

# K&R AND EXTORTION MONITOR

JULY 2010

**NOTE**

The "K&R and Extortion Monitor" offers a monthly digest of media-recorded incidents of extortion, kidnapping and wrongful detention from around the globe. As the vast majority of these events go unreported, only incidents available through the public domain are described. This report does not include kidnappings of Iraqi citizens in Iraq, which can be found in the ThreatRate Risk Management Database.

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## AFRICA

### Burkina Faso, 1 July 2010

The U.S. Embassy in Ouagadougou issued a Warden Message and warned American nationals of traveling to the northern parts of the city amid fears that a group associated with al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) plans to kidnap an unidentified U.S. citizen in the area. The U.S. Embassy had previously barred all official travel to the area without approval. "U.S. citizens are strongly urged to exercise caution and avoid unnecessary travel to this region," the notice said. (*lethbridgeherald.com, 1 July 2010*)

### Chad, 15 June 2010

Chad's minister of the Interior announced the release of a British aid worker who was kidnapped in Abeche, in eastern Chad, on June 6. According to the official, Chad's security forces intercepted the kidnappers, who were travelling in their own vehicle and that of their hostage, about 40 km/ 25 miles from the Chad-Sudan border, in the Guereda region. The hostage was freed and his captors detained. At the time of his kidnapping, the hostage was traveling with a Congolese colleague and a Chadian driver who were released by the kidnappers earlier. (*google.com, 15 June 2010*)

### Nigeria, 11 July 2010

Unknown gunmen in eastern Nigeria kidnapped three local journalists and demanded N 250 million in ransom to secure their release. The three - the chairperson of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in Lagos, the union's assistant secretary and a regional secretary of the union - were kidnapped at gunpoint around Aba, Abia State, as they were returning from a national executive meeting of the union in Uyo, the capital of neighboring Akwa Ibom State. An Abia Police spokesperson confirmed the abduction and stated that the incident was under investigation. (*iol.co.za, 11 July 2010*)

### Nigeria, 9 July 2010

The 96-year-old mother of a traditional king of the Umukwata kingdom, in the Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State, was kidnapped from her house at around 9:00 p.m. local time. Local reports suggest that the kidnappers have already established contact with the family and are demanding N 20 million in ransom for the release of the elderly woman. (*vanguardngr.com, 9 July 2010*)

### Nigeria, 8 July 2010

Unidentified gunmen intercepted and kidnapped an employee of local subsidiary company of a U.S.-based oil conglomerate in the Uvwie council area of Delta State. According to local reports, the man, a senior community engagement officer, was kidnapped at around 2:00 p.m. local time, as he was driving to the office. His vehicle was found abandoned in Sapele,

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suggesting that the kidnapers have taken him deep into the creeks. (*vanguardngr.com*, 9 July 2010)

### **Nigeria, 5 July 2010**

The leader of a political party in Rivers State and his wife were intercepted and kidnapped in Ahoada East Local Government Area by a group of seven gunmen at around 9:30 a.m. local time. The couple was dragged from their car after the kidnapers shot indiscriminately into the air to scare passers-by, and then forced into the kidnapers' vehicle at gunpoint. Confirming the incident, a Rivers State Police spokeswoman said the gunmen later burnt the vehicle used in the abduction and escaped through the Oshi Oppudo waterway by speed boat. The spokeswoman added that operatives of the police anti-kidnapping squad trailed the kidnapers to the Rumuekpe forest in the Emuoha Local Government Area of the state. (*allafrica.com*, 6 July 2010)

### **Nigeria, 4 July 2010**

According to the Seafarers Union of Russia (SUR), the Russian captain and chief engineer of a Greek-owned ship and the captain of a Lithuanian vessel, who were abducted from their ships near the Cameroonian port of Douala on May 16 by unidentified gunmen, have been freed. According to Russian media, citing the SUR spokesman, ransom was paid for the release of the three. Maritime analysts said that the May attack near the port, which serves landlocked Chad and the Central African Republic, showed that pirates in the region were venturing further south and becoming more brazen. (*reuters.com*, 4 July 2010)

### **Nigeria, 4 July 2010**

According to the Nigerian navy, 12 foreign sailors who were seized in the Niger Delta two days earlier have been released by their abductors. A navy spokesman told reporters that the foreign sailors were put on a fishing trawler and taken into the navy's care. Unidentified gunmen kidnapped the sailors late on July 2, after attacking a German cargo ship off the Niger Delta coast. One crew member was shot during the incident. The captured sailors included men from Germany, Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine. (*voanews.com*, 4 July 2010)

### **Nigeria, 3 July 2010**

The chairman of a political party in Ondo State, who also serves on the governing council of a Lagos-based medical university, and his driver were abducted by six unidentified gunmen as the two were traveling on the Benin-Ore Road near the town of at Okada at about 8 p.m. local time. Shortly after the abduction, the kidnapers released the driver and ordered him to tell the official's family that he would be released in exchange for an N 50 million ransom. Police believe that the official was followed by his kidnapers from Iju-Odo in Okitipupa, Ondo State, where he attended a political meeting. (*punchng.com*, 5 July 2010)

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### **Nigeria, 26 June 2010**

A Rivers State Police spokeswoman confirmed the abduction of a local employee of an Anglo-Dutch Oil group. The spokeswoman added that the woman was abducted along Tombia road in Port Harcourt by unknown gunmen. Local media reports stated that the kidnappers had made contact with the woman's husband, who also works for the company, demanding a ransom for her release. The group's local spokesman declined to comment on the incident, saying, "the company does not speak on security issues." (*news.yahoo.com, 27 June 2010*)

### **Nigeria, 24 June 2010**

A kidnapped lecturer from a Port Harcourt-based university was rescued by the anti-kidnapping team of the Rivers State Police. The scholar was kidnapped on June 18 from his house in Rumuokwarshi in the Obi/Akpor local government area of Rivers State by four heavily armed men. The kidnappers reportedly arrived at the lecturer's residence in his absence, tied up his wife and children and locked them in one of the rooms. They then waited until he returned from a nearby church and abducted him at gunpoint, forcing him into his own vehicle and driving him to an unknown location. A Rivers State Police spokeswoman confirmed the man's release and stated that a massive police search of the surrounding area eventually forced the kidnappers to abandon their victim and escape into the bush. The victim's vehicle was also recovered in the area. (*thetidenewsonline.com, 23 June 2010*)

### **Nigeria, 19 June 2010**

Five unknown gunmen in Oke-Ogun, Owo, Ondo State, burst into the home of the mother of a local politician at around 7:30 p.m. local time and kidnapped a woman whom they mistakenly thought was the official's mother. During the abduction the gunmen reportedly fired their weapons to scare away the woman's neighbors. According to eyewitnesses, the gunmen arrived at the building and asked for the politician who had left just minutes earlier. When the kidnappers were told that the politician had left, they abducted his mother's neighbor, who was waiting for the politician's mother to give her a ride to church. Before leaving with the woman, the kidnappers demanded N 30 million in ransom for her release. Talking to reporters, the politician confirmed the abduction and stated that he was negotiating with the kidnappers the terms of the woman's release. The official stated that he agreed to pay N 5 million as ransom. (*thenationonlineng.net, 21 June 2010*)

**On June 23**, the kidnappers released the woman whom they mistakenly thought was the mother of an Ondo State politician. The woman, a neighbor, was waiting for the politician's mother to give her a ride to church. The kidnappers reportedly released her around 4 a.m. local time at the Technical Junction in Owo, a few meters from where she was abducted in the Oke-Ogun area. It is unclear if ransom was paid to gain her release. (*allafrica.com, 24 June 2010*)

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### **Nigeria, 17 June 2010**

A female principal of a secondary school in Akwa, Anambra State, was intercepted and kidnapped by five armed men from her school. Eyewitnesses stated that the gunmen followed the woman to the school parking lot, where she was abducted and driven away in her own car. The incident attracted the attention of students who, along with some commercial motorcyclists and men of the state vigilance service, chased the kidnappers. The motorcyclists blocked the road with their bikes, causing a traffic jam which trapped the kidnappers and their victim. As soon as the vehicle was stopped, the woman managed to escape. Four of the suspected kidnappers escaped, but one of them was apprehended by the vigilance group and handed over to the police. (*tribune.com.ng, 17 June 2010*)

### **Uganda, 20 June 2010**

The body of year-and-half old boy, the son of an executive at the Ugandan Revenue Authority and the spokeswoman for an environmental watchdog group, who had been kidnapped on June 8 from Bugolobi, an upscale Kampala suburb, was found in a swamp in a Kamwokya slum. Three people, including one of the family's housekeepers, were detained by police in connection with the kidnapping and murder of the boy. The kidnappers reportedly collected Sh 30 million in ransom from a remote location in Bushenyi, but went silent afterward and did not release the boy. One of the suspects admitted to killing the boy as he attempted to silence his cry. Despite the ransom payment, police officials believe that the boy was initially kidnapped for sacrifice as his body showed evidence usually found with such murders. (*newvision.co.ug, 21 June 2010*)

### **Sudan, 23 June 2010**

The German Foreign Ministry confirmed the kidnapping of two German aid workers from the town of Nyala in western Sudan's Darfur region. According to security sources, who asked not to be identified, the two, aged 34 and 52, were employed by a government funded aid agency that works in Sudan to restore supplies of clean water for people returning to their homes. The agency also has a facility in Nyala that repairs UN and relief agency generators, pumps and vehicles. The reason for the abduction was unknown. The aid organization's head office in Bonn declined to comment and a Foreign Ministry spokesman said there was concern that too much disclosure might threaten the abductees' safety and declined to give further details. Aid workers have repeatedly been abducted in the region and held to ransom. (*monstersandcritics.com, 23 June 2010*)

### **Somalia, 5 July 2010**

A Singapore-registered tanker with 19 Chinese sailors on board was hijacked in the Gulf of Aden off Somalia while en route from Saudi Arabia to India. According to the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), the 19 Chinese sailors were reported to be safe. The vessel was chartered out to a Chinese shipping company. (*chinadaily.com.cn, 28 June 2010*)

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### **Somalia, 25 June 2010**

A Somali clan chief confirmed that the family of a British couple held by Somali pirates since October 2009 has handed over US\$ 430,000 (£286,490), half of the agreed US\$ 800,000 ransom amount, to Somali elders involved in the couple's release negotiations. The elders were expecting Somalis living in Britain to send the remainder of the money. Somalis in Britain, where they have gone for refuge from their anarchic homeland, have contributed some money as a gesture of goodwill for the couple. They have also rallied for the couple's release, holding demonstrations and media appeals. The pirates initially demanded a US\$ 7 million ransom for the couple, but reduced the figure to less than US\$ 1 million. (*uk.reuters.com, 25 June 2010*)

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## ASIA PACIFIC

### **Afghanistan, 7 July 2010**

In a bid to secure the release of their comrades in the northwestern Ghor Province of Afghanistan, Taliban militants have kidnapped a prosecutor and a teacher from Ghor's provincial capital, Cheghcheran. Shortly after their abduction, the militants threatened to kill them if their comrades were not released. A local government spokesman said that ten Taliban militants were arrested by security forces a few days earlier, however, he did not say if the provincial administration was ready to exchange the detained Taliban fighters for the kidnapped government employees. In an unrelated case, Taliban militants abducted four employees of an aid agency in neighboring Herat Province. The insurgents kidnapped local employees of a relief agency in Shindand District and took them to unknown locations. The governor of Shindand District, confirmed the abduction in a press conference but did not give the name of the aid agency and only said it provides health services to the locals. (*news.xinhuanet.com, 8 July 2010*)

### **Afghanistan, 17 June 2010**

Unnamed Afghan security authorities claimed that Taliban militants have demanded that the Afghan government pay a ransom for the 40-year-old Japanese journalist who went missing in late March in northern Afghanistan. According to the security source, negotiations are under way on a payment of several hundred thousand dollars for the release of the journalist. However, a spokesman for the Taliban denied reports that the Taliban is holding the Japanese national. (*newsonjapan.com, 17 June 2010*)

### **Bangladesh, 12 July 2010**

During attacks on fishermen in the coastal areas off Patuakhali and Barguna Districts, a total of 77 fishermen were kidnapped. The pirates, reportedly members of three criminal groups working together, have demanded Taka one lakh (100,000 rupees) in ransom for release of each kidnapped fisherman but the victims' families are too poor to meet the demand. During the attacks the pirates looted the fish, cash, fuel and equipment from 50 trawlers that were fishing

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about 40 km/25 miles south of Kuakata in Patuakhali. Two fishermen were shot and wounded by the pirates and one is missing. Pirates also looted 30 other trawlers from Pathorghata, Barguna District, and kidnapped at least 27 fishermen. The fishermen's families and officials of a local traders' association have called on Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies and the navy to end the piracy and terminate the extortion gangs operating in the Bay of Bengal, the heart of the local fishing industry. (*thedailystar.net, 12 July 2010*)

### India, 11 July 2010

Mumbai Police arrested six people suspected in the July 7 kidnapping for ransom of a 10-year-old boy in the city's Kandivli suburb. The suspects forced the boy into a vehicle while he was walking home from school and took him to an abandoned building in the area where he was confined in one of the rooms. Hours after the abduction, the kidnappers called the boy's father, a fish merchant who provides fish to several five-star hotels in the city, demanding Rs 1 crore in ransom. The father contacted the police who launched a massive search operation. When the suspects realized that the police were on their trail, they gave the child money, put him on a Borivli-bound bus and fled. The kidnapping was hatched by the boy's father's former chauffeur who wanted revenge for his firing a few years ago. (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 11 July 2010*)

### India, 7 July 2010

Chennai suburban police arrested four men and are searching for two others, including a Sri Lankan national, in connection with the kidnapping of a British citizen of Sri Lankan Tamil origin in Pallavaram on June 22. The man was reportedly kidnapped at Veteran Lines in Pallavaram as he was driven to Triplicane by a hired driver. Their vehicle was intercepted by a couple of auto-rickshaws from which a group of men emerged, overpowered them and forced them into another car waiting some distance away. They were blindfolded and taken to a house in an isolated location away from Chennai. The kidnappers called the businessman's wife and demanded Rs. 25 lakh in ransom. Later in the evening, she handed over Rs. 17.5 lakh and a little later her husband and his driver were released in Anna Nagar. The family reported the kidnapping following their release and Pallavaram police and a special crime team commenced investigations. The suspects were detained on July 7 as they were driving the vehicle used in the kidnapping and a portion of the ransom was recovered. (*thehindu.com, 7 July 2010*)

### India, 5 July 2010

A political leader in the Bulandshahr District, Uttar Pradesh State, who is also a leading businessman, was abducted by unidentified gunmen as he went for a walk in the Kotwali area. According to a police official, the man, a resident of Brahminpuri locality, called his family from his mobile phone about two hours after the incident and told them that he had been kidnapped by four men who forced him into a car. His phone was then switched off and no further contact has been made. (*indianexpress.com, 6 July 2010*)

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## **India, 18 June 2010**

The body of an executive engineer of the Assam State Agriculture Department, who was reported kidnapped in Khanapara a day earlier, was found in his vehicle in the Jalukbari area in Guwahati. The official's private driver, his brother and their friend were arrested as suspects behind the kidnapping and subsequent murder. An extortion note demanding Rs. 25 lakh was recovered by the police. Though the note was signed by the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) rebel group, police investigators believe it was sent by the driver and his accomplices. (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 18 June 2010*)

## **India, 17 June 2010**

The 17-year-old son of a textile broker from Bardoli, Gujarat State, about 30 km/19 miles from Surat, was kidnapped from his house by his father's three business colleagues. Following the family's complaint, police initiated a massive search, forcing the kidnappers to abandon their victim four hours later on the outskirts of the town and flee. The three reportedly arrived at the businessman's house while he was on a business trip to Mumbai and abducted his son. Before leaving the house, the three told the businessman's wife that her husband owed them Rs. 10 lakh and that they would hold their son hostage until he repaid them. (*timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 18 June 2010*)

## **India, 17 June 2010**

A 14-year-old boy, the nephew of the Ariyalur District member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Tamil Nadu State, who was kidnapped on June 11 was rescued following a massive police operation and chase on July 17. About 100 police officers working in nine teams participated in the search and rescue operation. After interviewing eyewitnesses, police determined that the kidnappers were known to the boy, who reportedly boarded his kidnappers' vehicle willingly near the private school he attends. Police concentrated on family acquaintances and employees and focused on a former driver of the MLA. Meanwhile the kidnappers, who had demanded Rs. 50 lakh, ordered the boy's father to board a train and drop a bag containing the cash at the Villupuram station, promising to release the boy at the second or third stop from that point. A group of police in plainclothes boarded the train with the father while other police officers were sent to all of the train stations following Villupuram. While on the train, the kidnappers contacted the father demanding that the money be dropped at a different spot, where the police had no presence. Advised by police that the boy's safety could be ensured only by using the money as bait, the father refused to accept the kidnappers' change of plan. During the negotiations, police officers traced the kidnappers' cell phones and located and followed the suspects' vehicle. When the kidnappers suddenly turned off their cell phones, police officials set up road blocks and checked all vehicles traveling by the Chennai Highway, which leads to the train stations. The kidnappers, traveling in a car with the boy tied up and gagged in the back seat, accelerated through one of the road blocks and the officers manning the post gave chase but lost the kidnappers' vehicle. The kidnappers drove the vehicle to an isolated location

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near Kiliyanur village and one of them went to search for new number plates. Villagers who noticed the car parked in an unusual location alerted the police who then rescued the boy. (*hindu.com, 17 June 2010*)

### Indonesia, 28 June 2010

Jakarta Police announced that a 27-year-old Tangerang resident who was found dead last week in Karawang, West Java, had been killed by his kidnappers allegedly because the victim's family had failed to pay the Rp 300 million (US\$ 32,700) ransom they had demanded. Talking to reporters, a police spokesman said that the kidnappers killed the man despite the fact that the family transferred Rp 50 million to a bank account provided by them a few days after receiving a text message in which they demanded the ransom. Police suspect that the kidnappers vented their anger on the victim because of the incomplete payment. The victim, an employee of a private company, had been kidnapped on June 10, as he left his home to attend a business meeting in Pamulang, Tangerang. His remains, without his legs, which were cut off by his kidnappers, were found in mid-June in Karawang. (*thejakartapost.com, 30 June 2010*)

### Malaysia, 10 July 2010

A plantation worker pleaded not guilty to three charges relating to the kidnapping of a 64-year-old businessman who was kidnapped at a junction in Bukit OUG, Kuala Lumpur at 8:50 a.m. local time on June 6. According to police, he was detained as he attempted to dispose of part of the RM 1.2 million ransom paid for the businessman's release. If convicted, he faces a maximum 10 years in jail and could be whipped as well. (*thestar.com.my, 10 July 2010*)

### Malaysia, 30 June 2010

Kuala Lumpur police arrested five people and recovered the RM 28,000 ransom paid for the release of a female Myanmar national who was kidnapped on June 8 by four compatriots and a Malaysian. The Kuala Lumpur police chief said the victim, who is in her 20s was kidnapped at around 8:00 p.m. local time in Kepong, when she was on her way to work at a restaurant. She was taken to an undisclosed location in the city where her captors locked her inside a house and later demanded RM 100,000 in ransom from her friend and her employer. Shortly after her friend delivered RM 28,000 to her kidnappers, her employer notified police of the incident. The woman was released on June 10 at an undisclosed location. After her release, police launched a massive operation and through the information gathered, they managed to track the suspects and arrest them. Police believe that the kidnappers followed the victim's movements for several days and learned her daily patterns before she was kidnapped. The case was investigated under Section 3(1) of the Kidnapping Act of 1961, which carries the death penalty or life imprisonment if convicted. (*mmail.com.my, 30 June 2010*)

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### Malaysia, 20 June 2010

A Nigerian gang involved in the kidnapping of student, believed to be the son of a Nigerian politician, was detained by police in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. The victim, a 28-year-old student at a private university in Cyberjaya, was intercepted and abducted at around 8:30 p.m. local time on May 23 and confined to a house in Cheras. The kidnappers then called the family in Nigeria to demand a ransom of US\$ 10,000 (RM 31,900), after which the family contacted the victim's younger brother, who is also a student at the same university, and he lodged a report on the incident. After the family transferred RM 30,000 into the victim's bank account in Malaysia, he was released on June 19 in Cyberjaya at 1:30 a.m. local time. During his captivity the student sustained minor injuries and underwent treatment at a local hospital following his release. Several hours after his release and following tips from the public, police conducted a raid on the house and detained four Nigerian men and two Malaysian women. Police confiscated three laptops, 15 mobile phones, one of which was used in the ransom negotiations, and 11 international passports from various countries in the operation. Further investigations also revealed that the suspects may have been involved in the kidnapping of a female Nigerian student from the same university who was kidnapped on February 18. She was released on February 24 after her family paid a US\$ 15,000 (RM 45,000) ransom. (*bernama.com, 21 June 2010*)

### Nepal, 3 July 2010

The unidentified kidnappers of a 16-year-old teenager from Rajbiraj, Saptari District, in southeastern Nepal, have demanded a ransom of Rs 4 million for his safe release. The kidnappers, who mostly spoke in Hindi, reportedly made numerous calls to his family demanding the ransom and threatened to harm the teenager if the family failed to pay. (*nepalnews.com, 4 July 2010*)

### Pakistan, 8 July 2010

Rawalpindi Police arrested a gang involved in kidnapping for ransom and recovered a hostage along with cash. In a press conference, the city police chief said that the son of a retired land record officer from Mujahid was kidnapped for ransom on June 29 when he went with a man to show him land the man said he wanted to purchase. A day later the boy's father received a phone call from the kidnappers who demanded Rs 7 million in ransom for his son's safe release. The father struck a deal with the kidnappers and agreed to pay Rs one million in cash and hand over his car and met them at the agreed location for the exchange. As the suspects were getting into the father's car to leave, plainclothes police officers, who were already at the location, overpowered the two suspects and detained them. During their interrogation, the suspects, both from Attock, Punjab Province, revealed the where the boy was being held. The police then raided a house in a forest near Tala Gang and rescued the boy safely and arrested two other suspects who were guarding the boy. (*dailytimes.com.pk, 8 July 2010*)

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### **Pakistan, 23 June 2010**

Four truck drivers, delivering rice from Punjab to Taftan, a bordering township with Iran, were kidnapped on the national highway near the Dhaddar and Bhaktiarabad areas of Kachhi Plains. Following the abductions, a large number of transporters gathered on the highway and staged a protest. The drivers erected barricades and blocked the national highway. A Tahsildar militia force from Dhaddar Mohammad Akbar reached the site and peacefully dispersed the protestors. A local police official stated that the cases are all connected and the motive behind them was financial. Around 10 drivers have been kidnapped over the past few months in the area and some of them were released after paying hefty sums in ransom and some were freed through tribal influence. (*thebalochhal.com, 24 June 2010*)

### **Pakistan, 23 June 2010**

The Taliban has demanded that the Pakistan government release an unspecified number of militants currently locked in jails across the country in exchange for the 33 Frontier Corps (FC) soldiers, who were taken captive by the extremists near the Afghan border the week of June 14. According to reports, a Taliban spokesperson, talking to journalists over the phone, stated that the Taliban was ready to release the troops if the government accepted its demands. The Taliban spokesman also warned that the soldiers would be killed if their demands were rejected. Over 60 FC personnel went missing after the Taliban attacked their check-post near the Afghan border last week. Six bodies of slain soldiers were retrieved through a tribal jirga, while 14 soldiers were handed over to the Pakistan Consulate in Jalalabad. (*newstrackindia.com, 23 June 2010*)

### **Pakistan, 16 June 2010**

A manager at a dairy company was intercepted and kidnapped in Nawabshah, as he was driving home with his brother after a visit to Sakrand town, by a group of five unidentified armed men. According to the manager's brother, who was abandoned by the abductors, he was forced out of the car at gunpoint and the gunmen drove away in his brother's vehicle. The car was found abandoned near Daulatpur town. Police surrounded the entire area and teams were formed to launch a hunt for the kidnappers. (*hindustanimes.com, 18 June 2010*)

### **Pakistan, 15 June 2010**

A Portland, U.S.-based international aid group suspended its operations in Pakistan after kidnappers killed one of its four Pakistani employees who were kidnapped on February 18 as they were driving back from work on maternal and child health projects in western Pakistan's poverty-stricken Baluchistan province. In a press release, the agency announced that it recently learned that a 52-year-old driver in the group, the father of nine, had been slain earlier this month. The fate of the other three staffers was not mentioned. (*startribune.com, 15 June 2010*)

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### Philippines, 5 July 2010

Philippine police rescued a Chinese businessman who was held by Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) militants for over a year on a southern Jolo island. The Chinese national was kidnapped in December 2008 from an appliance store he and other relatives opened in Jolo Township, the provincial capital. According to local media reports, police clashed with the kidnapers in Lambago village at around 8:30 p.m. local time, forcing the militants to abandon their victim. The kidnapers behind the abduction are believed to be led by a wanted militant. Police had previously tagged another group led by one of the most wanted ASG leaders for the kidnapping. The kidnapers originally demanded P 25 million for the trader's release, but later lowered it to P 10 million. (*gmanews.tv, 7 July 2010*)

### Philippines, 22 June 2010

According to the Jolo Province governor, the heavy military presence on Jolo Island, southern Philippines, has forced the kidnapers of two Malaysian seaweed farm workers to move them to the Tawi Tawi Province about 1,000 km/625 miles southwest of Manila. Five gunmen seized the workers from Sabah on February 8 and whisked them away on a speedboat. Abu Sayyaf militants, who are linked to al Qaida, have staged kidnappings in Malaysia in the past, and then brought their hostages to jungle hideouts on southern Jolo Island before demanding ransom. The official said it remained unclear who abducted the Malaysians, but they seem to be well organized and mobile which makes it hard to locate or contact them. (*thestar.com.my, 22 June 2010*)

### Philippines, 20 June 2010

Police are investigating and searching for the suspects behind the kidnapping of the 22-year-old son of the election commissioner for the southern Philippines. A police investigation into his abduction started after he failed to return home from a local mosque in Dansalang village, in Mindanao's northern city of Marawi. At around 7:30 p.m. local time, an unidentified caller called the commissioner demanding the revocation of May election results in the municipalities of Malabang, Pikong, Taraka and Masiu, in Lanao del Sur Province, in exchange for his son's release. (*english.peopledaily.com.cn, 21 June 2010*)

**On June 28**, local reports indicated that the kidnapers of the son of the election commissioner in southern Philippines are now demanding an undisclosed large ransom amount in exchange for his release. The kidnapers initially demanded that the victim's father nullify election results in several towns in Lanao del Sur Province. The provincial governor, talking to reporters about the abduction, stated that the government will retain its policy of not paying any ransom but it will commit to military and police pressure on the ground. (*abs-cbnnews.com, 28 June 2010*)

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### Philippines, 17 June 2010

A 60-year-old marine caretaker was kidnapped around 8:30 a.m. local time by five unidentified gunmen who arrived on two motorboats at a boat dock between the islands of Pitas and Panubigan. A local police official stated that the operator of the banca (a traditional Filipino boat) that the man was working on reported the kidnapping to police. (*newsinfo.inquirer.net, 17 June 2010*)

### Philippines, 16 June 2010

A Swiss-Filipino businessman, who was kidnapped from his house on April 4 by suspected Abu Sanyaf Group members, was rescued from a hut in Labuan village, near Zamboanga City. According to a police official, three gunmen who were guarding the 72-year-old man escaped as they noticed the advancing officers. The official did not provide much information on who led them to the west coast village from where the victim was rescued. The kidnapers initially demanded P 20 million in ransom for the man's safe release. Despite the authorities' denial of any ransom payment, the apparent ease of the captors' escape without their hostage raised immediate suspicions that a ransom had been paid. (*newsinfo.inquirer.net, 16 June 2010 & google.com, 16 June 2010*)

### Taiwan, 16 June 2010

Taipei Police safely rescued a merchant and arrested his three abductors who allegedly abducted him over a NT\$ 4 million house project dispute. Shortly after the kidnapping, the abductors called the merchant's girlfriend demanding NT\$ 1 million in ransom. The woman contacted the police, who were then able to track the suspects to a recycling factory in Taoyuan County, in northern Taiwan, where the hostage was kept. The three suspects were handed over to prosecutors on charges for false imprisonment, intimidation and extortion. (*chinapost.com.tw, 17 June 2010*)

### Sri Lanka, 3 July 2010

Mundalama and Puttalam Police are conducting a joint investigation into the abduction of a Sri Lankan holding a top post at a non-governmental organization for whose release his kidnapers have demanded one million rupees. The man was kidnapped by a group of unidentified men while on an official business trip to Polonnaruwa. A police official talking to reporters said that they had received information that an extremist group active in Puttalam and the Valaichennai area had abducted him and that police investigations were underway. (*dailymirror.lk, 3 July 2010*)

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## EUROPE

### France, 5 July 2010

A new law is being debated by the French parliament suggesting that French citizens ignoring foreign ministry warnings and deliberately exposing themselves to risks will have to reimburse the government for part or all of the financial expenses spent in their rescue operations abroad. France has had to spend millions retrieving nationals in the past couple of years. On one occasion, French commandos accidentally shot dead a French national as they stormed his vessel, releasing his wife and three-year-old son from Somali pirates. The couple was criticized by the government for ignoring advice to steer well clear of Somalia. The French government also stepped in to free a group of French hostages kidnapped by armed men in Pakistan in 2009. The new law, which has already passed through the French Senate and was debated in the National Assembly, makes no mention of ransom money, as France does not officially pay ransoms. The suggested law has been criticized by journalists and non-governmental organizations as it provides no clear definition of what constitutes a “legitimate motive” for being in a danger zone. The debate came as two journalists working for the national news service are still being held hostage in Afghanistan. A French army chief recently said the state had already spent almost 10 million euros trying to find and free them in the past six months. The French president sparked anger when he accused the television crew of ignoring military advice not to venture out in Kapisa Province, north of Kabul, saying they had acted with “culpable lack of care.” (*telegraph.co.uk*, 5 July 2010)

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## MIDDLE EAST

### Algeria, 6 July 2010

Residents of the town of Freha, 30 km/18 miles from Tizi Ouzou, in the Kabila region, went on a general strike demanding the immediate release of a town resident who was kidnapped on July 4 by a group of gunmen. The 35-year-old contractor was abducted while driving near the town. According Algerian press, his kidnappers are demanding 30 million dinars (300,000 euros) in ransom. In April, an 80-year-old man from Boghni, south of Tizi Ouzou in Kabila, was freed by his captors after 26 days in captivity due to popular pressure. No ransom was paid for his release. In October 2009, residents of Issenhajen, also in Kabila, secured the release of a shopkeeper who had been held hostage for three days by terrorists, following a mobilization that spread to nearby villages. (*ennaharonline.com*, 6 July 2010)

### Israel, 7 July 2010

The Israeli National Security Council, Counter-Terrorism Bureau, released a warning advising Israeli nationals that Hezbollah and Iran are planning to murder or kidnap Israeli businessmen and former state officials. Citing solid intelligence, the bureau explained that Hezbollah continues

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to blame Israel for the death of their militia's operations chief, who was killed in a Damascus car bombing in February, and Iran is blaming Israel for the death of a nuclear physicist in Tehran. The warning urged Israelis abroad to be wary of "unusual events," to turn down unexpected, tempting business or recreational offers and to avoid letting anyone suspicious or unknown visitors into their hotel rooms or apartments. The warning also cautioned Israeli travelers not to linger in remote locations, especially after dark, and to attend business meetings or take part in recreational activities only in the company of reliable companions and to avoid regular and predictable routines. (*shalomlife.com, 8 July 2010*)

### United Arab Emirates, 6 July 2010

The Sharjah Sharia Court of First Instance sentenced a man to six months in jail followed by deportation for kidnapping a child and threatening to kill him if his family failed to pay ransom. According to court documents, the 25-year-old Indian national, who was drunk at the time of the incident, asked the mother of the child for a glass of water and kidnapped her baby when she went inside her house to get it. The suspect called the family and claimed he had strapped an explosive belt to the year-old baby and threatened to detonate it if the family did not pay Dh 35,000 in ransom. The family contacted the police who managed to locate the man in the Al Musalla area and rescue the baby unharmed. (*gulfnews.com, 6 July 2010*)

### United Arab Emirates, 17 June 2010

According to court documents, a 48-year-old Pakistani national instigated the March 23 kidnapping for ransom of a Canadian businessman of Indian descent for whom he used to work. Two other men who participated in the failed abduction are still wanted by the authorities. The victim was kidnapped as he got out of his chauffeured car outside his house in Nad Al Hamar, when the suspect and his accomplice arrived in a car and claimed to be officers from Dubai Police demanding to see their IDs. According to the businessman's testimony, the accused attempted to force him into their vehicle, but he managed to escape toward the street. The suspect then attempted to grab him again but he managed to free himself. As the attackers escaped after taking the businessman's car keys, he wrote down their car's license plate and called the police. A police investigation revealed that the car used in the kidnapping attempt was rented. They arranged with the rent-a-car agency to lure the Pakistani man and arrested him. During interrogation at the Rashidiya police post, the Pakistani admitted to participating in the incident, claiming that his former manager was the mastermind. (*khaleejtimes.com, 18 June 2010*)

### Yemen, 12 July 2010

Three unidentified gunmen kidnapped a Yemeni freelance journalist specializing in reporting on al Qaida outside a Chinese restaurant in Sana'a. The kidnappers forced him into a vehicle at gunpoint and then sped off. Yemen's Journalist Syndicate said the kidnappers might be

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tribesmen angered by the journalist's reports on the relationship of some tribes with the Yemeni wing of al Qaida. (*khaleejtimes.com, 12 July 2010*)

### Yemen, 10 July 2010

The Yemeni Interior Ministry accused the Shi'ite Houthis rebels of kidnapping five governmental oil workers on July 8 as they were inspecting fuel stations in the directorate of Barat in the troubled northern province of al-Jouf. A Houthi source denied any link to the incident, saying the kidnapping was a result of a tribal dispute. In a separate statement, the government said security forces had foiled an attempt to sabotage an oil pipeline in Marib, in the northeast of the country. The pipeline is used to transport oil to ports on the Red Sea. (*siasat.com, 10 July 2010*)

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## NORTH AMERICA

### Canada, 5 July 2010

Two Toronto men, aged 57 and 35, abducted a man from a home in Dover Point, in southeast Calgary, on June 30. Friends of the victim alerted police, who found the victim's vehicle just north of the U.S. border and arrested two men and released the victim, who was not hurt. The three knew each other through business dealings in Ontario, said a Calgary Police inspector. Police suspect that a business deal gone bad may be behind the kidnapping. The suspects are being held on multiple charges including weapons possession and kidnapping. (*cbc.ca, 5 July 2010*)

### United States, 29 June 2010

A Chinese disco manager in Garapan, Mariana Islands, was kidnapped the evening of June 7 shortly after receiving a call for taxi service. His family received call demanding a ransom of US\$ 100,000 shortly after the man was first reported missing. The caller, however, did not call back, possibly after learning that the man's family had reported the matter to the police. Police found the man's car in an abandoned parking lot in Chalan Laulau on June 8. The family has offered a US\$ 20,000 cash reward to anyone who can provide information as to his whereabouts. Sources said the man comes from a wealthy family in China and that his sister is on Saipan, while his brother is in California. The victim was allegedly involved in recruiting people to come from China to Saipan in November 2009 on the promise that they would get green cards when the Northern Marianas were made a commonwealth of the U.S. Each person paid the man the equivalent of US\$ 10,000, sources said. It is unknown if the kidnapping is related to this scheme. (*saipantribune.com, 6 July 2010*)

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### United States, 6 July 2010

A wave of virtual kidnappings has struck Bay County, Florida. In several reported cases, the perpetrator of the scam calls the supposedly “abducted” family member before making the ransom call, pretends to be a cell phone company employee and tells the “abducted” person to shut off their cell phone so “updates” can be made to their phone. This is done in an effort to prevent anyone from making contact with the supposedly “abducted” family member, and being able to verify their safety. A Panama City woman narrowly avoided being scammed after receiving a phone call July 6 from a man claiming he had kidnapped her granddaughter. The caller demanded a ransom. To back up his claim, the man put a girl on the phone who claimed she was the woman’s granddaughter, crying and begging the woman to help her. The girl was the same age as the intended victim’s granddaughter and knew enough information about family members to sound authentic. After hanging up the phone, the intended victim was able to make contact with her real granddaughter and, discovering she was safe, did not follow the man’s instructions and wire ransom money to Madrid, Spain. These types of scams, used for many years in countries like Mexico, are becoming more common in the United States. The perpetrators are gathering information from social networking sites on the internet and public records on government websites to select likely victims. After spending weeks gathering information about the victim, their family members, and their income level, the phone call is made. Many scams have originated in Nigeria, but these phone scams are also originating in the Dominican Republic. The victim is usually told to wire money to a far off location using Western Union. Once the money is given to Western Union, it can be picked up at any Western Union location, not necessarily the pick-up location given to the victim, making the money untraceable. The Bay County Sheriff’s Office reminded residents that valid ransom kidnappings are extremely rare and told anyone who is contacted by phone by someone claiming to have abducted a family member to call local law enforcement. (*wjhg.com, 29 June 2010*)

### United States, 17 June 2010

According to Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department records, a 44-year-old tow truck driver from Castaic has been arrested on suspicion of kidnapping for ransom, and was being held at the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff’s Station on US\$ 1 million bail. An official with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department’s Major Crimes Bureau said the department will not be releasing any more information while the case is being investigated. (*the-signal.com, 17 June 2010*)

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## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

### Argentina, 25 June 2010

Authorities investigating the disappearance of a 21-year-old Santa Fe woman, who has been missing for seven days already, believe she may have been kidnapped. Police received anonymous phone calls stating they had seen a person resembling the victim, which led to the

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inspection of a house located in the Las Lomas quarter, without positive results. Other phone calls were also received demanding money for the woman's release. The victim, who lives with her partner and four-year-old son in the San Pantaleon quarter, went missing the week of June 14 when headed to her son's school. (*ellitoral.com, 25 June 2010*)

### **Argentina, 23 June 2010**

The morning of June 23, a politics journalist for two local newspapers was subdued at gunpoint by two men in Palermo, Buenos Aires. The assailants held the victim for one hour and took him to ATMs to withdraw money. When he was only able to withdraw money from one of his accounts, the men threatened him that they would hurt his family. The victim was later released, unharmed. (*infobae.com, 23 June 2010*)

### **Argentina, 14 June 2010**

Around midnight on June 14, the robbery and kidnapping of a 33-year-old man ended in tragedy when he and one of his abductors were killed in a fire exchange between the kidnappers and authorities. The man was arriving at his home in Ramos Mejias, Buenos Aires, when he was surprised by three men and a woman, who stole money and other valuables from his house and then forced him to drive them away in his vehicle. The man's neighbors notified police who intercepted the vehicle a few blocks away, where the shootout took place. Three suspects were detained. (*lanacion.com.ar, 14 June 2010*)

### **Argentina, 11 June 2010**

At 8:00 a.m. local time on June 11, a 56-year-old man was intercepted by an armed man while he was walking his dog in western Buenos Aires. The man threatened him with death and forced him to go back to his house, where the victim's wife and son were. There, he stole electric appliances, jewelry, mobile phones and other valuables. To protect his family, the victim offered to go with the man to an ATM to withdraw money. The criminal agreed and they drove to a nearby ATM, picking up another unknown man on the way. After the ATM allowed the victim to withdraw only the maximum daily amount of 1,000 Pesos, they drove to a gas station where the victim pretended to faint and asked his assailants for help. The two men became scared and drove off in the man's vehicle with the stolen goods. The victim then called his home, told them he was safe and to report the event to authorities, which his son had already done. Authorities caught up with the criminal at an ATM following an anonymous phone call reporting a suspicious individual in the area. When they arrived, the man was still in possession of the stolen goods and waiting for another victim. (*notiexpress.com.ar, 12 June 2010*)

### **Bolivia, 28 June 2010**

The director of the Special Crime Fighting Force of La Paz reported that the number of express kidnappings in the city of La Paz is increasing. The modus operandi is that three or four

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criminals onboard a vehicle identify their victims, subdue and beat them and put a nylon bag over their heads and force them to provide the PIN number to their accounts to withdraw money from ATMs. Bolivian Police have a database with information on those that have been already detained, and are using this information to investigate other cases. (*la-razon.com, 28 June 2010*)

### **Brazil, 11 July 2010**

A six-year-old girl, the daughter of a candy store owner, who was kidnapped on July 9, was abandoned by her kidnapers in Sapopemba, in the eastern zone of São Paulo, close to a slum quarter. The girl was abducted as she played on the sidewalk in front of her mother's shop located on Barreira Grande Avenue. It is unclear if ransom was paid for the girl's release. (*oglobo.globo.com, 11 July 2010*)

### **Colombia, 28 June 2010**

On June 28, authorities released details of the kidnapping three months ago of a 68-year-old businessman of Japanese origin, who resides in Colombia. The man's abductors are demanding 100 million Pesos (US\$ 52,000) for his release. The man was abducted by common criminals on March 23 in the rural area of the Candelaria municipality, Valle del Cauca Department, approximately 300 km/186 miles southwest of Bogota. The man owns a nursery and is not a wealthy person. The chief of the Prosecutor's National Anti-Kidnapping Unit said that it is possible that the victim has been already "sold" by his abductors to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). It was also released that five detentions have already been made linked to this case. (*elnuevoherald.com, 28 June 2010*)

### **Colombia, 26 June 2010**

Officers of the Anti-Kidnapping Group of Cali's Metropolitan Police rescued a 34-year-old man who had been abducted on June 12 in an operation in southern Cali, where the victim was located inside a safe house. The man had been kidnapped from a store in Cali by several armed men who forced him onboard an SUV. The man's relatives witnessed the event but could not do anything. According to authorities, this is considered a simple abduction, since no ransom payment was demanded. At the rescue scene, firearms, ammunition, grenades, two vehicles and a motorcycle were impounded. (*micurillo.blogspot.com & eltiempo.com, 26 June 2010*)

### **Colombia, 26 June 2010**

Officers of the Anti-Kidnapping Group of the First Marine Infantry Brigade thwarted the abduction of a cattle rancher in Corozal, Sucre municipality. According to preliminary information, a criminal gang, called "Los Hipermegapley," from Barranquilla, forcibly entered a house and tried to abduct the rancher, but neighbors immediately alerted authorities who quickly arrived at the scene. A shootout erupted in which the gang leader was killed, another criminal was

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wounded and another one escaped. Authorities are still investigating in order to capture the other gang members, who fled the scene in an SUV. (*caracol.com.co, 26 June 2010*)

### Colombia, 26 June 2010

A kidnapper was captured by authorities in the Astrea municipality, Cesar Department, as he was trying to abduct a cattle rancher who refused to pay the man the extortion money he was demanding. The criminal was posing as a member of “Las Aguilas Negras” and was demanding high amounts of money from the area’s cattle ranchers and farmers. A firearm and ammunition were impounded in the operation. (*rcnradio.com, 26 June 2010*)

### Colombia, 25 June 2010

Sucre’s Inter-Institution Anti-Kidnapping Group safely rescued a 12-year-old boy who had been abducted in Tolu, and for whose release his kidnappers were demanding a ransom payment of 10 million Pesos. The victim was located in the rural area of Chocho, Sincelejo, following investigations and information provided by the Cooperative Network. According to authorities, the kidnappers fled the scene when they became aware of the police presence. The kidnappers allegedly contacted the boy’s mother using his cell phone to demand the ransom, after which the woman reported the event to authorities. Investigations are underway to capture the suspects. (*rcnradio.com, 25 June 2010*)

### Colombia, 22 June 2010

Officers of the Transit and Transportation Section of Risaralda rescued a 34-year-old man who had been abducted earlier by two armed men in the Belarcazar municipality. Authorities launched a search operation soon after the abduction was reported and were able to locate the vehicle in which the criminals were transporting the victim near Km. 17 of the “Y” road of Cerritos – Cauya, in the La Almidonera sector. In the operation, two kidnappers were captured and two firearms were impounded. (*radiosantafe.com, 22 June 2010*)

### Ecuador, 15 June 2010

Around 9:30 p.m. local time on June 15, a man was abducted at gunpoint when three men forcibly entered his car while he was stopped at a red light on Rodolfo Baquerizo Nazur Avenue in Guayaquil. The men told him to drive to the Samanes VII quarter where he was tied up and forced into the trunk of another car. The three men drove off in the victim’s vehicle while their accomplice drove him away in the trunk of the second vehicle. Soon after, the man heard one of the car’s tires break and shortly afterwards he heard noises and a police radio and began to hit the trunk and was rescued by police officers. The gang responsible for this abduction was captured by National Police and is linked to similar crimes in the city. (*confirmado.net, 16 June 2010*)

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## **El Salvador, 16 June 2010**

According to the General Attorney's Office, there were four kidnappings reported nationwide in June, bringing the total for 2010 to 32. Of the two most recent cases, one of the victims was killed before his family received a ransom payment demand and the other was rescued. Both kidnappings were planned and directed separately, by two former convicts, who had been deported from the United States. The Elite Division against Organized Crime has captured eight suspects allegedly linked to the kidnappings, registered in the La Union and Santa Ana Departments. In the case where the victim was killed, the man's body was found the morning of June 16 in a safe house in the San Sebastian Salitrillo municipality. The victim, an engineer and church pastor, left his Santa Tecla home the morning of June 1 to meet with a friend in the western area to discuss some work projects. His relatives began to worry when they could not establish contact with the man and reported him as a missing person to authorities. No ransom demand was made for his release. Investigations led to three suspects, one of them a minor and another a former convict deported from the United States. Four safe houses were raided, where evidence linking the suspects to the kidnapping and killing of the man were found. Authorities stated that the victim knew his abductors but it is not known how they initially met. The victim's car was found parked at the house of the niece of one of the suspects, but the woman has not been captured and it is not known if she is linked to the crime. Police suspect that the man suffocated, since his body was found with a plastic bag over his head. The motive for the abduction is not known. Seven self-kidnappings have also been registered and the alleged victims have been captured and are being judicially processed. (*elsalvador.com, 18 June 2010*)

## **Guatemala, 3 July 2010**

According to official sources, Guatemala's security forces safely released four kidnapping victims of Salvadorian origin and detained four of their kidnappers, among them two minors, on an isolated road in the southeastern part of the country. The victims were a 48-year-old man, two women, aged 48 and 30, and a four-year-old boy. The group was traveling from San Salvador to Ciudad de Guatemala when they were intercepted near Chiquimulilla village. The criminals were trying to negotiate the ransom payment with the victims' relatives, when they were captured by authorities. During the rescue operation, two firearms, a mobile phone and a vehicle were impounded. According to the National Civil Police, two other suspects were able to escape with some of the victims' belongings. (*google.com, 3 July 2010*)

## **Guyana, 18 June 2010**

The wife of kidnapped Essequibo boat builder, who was abducted on June 3 from his mother's Jacklow, Upper Pomeroon home around 10:00 p.m. local time, denied paying a ransom for his release or having any knowledge of his whereabouts. According to a police official, they will attempt to contact the reporter responsible for an article claiming that the family paid over US\$ 40 million for the man's release. According to the official, the police are still conducting

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investigations to ascertain the identity of the kidnappers and the victim's whereabouts. The victim was kidnapped from his mother's home while watching television with his mother-in-law and another boat builder when two armed and masked men broke into the house. (*stabroeknews.com, 19 June 2010*)

### Haiti, 10 May 2010

A 22-year-old beauty school student, who was kidnapped the evening of May 10 when she went out to buy groceries in the Delmas 33 neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, was released after her family paid 2,000 Haitian Gourdes in ransom. The victim had joined her friend, a police officer, in his unmarked car when two men ordered the officer out of the car, took his gun and drove off with the woman. The men shoved her into the back of the car and made her lie face down. They drove to a neighborhood filled with homes destroyed by the January earthquake, forced her into one and pushed her into a crawl-space beneath the fallen ceiling. The officer searched all night for the woman and his car and returned to the woman's home the morning of May 11 and informed her family of what had happened. The kidnappers called the family that day using the woman's cell phone, demanding US\$ 50,000 in ransom and threatening to kill her if anyone intervened. The family managed to raise 2,000 Haitian Gourdes (about US\$ 50) from neighbors and left it at a drop site the evening of May 16. Around 3:00 a.m. local time on May 17, the woman was blindfolded and put on the back of a moto-taxi, which drove her to her home. The woman was beaten and raped during her captivity and received medical care following her release. Police are still searching for her abductors. (*nytimes.com, 24 June 2010*)

### Honduras, 2 July 2010

The 25-year-old son of a businessman and president of the an industrial association was rescued by police in the Linda Vista colony, Comayaguela, Tegucigalpa, 29 days after he was kidnapped. His rescue came after his family made two payments towards the high ransom amount his kidnappers were demanding. Following undercover investigations, authorities were able to locate the safe house where the victim was being held on July 1. At 7:00 a.m. local time on July 2, about 30 agents of the Special Anti-Kidnapping Group raided the house, where the man was found, gagged and tied up. Two suspected kidnappers, who were guarding the victim, were detained at the scene. They told authorities that they were threatened by some men that had previously contacted them to hire them for a job, with killing their families if they did not guard the victim. The victim was intercepted and kidnapped at 7:00 p.m. local time on June 4 in the Miramontes colony in Tegucigalpa, when heavily armed men forced him out of his SUV and into another vehicle. His family initially asked the police to not intervene in the case, fearing for his life, and preferred to negotiate with the criminals themselves. However, after they made two payments of 2 million Lempiras, out of the 10 million Lempiras demanded, authorities acted and rescued the victim. (*latribuna.hn, 3 July 2010*)

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## Honduras, 26 June 2010

In an undercover operation at 1:30 a.m. local time on June 26, officers of the Anti-Kidnapping Unit of National Police and the Cobras Police Squadron rescued a 12-year-old boy, the son of a congresswoman representing the Cortes Department, who had been held captive for 18 hours. The rescue took place in Asentamientos Humanos, Cielito Lindo colony, Rivera Hernandez sector, San Pedro Sula, where the boy was found blindfolded inside a safe house. At the scene, a man in charge of guarding the victim was captured. Police are questioning him in order to get information on the other members of the kidnapping gang. The boy had been abducted at 6:55 a.m. local time on June 25, while his way to school in the 6 de Mayo Colony, Rivera Hernandez sector. Allegedly, several men intercepted the victim and forced him into a vehicle, taking him away to an undisclosed location. Immediately police launched a search for the victim and located where he was being held by tracking phone calls made to demand the ransom payment. The criminals were demanding a 3 million Lempiras ransom payment from the victim's relatives for his release. No payment was made. (*laprensa.hn & elheraldo.hn 27 June 2010*)

## Honduras, 24 June 2010

The body of a 37-year-old lawyer and civilian officer for the National People's Registry who had been kidnapped the morning of May 26 by four heavily armed men from the parking lot of his work, was found in the early morning hours of June 24 at a farm in El Progreso, Yoro. According to witnesses, several men arrived at the farm in a truck around 6:00 a.m. local time and shortly after gunshots were heard as well as the vehicle driving away at high speed. Authorities arrived at the scene after they were informed that a body had been located. Authorities had been working on the case in order to safely rescue the victim and are now trying to locate the criminals responsible for this abduction and killing. According to police sources, a ransom payment was made by the victim's relatives in order to rescue the man. Initially, the criminals demanded 15 million Lempiras and, according to victim's acquaintances, only 12 million were delivered. Other sources stated that 8 million Lempiras were paid while officers of the Special Anti-Kidnapping Group assured that only 456,000 Lempiras were delivered in two transactions of 50,000 and 406,000 Lempiras each. The victim's relatives have not provided any further information regarding the amount that was paid. Two years ago, the victim was almost abducted but struggled with the kidnapers and was wounded. He had hired bodyguards but cancelled the service some months ago. (*latribuna.hn, 24 June 2010*)

## Honduras, 24 June 2010

On June 24, two Preventive Police officers from La Lima, Cortes, were accused by the prosecutor against organized crime of the abduction of the son of a businessman of San Pedro, together with another officer and two civilians. The victim was abducted on June 6, when leaving the university where he studies. (*latribuna.hn, 24 June 2010*)

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### Honduras, 24 June 2010

On June 24, two Preventive Police officers were accused of abducting the son of a hardware business owner in San Pedro Sula. The victim was kidnapped on June 1 when the officers stopped the vehicle he was traveling in with his father on the pretense that they were conducting random searches. Once the two stopped the vehicle, the young man was forced into another vehicle which sped away. The victim was rescued by police officers on June 7 in El Retiro, El Zapotal sector. A man and a woman who were guarding the victim were captured in the operation. The officers were captured on June 17 in Santa Barbara after robbing a house, together with another officer and two civilians. They were identified by eyewitnesses as responsible for the kidnapping. (*tiempo.hn, 24 June 2010*)

### Honduras, 22 June 2010

At 12:45 p.m. local time on June 22, a 39-year-old man was abducted near the National Autonomous University of Honduras, while headed to a bank to deposit money from his church. A minibus approached him and he was forced into the vehicle at gunpoint. Once inside the vehicle, his hands and feet were tied and he was blindfolded. The man was located in a hotel in Choluteca. According to authorities, the man was released briefly by his abductors and was given 1,000 Lempiras to check into the hotel. The receptionist then accompanied him to the room where he was later found. The victim took advantage of the time he was left alone and called his relatives, who informed police of the incident. The victim's relatives had already been contacted by the criminals to demand 1 million Lempiras for the victim's release. Police detained three hotel employees who are being questioned. (*m.elheraldo.hn, 22 June 2010*)

### Mexico, 8 July 2010

A 41-year old businessman from Playa del Carmen who had been held for 40 days was released by his kidnappers, alleged members of the "Los Zetas" gang, following the payment of US\$ 3.5 million in ransom. The man was kidnapped on May 28 from outside a bar in the Gonzalo Guerrero colony when four armed men forced him into an SUV with Tabasco State license plates. Shortly after the abduction, the kidnappers contacted his relatives demanding US\$ 5 million in ransom and threatened to execute him if the money was not delivered the following day. The ransom negotiations were handled by the man's father who paid 45 million Pesos on the night of July 7. Prior to his abduction, the businessman sold a large piece of land in the Riviera Maya for several million dollars and investigators believe that someone inside the public registry office handed out the information to the kidnappers. (*noticaribe.com.mx, 10 July 2010*)

### Mexico, 6 July 2010

On July 6, two alleged kidnappers were detained, after a shoot out was registered in Villa de las Flores, Coacalco. The criminals were trying to escape onboard a vehicle with two people they had kidnapped earlier, when the car crashed into a light pole. Around 7:00 a.m. local

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time, eyewitnesses reported to municipal police that two armed criminals subdued a woman inside a store and forced her to board a vehicle. Authorities launched an operation in the second section of Villa de Las Flores and located the vehicle that had been described in the eyewitnesses report. When the criminals noticed the presence of police, they tried to escape but crashed the vehicle. Two victims, a 48-year-old man and a 39-year-old woman were found by the officers in the vehicle. (*milenio.com*, 7 July 2010)

### **Mexico, 5 July 2010**

During a rescue operation in the Tonatico municipality, Ministerial Police captured two criminals, a 28-year-old woman and a 22-year-old man, members of a kidnapping gang operating in Guerrero, Morelos and Mexico States. This gang is responsible for at least seven abductions and is linked to the abduction of a man for whose release 1 million Pesos were being demanded and the kidnapping of a girl for whose release they demanded 2 million Pesos. In another operation, Anti-Kidnapping officers from the Ministerial Police detained a 30-year-old man and a 21-year-old woman in the Nextlalpan municipality when they arrived at a location on the Teoloyucan-Jaltocan road to collect a 2 million Peso ransom for the release of a kidnapping victim. (*eluniversal.com.mx*, 5 July 2010)

### **Mexico, 3 July 2010**

Officers of the Ministerial Police from Morelos thwarted the abduction of a woman who holds dual Mexican and American citizenship and detained six alleged kidnappers, one of whom was killed while trying to escape. The woman was abducted in an area known as La Herradura, in the indigenous village of Ahuatepec, north of Cuernavaca and on the border with the Tepoztlan municipality. The kidnappers had demanded a ransom of 75,000 Pesos for her release from the victim's husband, who is also a dual citizen, which he was trying to deliver to the criminals at a gas station near Chamilpa village, near the Km. 75 on the Mexico-Cuernavaca road. (*cronica.com.mx*, 3 July 2010)

### **Mexico, 2 July 2010**

A shoe factory owner from Queretaro, who was abducted on June 28, was rescued by officers of the Mexican Army and agents from the State Criminal Investigations Division of the General Justice Prosecutor. The man, for whose release the kidnappers had demanded an undisclosed ransom amount, was rescued from a safe house in the San Gaspar quarter in Cadereyta. His kidnapping marked the fourth abduction case officially reported to authorities in Queretaro in the last 50 days. (*unafuente.com* 3 July 2010)

### **Mexico, 30 June 2010**

A month after the kidnappers of a man who was abducted in April in the Vicente Guerrero municipality were detained, the State's General Justice Prosecutor's Office announced that part of the ransom paid for his release was recovered. The institution will give the victim's

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family the money, 27,900 Pesos and US\$ 9,711, which they had to have the victim released. The money was given back to authorities by the daughter of the kidnapping gang leader, who is also related to the victim. The four kidnappers were detained on May 28 in Nayarit State. (*elsiglodedurango.com.mx*, 30 June 2010)

### **Mexico, 29 June 2010**

Officers of the State's Security Agency detained five alleged kidnappers who held a minor captive. Allegedly, two people called authorities stating that they had been assaulted by five men in a taxi and that their friend, a 16-year-old, was violently forced into the vehicle, which drove away to an unknown location. The criminals were detained by authorities in the Mexico 68 colony, Tejupilco municipality, and the victim was safely rescued. (*milenio.com*, 29 June 2010)

### **Mexico, 26 June 2010**

On June 26, the General Justice Prosecutor dismantled a five-member kidnapping gang, one of whom had shot at officers of the State's Investigation Agency on June 16, in the Francisco Zarco colony. The gang member was wounded in the fire exchange, the firearm he was using was impounded and the information he provided led authorities to capture his accomplices. All the detained are from Durango and operated in the rural area, so they could not be located easily. They were accused of the May 2 kidnapping of two young men in Coneto de Comonfort, for whose release they were demanding 200,000 Pesos. The victims' relatives had no economic resources and could only gather 60,000 Pesos, which were delivered in La Sierrita. From that money, the gang leader kept 40,000 Pesos and gave 5,000 Pesos to each of the other criminals. Authorities stated that investigations will continue in order to determine the responsibility of the detained in other abductions. (*oem.com.mx*, 26 June 2010)

### **Mexico, 25 June 2010**

At 10:00 p.m. local time on June 25, in a joint operation between officers of the Anti-Kidnapping Attorney of the State's General Justice Prosecutor's Office and the State's Investigations Agency, a businessman who had been kidnapped on June 15 in La Chicocana village, Ayutla Mixe, was safely rescued. Five members of the "Chicocana" kidnapping gang were detained in the operation. The kidnappers were demanding 2 million Pesos for the victim's release. Investigations were launched after the incident was reported and the safe house where the victim was being held captive was located in the Miguel de Hidalgo colony, San Martin Mexicapan. In the operation, a firearm was impounded, as well as a truck. (*diariopm.com*, 28 June 2010)

### **Mexico, 22 June 2010**

Public Security Officers in Toluca located a 33-year-old man who was able to escape from his abductors after being kidnapped days ago in the Santa Maria Totoltepec community. The victim

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was found near the safe house where he was held captive on Tlatelolco Street with wounds to his head. Authorities immediately launched an operation to locate the kidnappers, who allegedly were demanding 1 million Pesos from the victim's relatives for his release. Three vehicles were located at the safe house and four military-issue firearms were seized. (*eluniversal.com.mx*, 22 June 2010)

### **Mexico, 21 June 2010**

Officers of the General Justice Prosecutor's Office of Chiapas State, together with other law enforcement agencies, rescued two men that had been abducted and were being held captive in a safe house in the Teapa municipality. Six members of a kidnapping gang were also detained and confessed their participation in at least seven other abductions, five of them in Tabasco. Their last victim was a minor who was released after being held for several days, when her relatives paid the demanded ransom. The two rescued victims, a cattle rancher and his employee, were kidnapped the morning of June 21, when they were headed to the rancher's farm in Nicolas Bravo, Juarez municipality. After the event was reported, the Specialized Unit against Kidnapping of the Chiapas Prosecutor Office launched investigations. Eyewitnesses stated that the victims were intercepted by armed men who forced them into their vehicles and drove away to an unknown location. The victims were rescued in the San Ignacio village in Teapa, near the Puyacatenco River. One of the criminals shot at authorities and was wounded. Three vehicles, a firearm and ammunition were impounded in the operation. (*chiapashoy.com*, 25 June 2010)

### **Mexico, 18 June 2010**

At 3:00 p.m. local time on June 18, two kidnappers and an Aguascalientes Police officer were killed when an intense fire exchange erupted in the Villa de Arraiga municipality, San Luis Potosi State, as officers of the Mexican Army and the Anti-Kidnapping Group of the Ministerial Police tried to rescue a kidnapped cattle rancher. The cattle rancher was kidnapped ten days ago when leaving his home in the Mexico colony. The man was driving his SUV with a cattle trailer and was headed to San Luis Potosi when he was intercepted by another vehicle. Several men posing as Federal Police officers stepped out of the car and demanded his permit for transporting the cattle, which the victim stated he did not have. They then demanded money, which the man said he did not have with him and that he had to call his son for it. The man spoke briefly with his son when suddenly the criminals took the phone and told the victim's son that he had to pay 2 million Pesos if he wanted to see his father alive again. The victim's son immediately reported the event to authorities and investigations were launched. When authorities arrived at the border of Villa de Arriaga, San Luis Potosi, and Ojuelos, Jalisco, they were ambushed by an armed group and a shootout was ensued. Search operations and raids on several houses continued throughout the day and night in order to locate the kidnapping victim, but his whereabouts remain unknown. (*aguasdigital.com* 19 June 2010)

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### **Mexico, 17 June 2010**

On June 17, officers of Mexico's Federal Police rescued two girls, aged 14 and 20, who had been held captive since June 13 in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua State, and captured eight members of the gang that kidnapped them. After the victim's relatives handed over the ransom money to the kidnappers, the officers followed them and located the victims in a safe house near the Melchor Ocampo quarter. According to authorities, the "Los Rojas" kidnapping gang abducted the victims near their homes in Ciudad Juarez and threatened their relatives that they would harm the victims if their ransom demands were not met. In the operation, two vehicles, an SUV, cash and several mobile phones were impounded. From April 9 to June 16, Federal Police rescued 34 kidnapping victims and captured 31 alleged kidnappers. Four kidnapping gangs have been dismantled. (*google.com, 17 June 2010*)

### **Mexico, 15 June 2010**

On June 15, Federal Police Officers detained two alleged kidnappers and released a 58-year-old man who was being held captive near Xalapa, Veracruz. Following investigation, it was discovered that the kidnappers had participated in the abductions of professionals in the Huehuetoca and Metepec municipalities. The rescued victim was abducted on May 12 and a high ransom amount was being demanded for his release. In the operation, five mobile phones, banking documents, a firearm and ammunition were impounded. The gang was known for threatening their victims' relatives and demanding high amounts of money to be deposited in several accounts. (*reporterospoliciacos.com.mx, 16 June 2010*)

### **Mexico, 13 June 2010**

At 10:30 p.m. local time on June 13, six members of a family from Mexico State fell victim to an express kidnapping. They were abducted by several armed men in the Tres Mariás, Huitzilac municipality. Three hours later authorities were informed that the family had been released and abandoned in their vehicle on the federal road to Mexico City, in the Tres Marias community. Only their valuables were stolen. (*launion.com.mx, 15 June 2010*)

### **Mexico, 12 June 2010**

The night of June 12, a businesswoman, the former transportation secretary of the Oaxaca Government, fell victim to an express abduction in Oaxaca. The woman was leaving a restaurant in the Reforma colony when she was intercepted by two men who arrived in a vehicle, subdued her and took her away to an unknown location. The woman was released the morning of June 13. (*cronica.com.mx, 14 June 2010*)

### **Mexico, 11 June 2010**

Officers of the State's Security Agency rescued a 42-year-old doctor who had been kidnapped while working out in Bosque de Tlahuac, Federal District. The kidnappers contacted the victim's father and brother to demand the ransom payment for the victim's release, and they

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reported the abduction to authorities. Officers of the Anti-Kidnapping Group of Mexico's State General Justice Prosecutor's Office in Matamoros, San Sebastian colony, Chalco municipality, closely monitored the ransom negotiations and were able to locate where the victim was being held and rescued him. In the operation, a man and a woman were detained, while their three accomplices escaped. (*milenio.com, 11 June 2010*)

### **Peru, 30 June 2010**

The pilot and copilot of a tour plane, who disappeared on June 10 while on a routine flight, were located in the Peruvian forest after being held captive for 20 days. The victims stated that they were released by their abductors near Puerto Maldonado, located in the jungle about 1,600 km/ 995 miles southeast of Lima. They also stated that they were threatened by their abductors. The airplane remains missing despite a search in the area. Authorities ruled out an accident and hypothesize that the plane was the actual target, which could be used for drug transport or by Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) terrorists to help their last free leader escape the country. (*google.com, 30 June 2010*)

### **Peru, 2 July 2010**

The wife and underage son of the owner of a money exchange office were left tied up inside their house in Los Olivos, while the man was taken to his business in Ocona, where an undisclosed amount of money was stolen. The two were found by authorities in different rooms of the house after the victim reported the incident to authorities. The assailants escaped in a vehicle with the money, leaving the man at his exchange office. (*rpp.com.pe, 2 July 2010*)

### **Puerto Rico, 22 June 2010**

Police authorities stated that a 54-year-old woman was carjacked and abducted in Hostos, Sultana neighborhood, Mayaguez, while she was waiting in her car outside a doctor's office for an appointment the early morning hours of June 22. An armed man approached her and forced her over to the passenger seat, stole her cash, jewelry and mobile phone and took her in her vehicle to withdraw money from an ATM. As they drove toward Cabo Rojo, the criminal was communicating with his accomplice, who was following them in an SUV and, when they briefly stopped to plan where they were going to take the victim to withdraw the money, she escaped and ran for help. The criminals left the scene with her vehicle. (*primerahora.com, 22 June 2010*)

### **Uruguay, 7 July 2010**

At 10:00 p.m. local time, a 42-year-old woman and her 19-year-old nephew fell victim to an express kidnapping in Pocitos, Montevideo. They were surprised by two armed men as they got into the woman's vehicle. At gunpoint, the woman was forced to drive around the city and stop at several ATMs, withdrawing a total of 10,000 Pesos from her bank account. The victims were held captive for four hours and were released at 2:00 a.m. local time on July 8, in Seccional 18,

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with 50 Pesos to catch a bus home. When they arrived, the building's concierge was notified of the event and he quickly called police. Meanwhile, the criminals used the victim's vehicle to rob a gas station in Las Piedras, Canelones Department, and afterwards abandoned the car. (*elpais.com.uy*, 9 July 2010)

### Uruguay, 7 July 2010

Several express kidnappings of couples, who were later taken to their houses and robbed, raised fears in Montevideo that criminals have imported the crime to the country. As a result of these crimes, police patrols have been increased in the Punta Carretas neighborhood, where two of the events were reported. Police also increased their efforts to solve these cases and increased the number of investigators working on these cases. (*elpais.com.uy*, 7 July 2010)

### Uruguay, 13 June 2010

A woman who was kidnapped from the home she shares with her partner, the owner of a foreign exchange office in Punta del Este, by two men pretending to be interested in buying land from the couple was able to escape her kidnappers. The kidnappers also stole money and jewelry from the couple's home. The victim was taken to a safe house in the Ocean Park area, located about 10 km/6 miles from Punta Ballena. The criminals were demanding US \$1 million for her release. The woman was able to escape from the safe house and sought help from neighbors. Authorities launched an operation following reports of the incident and were able to detain four men involved in the crime. (*espanol.upi.com*, 13 June 2010)

### Venezuela, 9 July 2010

At 3:00 a.m. local time on July 9, a 35-year-old cattle rancher was released near the Orope village, Garcia de Hevia municipality, Tachira State. The rancher was kidnapped on May 7 from his farm, located on Km. 26 of the Santa Barbara-El Vigia road, Colon municipality, by several armed men, some of them hooded, who subdued his relatives and workers who were present at the time of the abduction. According to the police, the kidnappers abandoned the rancher's due to the pressure of several law enforcement agencies from Zulia and Tachira States, who were closing in on them. (*laverdad.com*, 10 July 2010)

### Venezuela, 8 July 2010

A 74-year-old woman was abducted from her house in the Gallo Verde sector, Cecilio Acosta Parrish, by several armed men. The woman passed out during her abduction and was carried out of her home by the criminals, who loaded her into a vehicle which was followed by an SUV. Some of the victim's relatives witnessed the event but they were threatened with death if they interfered. The kidnappers have yet to establish contact with the victim's relatives. (*laverdad.com*, 10 July 2010)

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### Venezuela, 8 July 2010

On July 8, in a commando operation set up by officers of the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Corps and the National Guard, a pregnant woman and her 7-year-old daughter were rescued in the La Pipa sector, near Coloncito, Panamericano municipality, where they had been held hostage in a safe house. One of the kidnappers was killed in an exchange of fire during the rescue operation and two other suspects were detained. The victims were intercepted on July 1 near Guaramito, Garcia de Hevia municipality, northern Tachira State, by two men who took them to an undisclosed location at gunpoint. The kidnappers contacted the woman's husband demanding 300,000 Bolivares Fuertes for the release of his wife and daughter. To scare the husband and pressure him to speed up the ransom payment, the kidnappers cut off a small part of the girl's finger. (*el-nacional.com, 10, July 2010*)

### Venezuela, 8 July 2010

On the afternoon of July 8, a 4-year-old boy was kidnapped by three armed men in front of his school in San Cristobal. The kidnappers drove the victim away in an SUV, which was later abandoned when they changed vehicles. The victim's whereabouts remain unknown. (*el-nacional.com, 10 July 2010*)

### Venezuela, 6 July 2010

Police in Barinas State thwarted the abduction of a family in the Alto Barinas Sur neighborhood and captured four adults and a teenager. During the rescue operation, one suspect was killed. Authorities were able to rescue about ten family members who were being held captive in a room in their house. Authorities believe that the gang was behind several robberies and kidnapping cases in neighborhoods in Barinas and Portuguesa States. (*rnv.gov.ve 6 July 2010*)

### Venezuela, 5 July 2010

The morning of July 5, the body of a man who was abducted with his father, brother and two other men, was found near the river in the La Veraniega sector, Ocumare del Tuy, Miranda State. The body bore four gunshot wounds to the head and the hands were tied. The whereabouts of the other victims remain unknown. Four suspects, residents of La Veraniega, were detained, due to their possible participation in the kidnapping. They were identified by an eyewitness who was able to escape the abduction and reported the event to authorities. (*primicias24.com, 6 July 2010*)

### Venezuela, 2 July 2010

At 1:00 a.m. local time, a doctor from Carabobo State who had been kidnapped on November 30, 2009, by heavily armed men in commando attire was abandoned on the Barbula-San Diego road, Carabobo State. He was held captive in a cave 30 meters below ground, near a cemetery. The victim was found by a truck driver gagged and tied up in bushes on side of the

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road. Recently, police detained an evangelic pastor, allegedly linked to this kidnapping. (*cine.eluniversal.com, 3 July 2010*)

## Venezuela, 1 July 2010

The night of July 1, officers of the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Institution of the National Division against Kidnapping and Extortion, rescued an 8-year-old boy who had been kidnapped together with his mother on June 29, in Charallave, Miranda State. The two were abducted while driving in the woman's SUV in the La Puerta de La Mata sector in Charallave, when two cars intercepted her. The two victims were threatened with death and forced into another vehicle. The 33-year-old woman was released the afternoon of June 30, so she could gather the 600,000 Bolivares Fuertes the criminals were demanding for her son's release. Authorities stated that information provided by the victim's mother and other family members, was key to his release. Following reports of suspicious activity from residents in the San blas sector, officers were able to locate the improvised safe house where the boy was being held and rescued him. No ransom was paid. (*globovision.com, 2 July 2010*)

## Venezuela, 30 June 2010

A businessman kidnapped June 16 was rescued following a joint operation between the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Corps and the San Francisco (Zulia State) Municipal Police. One kidnapper was killed when a fire exchange erupted and six others, four adults and two teenagers, were detained. Authorities launched the operation after receiving an anonymous call informing them of the safe house in the La Polar quarter, San Francisco municipality, southern Maracaibo. The man is kidnapping victim number 43 this year in Zulia State. (*eluniversal.com, 29 June 2010*)

## Venezuela, 30 June 2010

Aragua State's director of the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Institution reported that in 2010, a total of 38 victims have been kidnapped in the state. Of them, 24 cases were solved due to the intervention of security institutions, while 14 victims were released after their relatives made the demanded ransom payments. He also stated that the number of kidnapping cases has decreased significantly due to the joint effort of several law enforcement agencies. Only one kidnapping victim, a man of Portuguese origin who was abducted on April 17, still remains captive. Two other victims, who were abducted in 2009, also remain captive. In the kidnapping cases registered in 2010, only one victim, a businessman who was abducted on January 28, was killed by his abductors. It was also reported that a woman was detained and is being held for planning her own abduction, in order to get a large amount of money from her relatives. (*elaragueno.gesindoni.com.ve, 30 June 2010*)

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## Venezuela, 30 June 2010

A 27-year-old businessman was rescued by officers of the Scientific Police and Miranda Municipal Police in a mountainous area of the La Boca de Palma sector on the road to Quisiro, Miranda municipality, Zulia State in the early morning hours of June 30. The man was held captive for 12 hours after being abducted from his farm in the El Clarin sector. Five suspects were detained in the operation and four others are being sought, two firearms were also impounded. The rescue was possible after a man was detained the afternoon of June 29 while driving the victim's SUV. During his questioning, he confessed to participating in the abduction and told authorities where the victim could be located. The man was found with his hands and feet chained. Two of the detained criminals, both of Colombian origin, were employees at the victim's farm and were in charge of monitoring the victim's movements for the gang. (*laverdad.com*, 1 July 2010)

## Venezuela, 29 June 2010

According to the director of Security and Public Order of Lara State, a 31-year-old businessman who had been kidnapped on June 8 in Industrial Zone 1 of Barquisimeto, Lara State, was released on June 29 by his kidnapers. It is not known if the demanded ransom payment was made. (*globovision.com*, 1 July 2010)

## Venezuela, 29 June 2010

At 10:30 p.m. local time on June 29, a cattle rancher from Barinas and two students fell victim to an express kidnapping and car robbery in the Colon quarter, La Guayana sector, Tachira State. Several men intercepted them while they were riding in their vehicle, threatened them with death and took them to an unknown location. Authorities stated that five similar cases have been reported in the area in recent days. (*rcnradio.com*, 1 July 2010)

## Venezuela, 28 June 2010

At 12:15 p.m. local time on June 28, a 27-year-old businessman of Syrian origin was briefly abducted in Cabimas, Zulia State. The man had left his store and was walking to a taxi stand to run some errands when he was intercepted by four armed men who forced him into an SUV without license plates. A checkpoint set up by the National Guard near Bolivar Square in the Santa Rita municipality, forced the criminals to abandon their victim on the road, after they received a phone call ordering them to do so. They told the victim to walk away and not look back. The victim said he was threatened by his abductors during the brief moments that he was held captive and was told to be quiet. After he was released, the man walked some blocks until he met a National Guard patrol and reported the event to authorities. (*laverdad.com*, 29 June 2010)

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## **Venezuela, 23 June 2010**

According to regional authorities, a 17-year-old was released by his kidnappers near a gas station on the Central Regional Highway, Aragua State, in the early morning hours of June 23, due to police pressure in the area. The teenager was abducted the afternoon of June 21 in the Los Jabillos sector in Maracay, Aragua State, while headed to his home, by four unknown men who forced him into a vehicle. Two criminals, a man and a woman, linked to this event were detained after a house was raided in the Saman de Guere quarter in Turmero, Aragua State. Allegedly they are members of the “Elis Saul” gang, which operates in the Santa Rita sector, Francisco Linares Alcantara municipality. The kidnappers were demanding 800,000 BolivaresFuertes for the victim’s release and one kilogram of gold. (*el-carobobeno.com, 24 June 2010*)

## **Venezuela, 22 June 2010**

At 2:30 p.m. local time on June 22, a criminal linked to the abduction of a man was captured in Tinaquillo, Cojedes State, by officers of the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Institution. Investigations regarding the case, which had been closed, led police to this detention, but four criminals linked to the crime are still on the loose. The victim was kidnapped on October 19, 2009, in Aguirre, Carabobo State, and authorities investigated the case for months. On June 1, two suspects were detained who led them to a farm near Las Torres, in the southeastern area of the municipality, where the victim’s body was found in a shallow grave. (*el-carobobeno.com, 23 June 2010*)

## **Venezuela, 19 June 2010**

After an intense pursuit, officers of the Anti-Extortion and Kidnapping Division of Miranda’s State Police detained two alleged kidnappers near a shopping mall in Cua, Urdaneta municipality, Miranda State. The chief of the division stated that the criminals abducted a 47-year-old woman, the owner of a bakery in Guatire, Miranda State, while she was driving her SUV. Two hours later, they abandoned her in Guatire’s Industrial Zone, where police officers located her. An operation was launched immediately and the criminals were located headed to the Tuy Valley in the victim’s vehicle. Allegedly, the detained are members of a gang that operates in the Guarenas-Guatire area and which is responsible for more than 15 express abductions and car robberies this year. (*el-guayanes.com, 19 June 2010*)

## **Venezuela, 19 June 2010**

Officers of the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Institution and the National Guard were involved in a shootout with suspected kidnappers during a rescue attempt outside a Caracas shopping mall the afternoon of June 19. According to reports, two alleged kidnappers were holding a victim captive and were waiting inside a vehicle for the ransom payment when the officers arrived on the scene. Unconfirmed reports state that the alleged kidnappers were

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killed in the 40-minute-long shootout and one officer was wounded. No information was released regarding the kidnapping victim. (*diarioelprogreso.com, 20 June 2010*)

### Venezuela, 17 June 2010

At 3:00 a.m. local time on June 17, a 40-year old farm producer was abducted from his farm, located in the Gibraltar Parrish, Sucre municipality, south of Lake Maracaibo. Two others were also abducted the same day in Maracaibo, Zulia State, but no further information has been released by authorities. (*elregionaldelzulia.com, 17 June 2010*)

### Venezuela, 17 June 2010

The masterminds behind several kidnappings in Lara State have been found inside the Uribana penitentiary, according to authorities from the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Institution (CICPC), Lara branch. CICPC authorities are working with prison management to address the problem and ensure that the perpetrators do not strike again. (*promar.tv, 17 June 2010*)

### Venezuela, 15 June 2010

The afternoon of June 15, a 26-year-old man was abducted by three men from his house located in the La Coromoto neighborhood, San Francisco municipality, Zulia State. It is believed that a woman who is very close to his family provided information to the criminals who kidnapped the man. A surveillance camera shows that the woman in question approached the house and then left suspiciously. Shortly after, the criminals arrived, traveling in three vehicles. The kidnappers knew where to find the victim's father's firearm, which was hidden under a mattress, and also too the family safe and two computers, likely because they knew the family had recently sold some property. Five suspects have been detained in relation to this case. The family's maid is also being interrogated in order to determine if she had any involvement. At the time of the abduction, only the victim's mother, brother and the maid were home. The kidnappers have not established any contact with the victim's relatives yet. (*laverdad.com, 19 June 2010*)

### Venezuela, 12 June 2010

At 9:30 p.m. local time on June 12, an 80-year-old businessman of Spanish origin was released in San Jose de Guanipa, Anzoategui State. The man had been abducted on June 5 while driving his SUV in the La Floresta sector, El Tigrito, when armed men intercepted him and drove him away in his own vehicle. Allegedly, his relatives paid the 300,000 Bolivares Fuertes the kidnappers demanded for his release. The victim was held captive in a safe house in the San Jose de Guanipa municipality, although the ransom calls were made from Puerto Ordaz, San Feliz and Uptata, Bolivar State. Unofficial sources stated that the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Institution has already identified the members of the gang that abducted the man, which operates in the southern part of the state. This is the third rescue authorities made in June: on June 9, a 17-year old man of Asian origin who had been held captive for 15

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days in a motel in San Jose de Guanipa was rescued. In the operation, a member of the “Los Maracuchos” gang was killed. On June 11, a 39-year-old farm producer who was held captive for 53 hours was released in Pariaguan. No other victims remain captive in the southern part of Anzoategui State. (*eltiempo.com.ve, 14 June 2010*)

### Venezuela, 12 June 2010

A 25-year-old man, the son of an El Tocuyo gas station owner, was abducted at 1:30 p.m. local time on June 12 when he was intercepted by three men while driving his SUV in the Nuvia sector, El Tocuyo, Moran municipality, Lara State. Allegedly, the men threatened him and boarded his car by force then drove for about an hour to San Jose de Quibor, Jimenez municipality, where they abandoned the victim’s vehicle and boarded another one. Unofficial sources stated that the event has not been reported and that the criminals have not established any contact with the victim’s relatives to demand a ransom. This year, 29 abductions have been registered in Lara State. (*elimpulso.com, 14 June 2010*)

### Venezuela, 9 June 2010

A 21-year-old man, the son of a businessman, who was kidnapped on May 18 by armed men while meeting friends outside a shopping mall, was released by his abductors near the Santa Clara toll on the National Road of Mariara-San Joaquin, Carabobo State. Joint intelligence work by several law enforcement agencies led them to the victim, as well as a member of the gang that kidnapped him. Further investigations led authorities to Barinas State, in the western part of the country, where the ransom negotiator for the gang was hiding. Three other criminals have already been identified and are being sought. The victim’s older brother was kidnapped in 2009 and was released after the family paid a high ransom amount but it is unclear if the two kidnappings are related. (*elperiodiquito.com, 11 June 2010*)

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## RUSSIA & CIS

### Kyrgyzstan, 23 June 2010

Six ethnic Uzbek women preparing for a referendum in Kyrgyzstan were released unharmed after being held hostage briefly in the country’s volatile south. Kyrgyzstan’s interim government has said that up to 2,000 people may have been killed this month in ethnic clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the region. The ethnic Uzbeks, working for the state election commission, had been held in the city of Osh. Officials said it was unclear who their captors were or what they wanted. The government has accused Kyrgyzstan’s deposed president, toppled in an uprising in April, of stoking violence from his exile in Belarus to derail the referendum. A spokeswoman for the commission said that the Uzbeks were kidnapped by a crowd of women - a tactic often used in Central Asia to snatch people in crowded places. The ethnic conflict in the south has

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wrecked the region and triggered a mass wave of refugees, mainly ethnic Uzbeks who fled their homes during several days of fighting after June 10. (*msnbc.msn.com, 23 June 2010*)

### **Russia, 28 June 2010**

Seven unidentified men wearing camouflage and armed with automatic weapons intercepted and kidnapped a resident of the village of Arshty, in Ingushetia's Sunzhen District. The incident took place on the highway near the settlement of Assinovskaya, Sunzhen District, as the man was driving home with four relatives from the settlement of Bamut, Achkhoy-Martan District, Chechnya. The gunmen, driving a Russian-made truck, intercepted the victim and his relatives, forced the man out of his car and into the truck at gunpoint, and then sped away. According to an unnamed law enforcement source, local militia officers were searching for the victim and his kidnapers. (*eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru, 29 June 2010*)

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