kidnapped near the French Embassy in Baghdad on 22 January 2020. (Photo: PressTV)

AFRICA

Over the reporting period, Africa saw a significant reduction in the number of kidnapped foreign nationals, dropping nearly 47% compared with November-December 2019. Having said that, reductions in numbers over this period are congruent with established seasonal trends. The reduction in Africa was directly linked to a decrease in the number of successful kidnappings recorded in the waters of the Gulf of Guinea, with only two such incidents registered in the January-February period. However, this did not signify a decrease in pirate activity, with a series of attempts and regular suspicious activity noted. Another driver of kidnapping activity in the region was criminality in Mozambique, where a series of abductions targeting businesspeople and their families have been progressively taking place since the end of last year. At least four such incidents have been recorded in the country since January 2020, as against three in the whole of 2019. This new wave of kidnappings could indicate a resurgence of this criminal activity after a hiatus of several years. Incidents in the country began to decrease after 2016 as a result of the government's law enforcement efforts, targeting leaders of kidnapping syndicates. Recent incidents indicate that the previous *modi operandi* remain unchanged, with the operations continuing to be well-organised. This could hint at a reorganisation of gangs previously affected by the arrest of their leaders. In line with this, middle-class and wealthy residents, particularly those of South Asian and Portuguese origin, will continue to be preferred targets, predominantly in large urban centres such as Maputo, Beira, and Nampula.

CASES:

- In the late hours of 2 January, Nigerian-flagged hopper dredger MV AMBIKA was boarded by pirates while operating about 9 nm to the east of the Forcados offshore oil terminal, in Nigeria's Delta State. A firefight broke out between the vessel's embarked security team and the pirates, resulting in the killing of four Nigerian military armed guards and the injury of two more. Additionally, three crewmembers – two Russians and an Indian national – were abducted, while the other five were left behind. According to reports on 8 January, the three sailors were rescued unhurt in a security operation by the Nigerian Navy. The rescue reportedly took place at approximately 2300hrs on 7 January, in a locality of Ondo State, while the kidnappers were transporting the victims to a new location. One kidnapper was arrested and several others were killed during the operation.
- In Mozambique, Indian businessman Issufo Satar was kidnapped on the evening of 8 February as he was leaving one of his shops in Chimoio, the provincial capital of Manica province. Reportedly, the armed, masked assailants threatened to shoot security staff who attempted to halt the kidnap bid. The incident was reported by one of the security guards at the commercial

establishment, who said he believed the gang had specific information on their target, as they arrived at the exact time the businessman was leaving the shop. Satar was released on 15 February, allegedly during a police operation that also resulted in the arrest of five kidnappers. The suspects were all identified as Chimoio traders, who used their businesses to launder money obtained from their criminal activities. According to the police, no ransom was paid by the businessman's family prior to his rescue, although a 'large sum' had been demanded by the kidnappers.



Mozambican police at the crime scene of the kidnapping of Indian businessman Issufo Satar. (Photo: Club of Mozambique)

Meanwhile, in South Africa, the police have warned residents about an exponential increase in kidnappings in the country. According to the South African authorities, kidnapping syndicates in the country netted at least ZAR 1 billion (over USD 60 million) in ransom payments in 2019. The authorities have been criticised for their lack of political will to address this problem, which is reflected in the inability of on-the-ground units to deal with these incidents and prevent them. Moreover, corruption continues to be a key factor, with a large number of sophisticated kidnapping syndicates involving former and serving police officers. As in Mozambique, kidnap gangs in South Africa choose local wealthy businessmen as their preferred targets, as well as members of the South Asian communities, who are considered generally wealthier. A developing trend is the kidnapping of foreign entrepreneurs who are lured to the country with fake business deals. Victims are commonly abducted at police checkpoints when exiting the airport, or when attending business meetings set up by the criminals. While different methods are used in the payment of ransoms, including the use of Bitcoin, the authorities have identified that the use of the Hawala system¹ continues to be common, particularly in cases involving South Asian victims. While most victims are released safely after the payment of a ransom, unlike their Mozambican neighbours, South African kidnappers have been known to often resort to violence, with a number of victims having been killed in the past in the absence of any agreement with their families.

CASES:

- On 28 February, a kidnapped Indian-Mozambican woman was found dead in Emalahleni, Mpumalanga province, South Africa. Guitabali Samngi was abducted on 15 October 2019 in the Mpumalanga city of Nelspruit while on her way home from a shopping mall. According to reports, the woman's family had paid ZAR 7 million (approximately USD 422,000) but her kidnappers did not release her, instead demanding another ZAR 7 million. The family allegedly paid another ZAR 1 million (just over USD 60,000), but to no avail. Reportedly, the last communication between the family and the kidnappers took place in December 2019.
- Two businessmen, an Indian and a local national, were charged on 12 February with the kidnap for ransom of three Indian nationals in the Ugandan capital. The two accused, along with others still at large, had promised the three Indian victims work in Canada. The victims arrived in Kampala on 15 January, and after being picked up by the men from the airport, were held against their will. The gang contacted the victims' relatives in India and demanded a USD 50,000 ransom for each of them. The relatives reported the incident to the Indian authorities, who in turn liaised with their Ugandan counterparts to locate the hostages. The victims were later rescued in a security operation by the Ugandan police.

- Meanwhile in Kenya, detectives from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) rescued a Chinese national who was kidnapped on 27 February at the China Centre along Nairobi's Ngong Road. The incident was reported to the police by the Chairman of Kenya Chinese Chamber of Commerce on the same day. According to the report, three men who identified themselves as DCI officers stormed the China centre and arrested shop owner Gao Yuan Hong. The kidnappers subsequently contacted the expatriate's brother and demanded a KES 100 million (approximately USD 958,000) ransom. A day later, the police raided a house in Dagoreti, western Nairobi. There they found the Chinese national being held by four armed men, who were killed during the operation. Among the dead kidnappers was a police officer.



South African police recovered the body of a kidnapped Mozambican citizen in Emalahleni. (Photo: Emalahleni Residents Facebook)

¹ Traditional systems of money transfer prevalent in Muslim countries, based on a network of agents in different locations.

ASIA

Asia ranked as the region with the highest number of foreign kidnap victims, representing almost 33% of Constellis' records for the period of January-February 2020. Once again, as was the case since the last quarter of 2019, kidnapping incidents in the region were mainly driven by the activities of Chinese loan sharks and gambling activities. This was particularly evident in the Philippines, where the authorities have identified these activities to be a significant source of violence in the country, linked to a series of serious crimes including extortion, kidnapping, prostitution and human trafficking, targeted killings, and narcotics smuggling. Based on data released by the Philippine National Police in March, 40 cases of Philippine Offshore Gaming Operations (POGO)-related crimes have been registered so far in 2020, with 22 victims, all of them Chinese nationals. Further evidence of the links between criminality and POGO activities was the recent deportation of over 2,000 Chinese POGO workers, who were found to have extensive criminal records in China. The Philippine authorities have pledged to curb this problem by increasing scrutiny over the staff and activities of POGOs and casinos, and halting the issue of business permits to these companies. However, it is unlikely that these measures will be fully implemented, as this multimillion industry constitutes an important source of revenue to the government (estimated at over USD 350 million per year) and of employment in the localities where they are established.

CASES:

- Police in the Philippines filed criminal charges against three Chinese nationals believed to be members of a loan shark ring who kidnapped a compatriot in Parañaque City. The incident took place on 21 February, after the victim lost half of the PHP 1 million (USD 20,000) the men had lent him to gamble at a casino. The suspects reportedly held the man in a room at the casino, demanding the payment of the debt. A friend of the victim reportedly paid CNY 71,500 (just over USD 10,000), but the kidnappers did not release him, demanding the payment of further PHP 1 million. This led the friend to report the abduction to the authorities, who in a raid on 25 February rescued the victim and arrested his captors.
- Philippine anti-kidnapping police rescued two Chinese nationals and arrested their two abductors from a hotel in Pampanga province on 24 February. The victims had been brought to the Philippines with promises of work as technicians for an IT company. However, upon their arrival, they were instead forced to work at a POGO. The men were abducted on 22 February by the POGO's manager, a Chinese national, and a former

Filipino soldier who worked as a security agent for the company. It is believed that the reason behind the abduction related to the victims' discontent with their work situation.

- Five Chinese nationals were arrested in a village in Sihanoukville, Cambodia, accused of abducting and imprisoning four of their fellow nationals in what police suspect was an argument over a loan that went awry. No more details were released by the authorities.



Philippine police parade two suspected members of a Chinese loan shark syndicate accused of kidnapping compatriots in Parañaque. (Photo: Phil Star)

In Afghanistan, abductions by both militant groups and criminal gangs remain a major security concern. While the kidnapping of foreign nationals is a rare occurrence, the threat is very high, as they are high-value targets for both criminal and militant actors in the country. This is true especially for US nationals, due to the role of their country in the conflict. Given the fact that the Taliban currently controls over 18% of Afghan districts and are contesting another 48%, virtually all Afghan locations can be assessed as high-risk, and any activity carried out without due care may lead to an abduction. This was recently highlighted with the abduction of a US national in late January. This was the first reported kidnapping of a foreigner in the country since the disappearance of a Pakistani national in Kabul city in October 2019. This abduction followed the release of an American professor and his Australian colleague by the Taliban in November last year after three years in captivity. This was achieved in a prisoners exchange agreement in which three senior Haqqani Network members were also released. The January abduction additionally took place in the context of stalled peace talks between the Taliban, Kabul and Washington. Notably, three days after the incident came to light, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo publicly indicated that the Trump administration was willing to restart peace talks with the militant group.

CASES:

- A US government contractor was kidnapped while working in Afghanistan's south-eastern province of Khost, near the border with Pakistan, on 31 January. The victim was identified as Mark R. Frerichs, a civil engineer and former US Navy diver, who is the managing director of security company International Logistical Group. US officials said it is not clear how he was captured. Though the abduction was not claimed by any group, US officials said they believe it was orchestrated by the Taliban-aligned Haqqani Network. The Haqqani Network, active in central, eastern and south-eastern Afghanistan, has been behind the kidnapping of several other Western nationals in the past, including Americans.
- A Pakistani doctor was recovered in Afghanistan on the night of 13 February, five months after his abduction in Pakistan. Abdul Jabbar Khan was abducted from his work place, the Hilal Khel Charmang rural health centre, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's Bajaur district, in December 2019. It is believed that the doctor was taken to Afghanistan by his kidnappers so he could conduct examination and treatment of patients linked to the group. The identity of his captors and the place of rescue were not disclosed.

- On 2 February, 25 Afghan kidnap victims were released following a clash between two gangs in Pakistan's Balochistan province. At least two people were killed during the shooting, which took place after one of the groups raided a property where the second group held the hostages. The victims had reportedly been in captivity for weeks, having been abducted after they tried to enter Iran illegally. An undisclosed ransom had allegedly been demanded for their release.

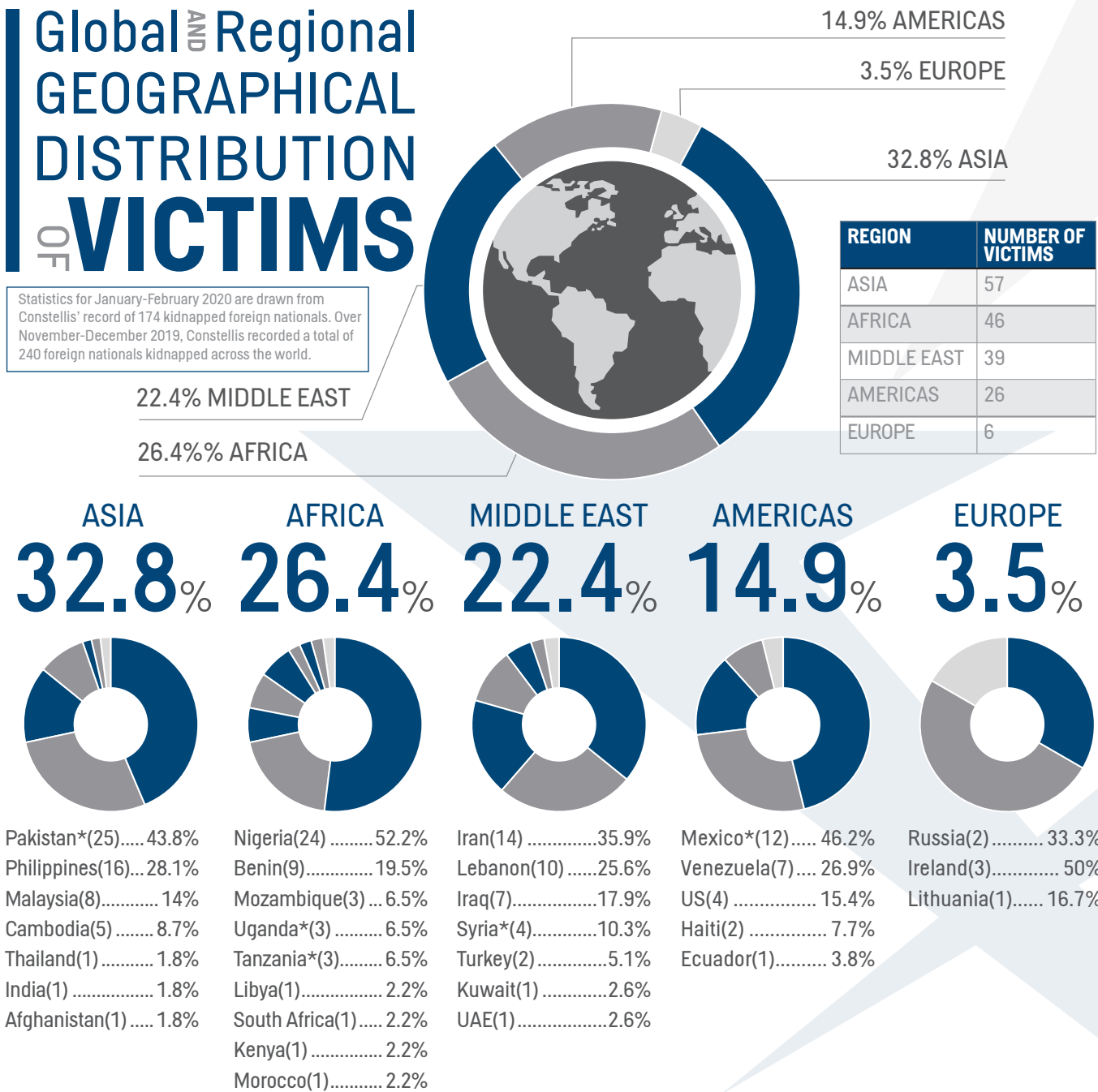


Haqqani Network senior commanders Anas Haqqani, Haji Mali Khan and Hafiz Rashid, released in November 2019 in exchange for two Western academics. (Photo: ariananews)

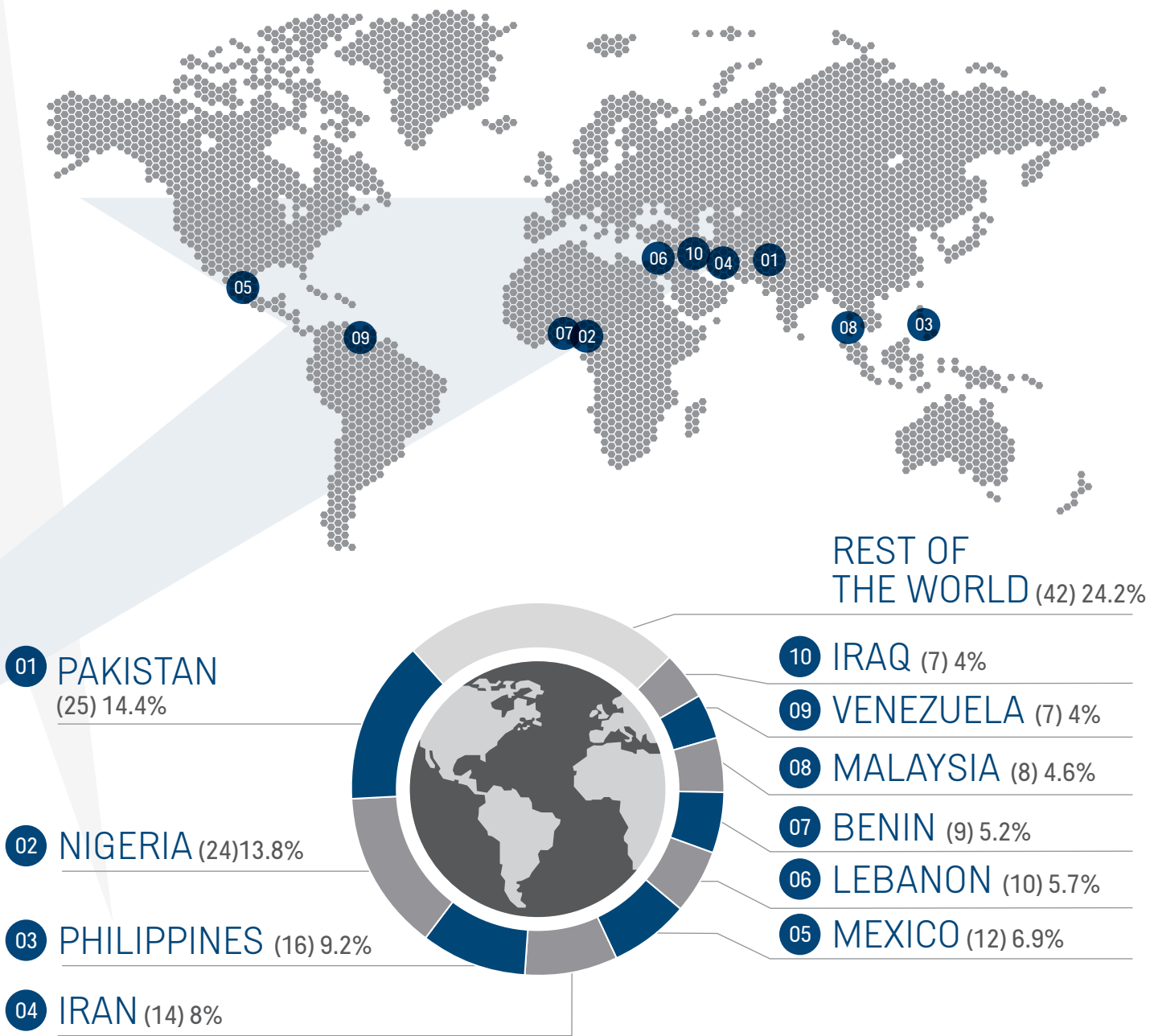
KIDNAPPED FOREIGN CITIZENS

Global AND Regional
GEOGRAPHICAL
DISTRIBUTION
OF VICTIMS

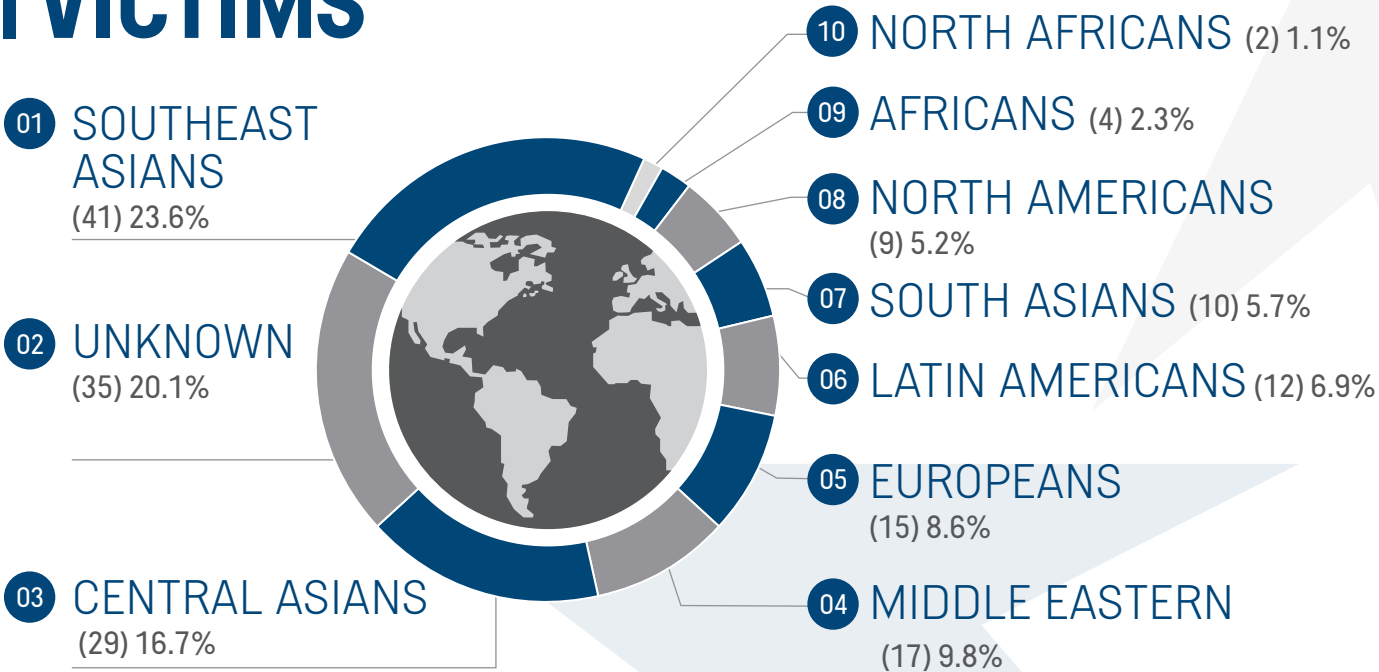
Statistics for January-February 2020 are drawn from Constellis' record of 174 kidnapped foreign nationals. Over November-December 2019, Constellis recorded a total of 240 foreign nationals kidnapped across the world.



TOP 10 COUNTRIES
FOR THE KIDNAPPING OF
FOREIGN CITIZENS IN JAN-FEB 2020



REGIONAL ORIGINS OF VICTIMS



MOST VICTIMIZED SINGLE NATIONALITY

- 01

Afghan
- 02

Chinese
- 03

Syrian
- 04

American
- 05

Indonesian
- 06

Indian
- 07

French
- 08

Filipino
- 09

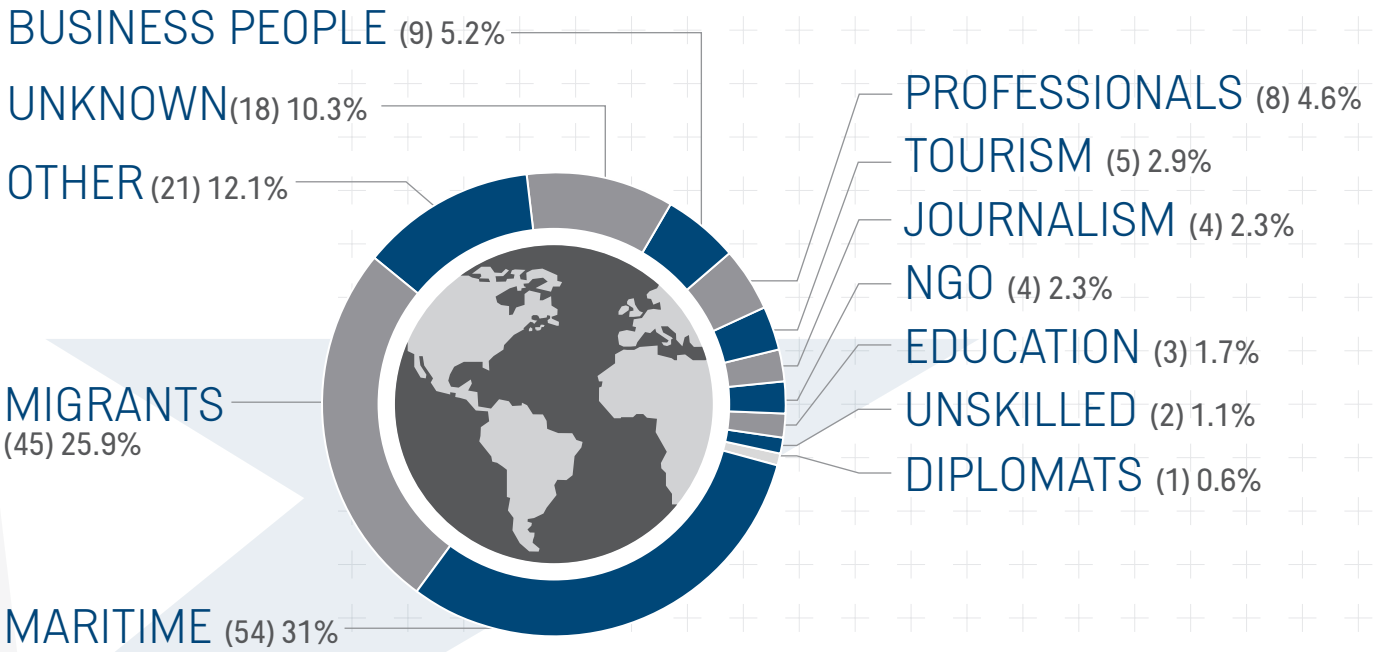
Iraqi
- 10

Malaysian

MOST VICTIMIZED ORIGIN BY REGION

REGION	ORIGIN
Africa	South Asians
Americas	Latin Americans
Asia	South East Asians
Europe	Europeans
Middle East	Middle Eastern

VICTIMS BY OCCUPATIONAL SECTOR



MOST VICTIMIZED OCCUPATIONAL SECTOR BY REGION

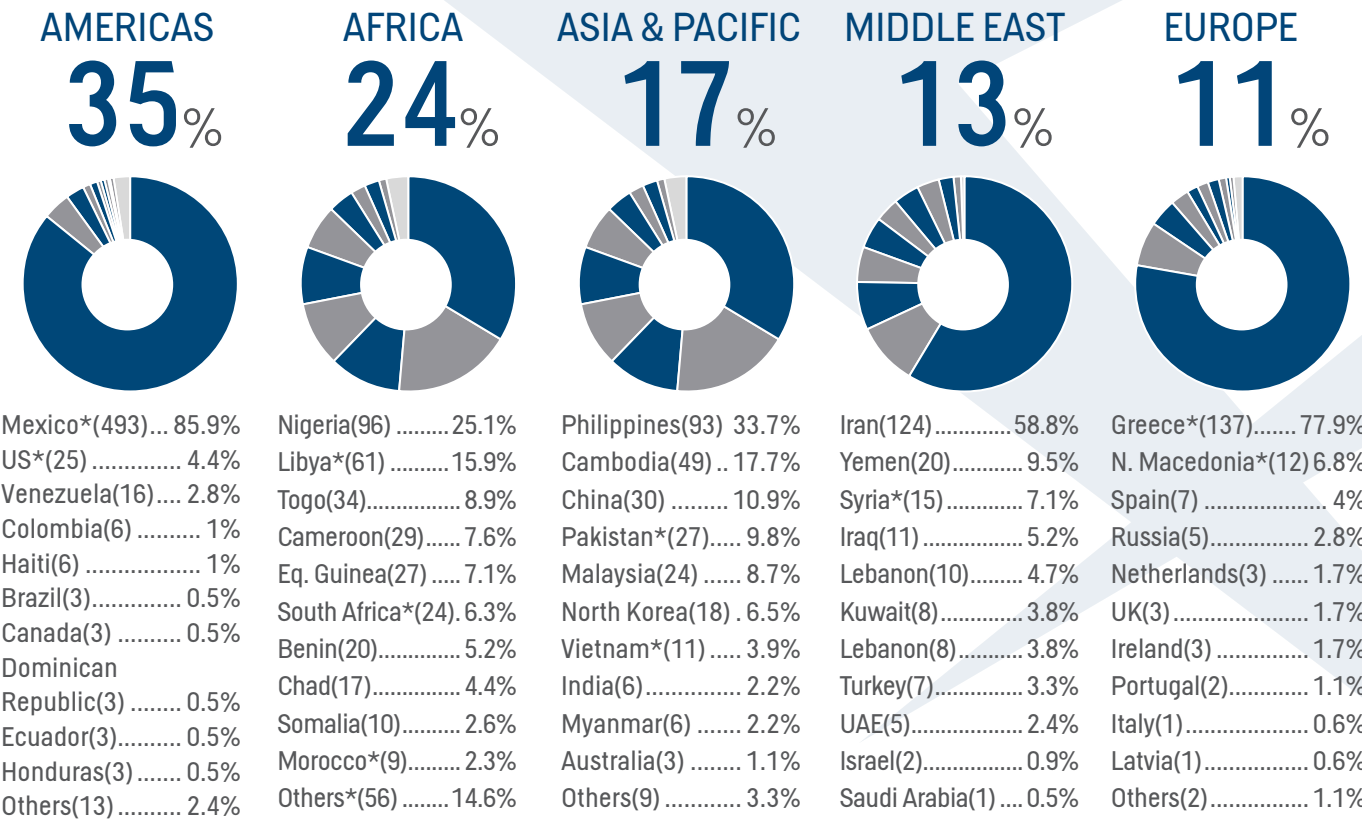
REGION	OCCUPATIONAL SECTOR
Africa	Maritime
Americas	Migrants
Asia	Migrants
Europe	Tourists
Middle East	Maritime

DISCLAIMER: These statistics herein presented are the result of a compilation of kidnapping incidents involving foreign nationals only, which have been reported in the media and other open sources. The information contained and its results are therefore partial as result of the incomplete nature of open-source material. Thus, this report should be taken only as a reference of general trends, taking its limitations into consideration.

KIDNAPPED FOREIGN CITIZENS

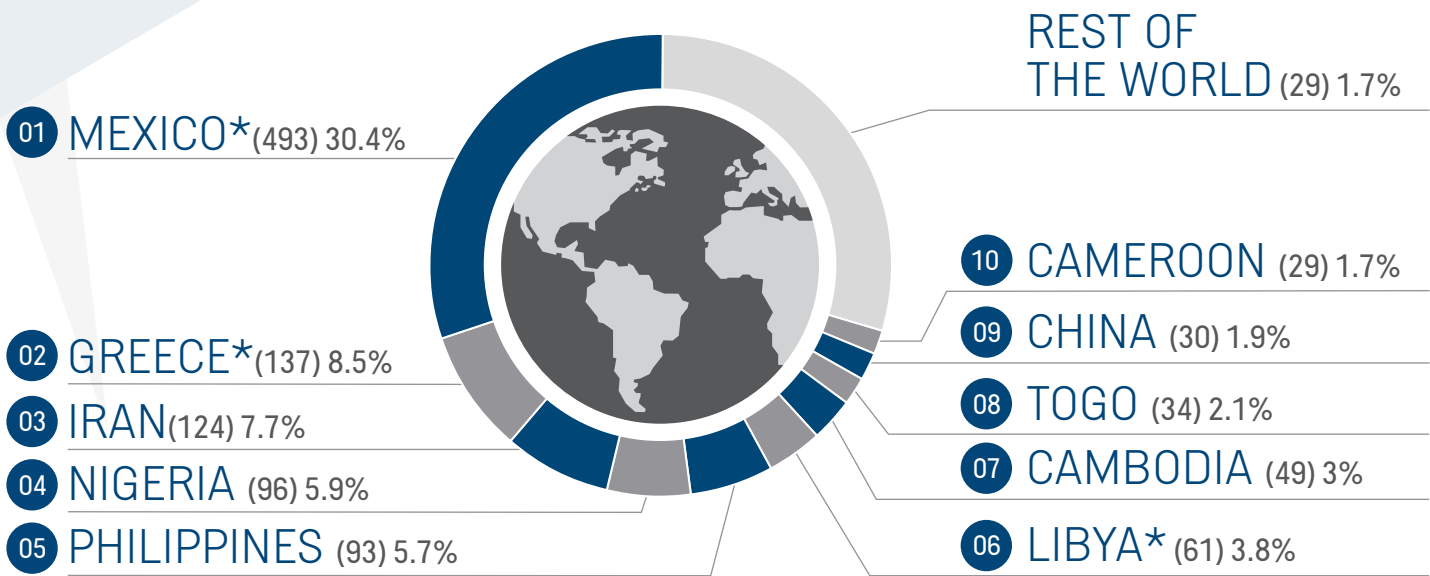
Global AND Regional
GEOGRAPHICAL
DISTRIBUTION
OF VICTIMS

Statistics for March 2019 - February 2020
are drawn from Constellis' record of 1,620
foreign nationals kidnapped worldwide.



(Number of Victims)
* Including Migrants

TOP 10 COUNTRIES
FOR THE KIDNAPPING OF
FOREIGN CITIZENS IN MAR 2019-FEB 2020



GLOBAL PIRACY UPDATE

Maritime hostility levels remained high over the first two months of this year, with activity on the increase since November 2019. 68 maritime security events were recorded over January and February worldwide, compared to 59 during the previous two months. In line with established trends, criminal boardings accounted for over 50% of all recorded incidents during the January – February period. Six kidnappings and hijackings were also reported, a twofold decrease from the previous two months. The Gulf of Guinea remained the focal point of piracy in the world, with serious maritime crime also concentrated in the region.

Geopolitical tensions continued to affect the maritime security environment. Of primary concern has been the deterioration of security in the Gulf of Oman, the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf over the past year, attributed to increased tensions between the US and Iran, which translated into a series of tit-for-tat attacks, including on commercial shipping, between May and September 2019. While security conditions have since stabilised, sporadic attacks have continued to occur. Of note over the reporting period, Iran seized an unidentified foreign vessel on oil smuggling charges in the Gulf of Oman, on 22 February. The tanker was reportedly towed to Bandar-e-Jask Port and all its 13 crew members were detained. This incident has brought the number of vessels seized by Iran since May to at least eight. Iran's aggression has been met by a substantial international military build-up. The US launched a coalition in September, while Japan deployed a warship to the region at the start of 2020. A European-led Maritime Surveillance Mission in the Strait of Hormuz was also launched in February 2020, despite the initial hesitation of European powers to deploy naval assets to the region over fears of an escalation of the crisis. Tension is predicted to remain high for the foreseeable future. Commercial vessels, particularly those affiliated with the US and its allies, will remain under threat of attacks and seizures when traversing the region.

Over the past four months, maritime security conditions off Libya's coast have deteriorated markedly as a result of the fighting between the Libyan National Army (LNA) and the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA), which has been aggravated by foreign interference. A military and maritime cooperation deal between Ankara and the GNA signed in November provoked international criticism and antagonised the LNA, which has since intensified efforts to assert their territorial control and strengthen the group's bargaining position during on-and-off peace talks. Additionally, the LNA has increasingly targeted Turkey-affiliated ships and searched vessels for military equipment. In February, the LNA shelled the Port of Tripoli, stating that it had targeted a Turkish cargo vessel unloading weapons. At least three people of unknown nationality were killed and several injured. This was the first direct attack on the port since the conflict began, marking a significant escalation. Amid rising tensions, the European Union agreed in February to launch a new mission off the Libyan coast to enforce an internationally-backed

arms embargo. However, it is unlikely the new patrols will be able to fully cut off arms supplies. The security environment in Libya is expected to remain volatile and attacks on ports, as well as port closures, are likely to continue. Commercial shipping may also be directly targeted by rebel forces, with Turkey and GNA-affiliated vessels remaining most at risk.

Additionally, while no trade restrictions have been imposed to date, commercial shipping has been impacted by the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). According to some estimates, the global shipping industry is facing a USD 1.7 billion revenue loss as a result of the outbreak, due to restrictions and supply chain disruptions. With COVID-19 having been declared a pandemic in March, further disruptions will continue to be observed as countries across the globe activate emergency plans.

Heightened maritime hostility levels were observed in the Gulf of Aden and the wider East Africa region, with 10 recorded incidents in the first two months of 2020, compared to five over November-December 2019. Six of the incidents during the current reporting period were suspicious approaches, one of which took place off Djibouti and the others in the Bab al Mandeb Strait. It is currently unclear whether the Bab al Mandeb Strait incidents were linked to piracy, Houthi operations, or other illicit activity. Other incidents included a criminal boarding at Nacala Anchorage (Mozambique), the discovery of three naval mines in the Red Sea and a mine explosion that killed three Egyptian fishermen in the same area. Shortly after the mine blast in February, the US Maritime Administration alerted vessels of the presence of mines along the Saudi Arabia–Yemen maritime boundary (between Yemen's Midi and Saudi Arabia's Jizan), with the mines believed to have drifted north from Yemen as a result of seasonal currents rather than having been placed there deliberately. Also in February, the Saudi-led coalition reportedly thwarted an attempt by Houthi rebels to carry out an attack using an unmanned boat laden with explosives that was launched from Hodeidah. A similar attack was foiled in early March, when four explosive-laden boats were destroyed prior to hitting their target - an oil tanker southeast of Yemen's Nishtun Port. Over the past year, the majority of hostile activity in the Gulf of Aden has been linked to the Yemeni conflict, with this trend expected to persist. Due to escalating regional tensions prompted by the US–Iran rift, the Iran-linked Houthis are likely to step up efforts to target the US and its partners. Iran is

also believed to have increased its military support to the Houthis, as evidenced over the past four months by a series of interdictions of boats loaded with high-profile Iranian weapons believed to be destined for the group. Furthermore, while piracy levels in the region have declined markedly, the threat remains, highlighted by the ongoing instances of serious maritime crime, including kidnappings – the most recent in December 2019 –, and several suspicious approaches possibly involving reinvigorated pirate activities in the region.

Violence levels in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) remained generally consistent with the previous two months. However, the overall levels of activity observed over the past four months have been unusually high despite traditional increases in violence following the end of the Nigerian rainy season (May – October). Although instances of crew abductions declined over 50% during the January – February period when compared to the previous two months, kidnappings in the region remained at a heightened tempo and scale. Attacks over the past two months were generally evenly distributed between Nigeria's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the wider GoG region. While Nigeria's EEZ has been the traditional piracy hotspot in the region, the past two years have seen a marked increase in the number of attacks throughout the rest of the GoG. This has underscored the wider proliferation of piracy in the region. This is assessed to be the result of improved patrolling close to Nigeria, which has pushed pirate groups further offshore where there is a relative lack of an established security presence. This has also



Greek product tanker Alpine Penelope.
(Photo: Vessel Finder)

stimulated the kidnap of sailors, and progressively in larger groups, to make it more worthwhile financially for the pirates. In this context, no area in the GoG is immune from attacks, including kidnappings. Overall, the piracy threat throughout the GoG will remain severe in the coming months, as pirate gangs continue to exploit favourable weather conditions.

Southeast Asia continued to record heightened levels of piracy and armed robbery, with 15 reported incidents over January and February, compared to 19 during the previous two months. In line with

established trends, criminal boardings continued to represent the primary threat to commercial shipping in the region. One kidnapping was also reported during the past two months, underlining the enduring risk of crew abductions. The kidnapping threat remains concentrated in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah, with such incidents continuing to be associated primarily with the activities of Philippine militant organisation Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Meanwhile, the Singapore Straits remained the focal point of both violent and non-violent criminal boardings, a trend since 2019.

CASES:

- Chemical Tanker Wawasan Emerald was approached while underway in the Bab al Mandeb Strait in position 12°13' N 44°06' E at 1041 UTC on 25 February. The vessel was approached to within 0.5 nautical miles by six skiffs with around five people on board each. Ladders were sighted within the skiffs, however,

no weapons were reported. Whilst vessel information shows that the ship had guards on board, it is unknown whether any warning shots were fired. This was the third reported suspicious approach in the area over a period of five days.

- Liberia-flagged product tanker Alpine Penelope was attacked 76 nautical miles southwest of Cotonou, Benin, at approximately 0110 UTC on 20 February. The tanker, which was targeted whilst in transit towards Lagos, sent an alert after a watch officer identified two armed men on board. Nine of the tanker's 24 crew members were kidnapped. All hostages - four Georgians, four Filipinos and a Ukrainian - were released on 7 March. No specifics were provided regarding the conditions of the men's release.
- A Malaysian fishing trawler with eight people on board was attacked by six suspected ASG gunmen in waters off Tambisan Island in Lahad Datu, Malaysia, on 17

January. The trawler was later found abandoned with no crew on board. Three of the missing crew, who escaped the attackers by jumping off board, were found in the vicinity of Lahad Datu the next day. A month later, on 20 February, the chairman of the Moro National Liberation Front said that he had received reliable information that the ASG was planning to demand P30 million (almost USD 600,000) from the victims' employer. He also said that the hostages were being guarded by heavily-armed men in the forest boundary of Patikul and Indanan in the Philippines' Sulu Island. This abduction came a day after the release of an Indonesian fisherman who was held captive by the ASG for 115 days in Sulu.



USS Normandy seized a dhow in the Arabian Sea containing a shipment of Iranian advanced weapons and weapon parts allegedly intended for the Houthis in Yemen, on 9 February. (Photo: Military Times)

CYBER SECURITY

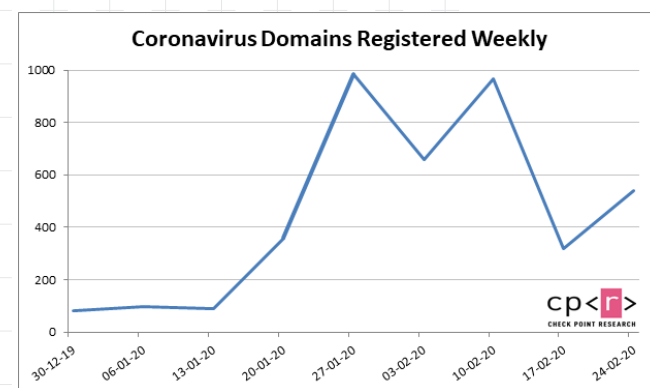
CORONAVIRUS AND CYBERCRIME

Cybercriminals have long taken advantage of natural disasters and global crises to conduct attacks, seeking to exploit panicked and vulnerable individuals and organisations. The Coronavirus outbreak has been no different. What began as a localised health concern in Wuhan, China, has gone on to become a worldwide emergency, impacting economies and businesses in all sectors. In an age of global connectivity and mass information sharing, in addition to organisations being increasingly reliant upon online communication, the spread of the Coronavirus has massively permeated the world's digital landscape. Since January, a corresponding spike in cyberattacks has also been recorded, specifically related to the Coronavirus. By feeding off public paranoia, cybercriminals have used the crisis to steal credentials, spread malware and conduct enormous spam campaigns. The UK alone is thought to have already lost GBP 800,000, with thousands of individuals having fallen victim to such scams.

One of the major consequences of the Coronavirus outbreak has been a monumental surge in the creation of associated websites. While most of these are legitimate, offering authentic medical information, a significant proportion are malicious. Crafted by cybercriminals, these websites offer fake vaccines, cures and test-kits, or ask for donations for victims. Others seek to steal users' personal information. An example of this was 'vaccinecovid-19.com', a website originating in Russia, which offered the 'best and fastest' test kits for the virus at USD 300 each. The site was unsecured and the kits it offered were counterfeit. According to cybersecurity provider Check Point, there have been over 4,000 coronavirus-related domains registered since January, 8% of which are either malicious or suspicious. On top of this, spammers have flooded social media and popular

websites with links to these fake sites, frustrating peoples' genuine need for legitimate information and medical advice.

There has also been significant growth in phishing emails, with cybercriminals sending out fake emails to trick recipients into clicking on malicious links or downloading malicious software. Such emails are often made to look as if they are from real medical organisations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Email-based attacks have similarly impacted upon enterprises. With Business Email Compromise (BEC) attacks already costing organisations billions of dollars in recent years, cybercriminals have latched on to the Coronavirus outbreak to craft 'internal' Coronavirus-themed emails. Purporting to be from company directors and managers, there has been a growth in such emails sent to employees. These custom-designed communications typically direct unsuspecting workers to click on links to malicious websites, disguised as some kind of healthcare or Coronavirus-related website, to harvest their credentials or install malware on their devices.



Number of Coronavirus domain names registered per week from 30 December 2019 to 24 February 2020 (Photo: Check Point)

Representative of threats against the business sector, the European Central Bank (ECB) issued a letter² on 3 March warning and advising banks on dealing with the Coronavirus outbreak. Amongst its pointers, which include infection control measures and testing a company's resilience for large-scale remote working, the ECB advises banks to assess their IT infrastructure and risks associated with increased Coronavirus-related cyber threats. The WHO has also issued a warning³ on its website, advising that criminals are impersonating WHO employees to 'steal money or sensitive information'.

With the virus projected to continue spreading rapidly, causing significant economic and social disruption, cybercriminals will inevitably continue to attempt to cash-in on the crisis. As long as the virus maintains its prominent position in the public eye, hackers will

continue scamming and phishing with Coronavirus-related websites, emails, and bogus products. Indeed, according to cybersecurity provider Proofpoint, the number of malicious campaigns are continuing to trend upwards day-by-day. There are certain steps individuals and businesses can take to avoid becoming the victims of Coronavirus-based cybercrime:

- ▶ Ensure emails and files received are from known and authentic senders
- ▶ Look out for unfamiliar email addresses, spelling errors and 'lookalike' domains
- ▶ Avoid clicking on links or attachments in emails from unknown senders
- ▶ Do not provide personal information on suspicious websites
- ▶ Do not order any goods or pay for services from illegitimate sources

CASES:

- ▶ In February, a phishing campaign in Italy targeted over 10% of all Italian organisations. The scam email, which contained the subject line, 'Coronavirus: Important Precautionary Information', was designed to look as if it was an official communication from the WHO. The body of the email contained the message, 'Due to the number of cases of coronavirus infection that have been documented in your area, the World Health Organization has prepared a document that includes all the necessary precautions against coronavirus infection.' The attachment was however a malicious document file that downloaded malware onto the victims' device if they opened the attachment. The malware then proceeded to mine data from the hacked device.
- ▶ Over January and February, a Coronavirus 'Emotet' malware campaign targeted Japanese computer users. Imitating a Japanese disability welfare provider, fraudulent emails contained alleged information on the areas of Japan where the virus was spreading. It then invited recipients to open an attached document with further information. Upon opening the document, the 'Emotet' Trojan was downloaded. Originally a banking Trojan, 'Emotet' has more recently been used to distribute other forms of malware on infected devices, leaving victims open to hacking.



Medical staff screening patients in Wuhan, China. (Photo: ABC 15)

- ▶ In February, a coronavirus-themed email campaign targeted industries susceptible to shipping disruptions, including manufacturing, logistical and transportation companies. The email used in the campaign, rather than focusing on the health impact of the coronavirus outbreak, instead specifically played upon concerns about the international supply chain. Containing a Word document purporting to have information on the impact on the shipping industry, upon opening the file, the victim would instead download an information-stealing malware.

² European Central Bank, 'Contingency preparedness in the context of COVID-19', 3 March 2020: https://www.bankingsupervision.europa.eu/press/letterstobanks/shared/pdf/2020/ssm.2020_letter_on_contingency_preparedness_in_the_context_of_COVID-19.en.pdf?d1c8dc2780e2055243778bedf818efeb

³ World Health Organization, 'Beware of criminals pretending to be WHO': <https://www.who.int/about/communications/cyber-security>

FOCUS ARTICLE

FEMALE TRAVEL SECURITY

By Kate Colberg

According to statistics released in 2019, 47% of business travel is undertaken by female colleagues. This may be somewhat unsurprising, considering that half of the world's population is female. What may be a little more surprising are the following statistics released by the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) in 2018:

- ◆ 83% of women have experienced one or more security-related incidents while traveling for business in the past year;
- ◆ 90% of women say safety concerns have impacted personal activities while on business travel;
- ◆ 81% of women say their travel frequency for business has been impacted by safety concerns;
- ◆ 80% of women say safety concerns have impacted their productivity while on business trips.

While we can all agree that statistics can often be interpreted in many ways, we can all also agree that any way you interpret these particular statistics, they are still extremely unsettling. In fact, if travel security for your female colleagues is not a concern for your organisation, then the impact that safety concerns have on productivity during a business trip should at the very least catch your attention.

This is not to say travel security for female colleagues has been ignored all these years. In the past several decades, as women began to swell the ranks of business travellers, corporations did indeed begin to recognise the need for safety and security training. However, often the advice put forth by these organisations was typically a variation of "Follow the same safety advice for men but just be more careful." While this advice certainly came from and continues to come from a genuine concern regarding their female colleagues' safety, it overlooks and disregards the nuanced and unique safety issues

faced by women travelling around the world. In fact, overall, women tend to be more security-conscious regarding their personal safety than men, whether at home or abroad. To encourage her to be even more so is a bit like asking a mother bear to protect her cubs; at best unnecessary and at worst, foolish.

This is also not to disparage those corporations who have provided the same safety and security advice to both men and women throughout the years. Obviously, women are just as susceptible to petty theft, just as likely to be caught in random violence, or be an intended – or unintended – victim of a terrorist attack as men. Therefore, the solid personal security advice taught throughout the years was, is, and will continue to be, vitally important. However, what is also needed is the acknowledgment that while travelling, women face the same safety and security issues as men, and more.

So what are these unique security issues facing female travellers? We are all aware of those destinations where the safety of nearly all females – whether visitors or residents – is at some level of high risk. Those cities and countries where female travellers must always have security, must always be accompanied by a male, must carefully plan every moment of their travel while at their destination, etc. Those destinations have been highlighted ad nauseum and



(Photo: CEW.org)

to be honest, those are the destinations where corporate security is often the most effective in helping protect their travelling colleagues.

What we are addressing here is the fact that the most common security issues faced by females travelling abroad are assault and harassment. Often when hearing those words, many of us immediately think of the high profile, worst-case scenario examples of assault and harassment, such as the stranger emerging from the shadowy alley to attack the unsuspecting female walking past. Clearly we want to account for those situations as well; but less obvious forms of harassment and assault – and the threat of them – are just as disruptive, traumatising and insidious.

For example, if you are a male, how would you handle the following situations?

1. You are in a hotel waiting for an lift. The door opens and there is a single male standing there. He is a 'respectable'-looking man dressed in a suit. You realise there is no one else around, both outside and inside the lift. Do you get into the lift?
2. When you arrive at your hotel room the hallway is noisy, but you think you may have heard something from inside your hotel room. It was probably just noise from the hallway, but you are not sure. Do you enter?
3. You are waiting for public transportation to bring you back to your hotel after a day's work. The subway, train or bus pulls up and it is packed. In this particular country it is normal to simply force your way into that car or bus. Do you force your way on?

If you are a male colleague, your answer to these would most likely be yes. Of course you enter the lift and ride down to the lobby or up to your floor with the man. Of course you enter your room. Of course you force your way onto that car or bus.

If you are a female, your answers are probably going to be much different and complex:

1. You will quickly recognise and assess the situation, knowing that a 'respectable'-looking man in a suit is just as likely to attack or assault as a 'disreputable'-looking one. Women who are trained in self-defence or have

some sort of item on their person that could be used as a weapon may be more likely to board that lift. Women without these tools are more likely to let this lift pass and wait for another.

2. Most women will summon a colleague or hotel employee to enter their hotel room with them to ensure their safety. At the very least, a woman would prop the door open to give herself the chance of a quick exit while they search the room to ensure it is safe.
3. No. Most women will not force themselves onto the car or bus because any woman who has any experience traveling knows that a packed car or bus is a prime spot to be groped or assaulted.

These are just a few simple examples of how women must always be assessing their current security posture in every single situation. This without even beginning to address the destinations where systemic discrimination and harassment are so pervasive culturally that they affect female colleagues' productivity within the workplace. This isn't to say that the situation is hopeless, but to shed light on the fact that there is still progress to be made in the realm of female traveller safety and security awareness. This progress is vital to the happiness, productivity and by extension, the continued success of your female colleagues, and ultimately, the continued success of your organisation.



(Photo: Scottish Business Insider)

ABOUT CONSTELLIS

Constellis is a leading provider of risk management, humanitarian, social intelligence, training and operational support services to government and commercial clients throughout the world. Operating in over 45 countries, Constellis' 20,000 employees bring unparalleled dedication and passion for creating a safer world by upholding the highest standards of compliance, quality, and integrity.

Constellis' forward thinking services span a broad range of synergistic solutions, from the boardroom to the project site, encompassing risk governance, organizational resilience, business continuity management, crisis management, travel security, global tracking, training, protective security, life support, logistics and specialist support such as K9 services and UAV systems.

At Constellis, our number one mission is to secure success for our customers. Constellis combines the legacy capabilities and experience of ACADEMI, Triple Canopy, Centerra, Olive Group, OmniPlex, AMK9, Edinburgh International, Strategic Social and all of their affiliates. The consolidation of companies under the Constellis name allows our clients to rely on one single partner and project experience that spans the globe.

For more information about Constellis, please visit our website at: www.constellis.com

Constellis' intelligence analysts and security consultants produce bespoke political and security reports, threat assessments and security risk assessments to inform decisions and to protect people and assets across the world.



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