THE ACTIVE-SHOOTER THREAT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY

This issue of Constellis’ Kidnap for Ransom Insight Report covers global kidnapping incidents and trends for the months of September, October, and November 2018. The information is derived from multi-source analysis of kidnap for ransom activity and where known, the outcome or resolution of the event. The report covers current kidnap for ransom hotspots at regional, national and provincial levels, with particular focus on areas where K&R activity is increasing.

Statistical analysis of data for September and October 2018 is included on page 13, which displays K&R trends by region, victims by nationality and employment sector, as well as identifying the Top 10 countries for kidnapping of foreign nationals over the reporting period.

The Global Piracy Update provides an overview of the piracy threat by region, providing trend analysis for September and October 2018. It also includes sample cases occurring through those months, providing an illustration of the identified trends.

The Cyber Security section examines current issues affecting companies and individuals in the realm of IT security. This edition will look at the threats against ‘Internet of Things’ (IoT) devices. The use of IoT, or ‘smart devices’, has become increasingly common among individual users as well as in the workplace. As projections establish that tens of billions of IoT devices will be in use globally in the next couple of years, it is widely acknowledged that IoT security has not kept pace with the proliferation of these devices. A vast number of vulnerabilities have been exposed by cyber criminals, often having a significant impact on businesses and governments. With the abundance of data being collected by IoT devices, both for personal or professional use, users and organizations are becoming increasingly susceptible to data interception, which can have a significant financial impact, as well as placing individuals at physical risk.

The Focus Article offers an insight onto the Active Shooter threat. Mass shootings and workplace violence events are on the rise, with such incidents reported around the world on a nearly weekly basis. This is particularly the case for countries where guns are largely accessible, including the US, where this type of event is becoming a significant risk for organizations. In this context, and given the impossibility of predicting when or if an active shooter will target an organization, emergency action plans and pre-incident training are essential, in order to enable personnel to react appropriately if confronted with an active shooter situation.
GLOBAL OVERVIEW

AMERICAS

In an atypical occurrence, during September-October 2018, the Americas accounted for only 9% of the total number of foreign kidnapping victims recorded by Constellis globally. Authorities in a number of countries, such as Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico, have continued to maintain that there has been a decrease in the number of kidnappings since the beginning of 2018. However, Constellis considers that general trends remain largely unchanged in the region, with Latin America continuing to be one of the most affected areas for kidnapping in the world. As such, it is likely that the observed decrease was the result of reduced reporting during the reporting period. In Nicaragua, while crime rates were typically moderate by regional standards, anti-government protests and associated violence have resulted in very poor security conditions since April 2018. In this context, a series of politically-motivated illegal detentions, kidnappings, and enforced disappearances has taken place, carried out by both the Nicaraguan security forces and pro-government militias. While mostly affecting local nationals, particularly activists and journalists, foreign nationals are not immune to these threats and other collateral risks. As a result, a number of foreign governments have advised against all but essential travel to Nicaragua.

CASES:

- In October 2018, civil organizations denounced the illegal arrest of Austrian-American journalist David Goette-Luciak by elements linked to the government of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua. The reporter for international media outlets such as The Washington Post and The Guardian, was illegally arrested on the morning of 1 October. According to local journalists, since mid-September Goette-Luciak had been the target of a smear campaign launched by pro-government groups, which questioned his professionalism. Some even asserting he was a spy for the American government, looking to overthrow the regime. Later reports said the reporter was forcibly ‘deported’ after a day in detention. Other foreign journalists have also reported violence by the Ortega regime, being the alleged targets of threats, confiscation of equipment and deportation.

- On 9 October, a young man was kidnapped by police agents dressed in civilian clothes as he arrived at his work in the Nicaraguan city of Matagalpa. Co-workers and passers-by attempted to impede the illegal arrest but were threatened with detention by the policemen. Relatives of the victim revealed that he had previously participated in a series of anti-government protests and had been the victim of a similar encounter two months earlier. On that occasion, he was kidnapped by pro-government militias, who physically assaulted and tortured him. Since then, the victim had reportedly stopped his participation in protest action.

In Panama, although kidnapping for ransom remains an uncommon occurrence, an increasing trend has been observed since 2017. Moreover, since the beginning of 2018, foreign nationals have been increasingly targeted. This remains mostly an activity of organized criminal gangs, commonly of South American origin, although in recent times local groups have progressively ventured into this profitable crime. The Panamanian authorities have discovered that although kidnapping for ransom in the country is typically traditional in its methodology, social networks have become one of the kidnappers’ main tools, in many cases enabling them to trace a victim in almost real time. To the north, in Costa Rica, risk factors are worsening due to increasing crime rates. Violent crime has particularly seen a notable increase in recent years, as a result of growing competition among groups engaged in drugs trafficking. In recent months there have been multiple incidents of violent crime against foreigners, particularly at prominent tourist locations in the country. These incidents prompted foreign governments to issue travel advisories on the crime threat in the country, at the same time compelling the Costa Rican authorities to improve security in areas frequented by tourists.

CASES:

- On the evening of 1 October, two Panamanian citizens of Palestinian origin were found half-naked on the Pan-American Highway, in the district of Bugaba, Chiriquí Province. Ziad Shaker Abu Awad and Movir Jibarah had been kidnapped earlier the same day, after they left a mall owned by the family of one of them in the city of David, near the border with Costa Rica. A ransom demand of USD 1 million was reportedly made to relatives of the wealthy victim for the release of the hostages. It is said the victims managed to escape before any payment took place. Six suspects have so far been arrested for the crime, including two Panamanians, and four foreign nationals: two Syrians, a Venezuelan and a Nicaraguan. This is reportedly the second kidnapping of Palestinians in the area. The previous one, which was reported in May, targeted the son of a trader in the locality of Paso Canoas.

- On 20 October, Costa Rican authorities, with the aid of private investigators hired by the victim’s family, found the body of a US expatriate, owner of an online sportsbook, William Sean Creighton. He was forced off the highway by a vehicle carrying four armed men, who later took him to an unknown destination. The kidnappers called the victim’s Costa Rican wife the next day, demanding a ransom of between USD 1 million and 750,000 in bitcoin. Local sources confirmed that the family paid a large part of the ransom the same night, to an account in Cuba. However, the victim was not released. Creighton’s body was discovered a few days after news of the kidnapping leaked to the media.
During the period of September-October 2018, Europe saw a significant increase in the number of kidnapped foreigners. Of note in this period was the occurrence of one mass abduction in the region, linked to the global anti-Gülen arrest campaign by the Turkish intelligence services (MIT). During this campaign, at least 80 people were arrested by MIT agents across 18 different countries between 2016 and April 2018, according to Turkey’s president, with many more incidents having been reported since then. While in some cases governments have denounced such interventions as a breach of national sovereignty, in other instances the participation of the host nation is suspected. Locations of the arrests have included European countries such as Bulgaria, Ukraine, Kosovo, and more recently, Moldova. Most arrestees have been involved in the administration of schools run by Gülen’s network. Europe has the second largest number of schools linked to the Gülen movement, with an estimate of 175 schools in 35 countries. Thousands of Gülen’s supporters live in European countries, many of whom applied for asylum after the purge initiated after the 2016 failed coup, of which the movement is accused.

**CASES:**

- On 10 September, international media reported the kidnapping of at least six Turkish nationals, employed in Moldova at a private chain of high schools linked to the Gülenist movement. The operation was said to have been carried out by the Moldovan intelligence services in alleged complicity with the Turkish authorities who later flew the hostages back to Turkey for trial. Details remain vague, but Moldova’s secret service, the SIS, stated that its anti-terror arm had carried out a coordinated operation across several localities, to “prevent threats to national security”. Turkish media later confirmed the detentions, showing evidence of the arrests on various social media accounts. Amnesty International confirmed showing evidence of the arrests on various social media accounts. Amnesty International confirmed showing evidence of the arrests on various social media accounts. They have denounced such interventions as a breach of national sovereignty, in other instances the participation of the host nation is suspected. Locations of the arrests have included European countries such as Bulgaria, Ukraine, Kosovo, and more recently, Moldova. Most arrestees have been involved in the administration of schools run by Gülen’s network. Europe has the second largest number of schools linked to the Gülen movement, with an estimate of 175 schools in 35 countries. Thousands of Gülen’s supporters live in European countries, many of whom applied for asylum after the purge initiated after the 2016 failed coup, of which the movement is accused.

Although Europe has one of the lowest crime rates in the world, the continent is not immune to violent and organized crime. Recent reports have suggested that organized crime groups (OCGs) in the European Union generate approximately €110 billion a year. While the illicit drugs trade and extortion remain some of their most traditional activities, other enterprises such as trading in counterfeit goods, fraud and cybercrime are increasingly profitable. The European organized crime environment is characterized by its plurality, with a number of multinational groups and actors participating in the criminal cycle. Chinese, British, Dutch, Central Asian, and Turkish OCGs, as well as Russian and Italian mafias, are assessed to be the ethnic groups with the widest reach. While kidnapping for ransom does not yet constitute a profitable activity for OCGs in the continent, this cannot be discounted for the future as the criminal landscape evolves.

**In Ukraine:**
On 22 October, police informed of the arrest of two Azerbaijan nationals, suspected of kidnapping a Turkish man the previous day. According to the victim’s report, the accused forced him into a car at gunpoint and took him to an unknown place, from where they demanded a ransom of USD 100,000 for his release. A third man, a Turkish national, is also suspected of having participated in the crime. The circumstances of the release of the victim are unknown, but it is likely a ransom payment took place.

**In Spain:**
On 2 November, five armed foreign men invaded a home in a wealthy neighborhood in the locality of El Escorial, near Madrid. The residents were gagged and bound, while the criminals ransacked the property. The group then took the father of the family hostage and forced him to go with them. The man was returned to the property after two hours. It is believed he was the victim of an express kidnapping, forced to withdraw funds from his bank accounts during that time. The Spanish authorities have stated they believe this was a targeted assault, with the criminals seeming to have prior information on the family and their wealth. The nationality of the aggressors was not specified, but it is believed they may have been Eastern Europeans.

Still from a video allegedly showing the illegal arrest of Turkish nationals in Moldova in September 2018. (hizmetkurdi.org)
**MIDDLE EAST**

Over the reporting period, the Middle East showed a notable increase in the number of kidnapping cases involving foreign nationals, with almost 14% of all recorded cases, in comparison to usual levels below 5%. This increase was led by incidents in Turkey and Syria, which together accounted for 66% of the victims registered in the region. In Syria, in addition to the elevated threat from terrorist activity, the protracted fighting has led to widespread crime in most areas, including those under government control. In this context, violent crime is rife, with extortion, violent robbery, carjacking and kidnapping being frequently reported. This is particularly common at checkpoints, mounted by both militants and criminals. As land borders have begun to reopen in recent months, the number of regional visitors has increased (typically visiting family members), and with this, the number of foreign nationals becoming victims of crime on Syrian territory, including kidnapping.

**CASES:**

- Two Lebanese men were abducted while traveling in Syria on 11 September. Firas Al-Sayegh and Basel Al-Ahmadiya were kidnapped while driving to Al-Suwayda governorate to pick up Al-Ahmadiya’s Syrian wife who was visiting relatives. They were reportedly accosted by armed men, believed to be the perpetrators of several kidnap for ransom cases in the region. The hostages were released on 16 September after Lebanese security forces were able to track them down to a farm near the town of Shahba in the north-eastern part of Al-Suwayda. The victims were allegedly released without any ransom payment.

- An Egyptian businessman, owner of an import-export company, was released by kidnappers on 24 October after a ransom was paid by his family. The expatriate was kidnapped the previous week in the city of Suwayda and later taken to Shibia. The family reportedly paid USD 19,000, along with SYP 25 million (over USD 116,000), some gold jewellery and mobile phones. According to earlier reports, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham based group that monitors the Syrian civil war, said that Yasuda was captured by terrorist group Jabhat Fatah al-Sham in western parts of Idlib province.

- On 24 October, the Japanese government confirmed the release of Japanese journalist Jumpei Yasuda, who was captured by terrorist group Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (formerly known as Nusra Front) on the border with Turkey in June 2015. Japanese government officials said that no ransom was paid, adding that Yasuda was released as a result of the Japanese government asking for cooperation from Turkey and Qatar. Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a UK-based group that monitors the Syrian civil war, said that Yasuda had been released under a Turkish-Qatari deal, which included the payment of USD 3 million by Qatar. According to earlier reports, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham had initially demanded a USD 10 million ransom. According to SOHR, during his captivity, Yasuda was held by the group in western parts of Idlib province.

- An Egyptian businessman, owner of an import-export company, was released by kidnappers on 24 October after a ransom was paid by his family. The expatriate was kidnapped the previous week in the city of Suwayda and later taken to Shibia. The family reportedly paid USD 19,000, along with SYP 25 million (over USD 116,000), some gold jewellery and mobile phones. According to earlier reports, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham based group that monitors the Syrian civil war, said that Yasuda was captured by terrorist group Jabhat Fatah al-Sham in western parts of Idlib province.

- An Egyptian businessman, owner of an import-export company, was released by kidnappers on 24 October after a ransom was paid by his family. The expatriate was kidnapped the previous week in the city of Suwayda and later taken to Shibia. The family reportedly paid USD 19,000, along with SYP 25 million (over USD 116,000), some gold jewellery and mobile phones. According to earlier reports, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham based group that monitors the Syrian civil war, said that Yasuda was captured by terrorist group Jabhat Fatah al-Sham in western parts of Idlib province.

- An Egyptian businessman, owner of an import-export company, was released by kidnappers on 24 October after a ransom was paid by his family. The expatriate was kidnapped the previous week in the city of Suwayda and later taken to Shibia. The family reportedly paid USD 19,000, along with SYP 25 million (over USD 116,000), some gold jewellery and mobile phones. According to earlier reports, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham based group that monitors the Syrian civil war, said that Yasuda was captured by terrorist group Jabhat Fatah al-Sham in western parts of Idlib province.

In Iran, while the overall threat is assessed to be medium, terrorism concerns have increased in the last couple of years, particularly following the attacks in Tehran in June 2017 and more recently in Ahvaz in September 2018. The threat of terrorism in Iran emanates from both domestic and transnational actors. In addition to the Islamic State (IS), which poses a countrywide concern, various local actors pose a threat to specific regions, particularly Baluchistan to the east, Kurdish-majority areas in north-western Iran and Arab-majority areas in the southwest. Although most incidents that have occurred in Iran have targeted government locations and personnel, foreign interests have been targeted in the past. As such, future incidents cannot be ruled out, in addition to possible collateral risks.

**CASES:**

- On 16 October, militants in Iran abducted 12 members of the Iranian security forces near the border with Pakistan. According to reports, the abducted include two members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ (IRGC) intelligence department, seven members of the Basij forces (a sub-unit of the IRGC), as well as regular Iranian border guards. The abduction took place just before dawn, near the Lulakdan border crossing point in the south-eastern Sistan-Baluchistan region. According to official reports, the victims were made unconscious by a ‘single infiltrator’ and then kidnapped and taken to bases inside Pakistan. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, with the IRGC stating the attack was committed by a “terrorist group guided and supported by foreign intelligence services”. Later, on 22 October, terrorist group Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice) claimed responsibility for the abduction, posting two photos of the hostages. The photos showed seven members of the IRGC and five police commandos, all in combat gear, behind a stock of weaponry, apparently seized from the Iranian forces. On 15 November, the IRGC announced that five of the hostages were released in Pakistan. While the conditions of their release were not stated, the IRGC said the kidnappers were seeking to exchange the abducted soldiers with several of their accomplices arrested in Iran, which was an unacceptable demand for the Islamic Republic. Efforts are reportedly underway to secure the release of the remaining captives. Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice), formed in 2012 by former members of the Sunni extremist group Jundallah (Soldiers of God), under the banner of defense of the rights of the Sunni Baluchi people, has in recent years carried out a spate of attacks on Iranian security forces and civilians in the south-eastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan. According to IRGC officials, over the last year, “terror cells affiliated to foreign intelligence services” launched over 50 kidnapping attempts targeting Iranian security forces in various locations along the border, especially in Saravan. Most of the aforementioned attempts were reportedly foiled.
AFRICA

During the period of September-October, Africa regained its position as the region leader for the kidnapping of foreign nationals. Once again, the continent’s figures during the reporting period were dominated by events at sea in the Gulf of Guinea. These took place off Nigeria and the Republic of the Congo, where at least five vessels were attacked in the course of four weeks and at least 37 seafarers of multiple nationalities were kidnapped, confirming the resurgence of this activity after a relative lull between Q2 and Q3 2018. Moreover, in Nigeria, terrorist activity (and counter-activity) continues to escalate against the backdrop of increasing competition between the two factions of Boko Haram: the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) and the one simply referred to as ‘Boko Haram’. This competition, which initially arose following the demise of Abubakar Shekau as head of ISWA, has intensified in recent months. ISWA, under the leadership of Musab al-Barnawi, has emerged as a more extremist faction of Boko Haram, already evidenced in the nature of its operations and internal policies, eliminating any form of moderation within the group. In this context, the threat of kidnapping by the group is very high, as it continues to actively plan to kidnap foreign nationals and those linked to foreign interests.

CASES:

ISWA militants executed a medical worker after a deadline imposed by the group for the Nigerian government to agree to their demands expired on 15 October. The deadline had been set on a video posted online in September. In an additional video released after the murder, the militants said the midwife deserved to be killed because she had abandoned Islam by working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Hauwa Mohammed Liman, who worked in a hospital supported by the ICRC, was one of three aid workers kidnapped by ISWA militants during a raid in the town of Ram, Borno State, in March 2018. She is the second member of the group to have been executed.

JNIM militants in Mali. Still from video released in March 2018. (Long War Journal)

The kidnapping and terrorism threat is at its highest in the Sahel, where numerous terrorist groups operate and have effective control over large swathes of territory. Among the most prominent groups in the region are the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), and Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) - a merger between the al-Qaeda affiliates Ansar Dine, al-Murabitoun, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’s (AQIM) Sahara branch. Dynamics in the region have proved intricate, with evidence of some degree of cooperation between competing groups, and merged groups also carrying out operations as stand-alone units. All these groups are capable of carrying out attacks, including kidnappings, over long distances and across borders. Kidnapping for ransom has particularly been one of the main sources of finance for JNIM and its constituent organizations. Additionally, there is evidence that local criminal gangs also carry out kidnappings of foreign nationals with the intention of selling them to terrorist groups in return for financial rewards. A number of western nationals, including tourists, NGO workers, diplomats and other expatriates, have been kidnapped in the region, with several of them remaining in captivity after several years. Some of the hostages have been killed by their captors or have died in captivity as a result of health complications and the harsh conditions of their detention.

CASES:

On the evening of 17 September, an Italian priest was kidnapped in south Niger. Father Pier Luigi Maccalli was reportedly abducted by eight armed men riding motorbikes, who raided his church in the village of Bomanga, near the border with Burkina Faso, taking him from inside his living quarters. The authorities are continuing to investigate the incident, although they believe the assailants might have taken their hostage to Kogega, a forest that serves as a base along the Niger-Burkina Faso border. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. Father Maccalli had been working in Bomanga for 11 years as a missionary.

On 23 September, a South African executive and an Indian technician were kidnapped along with their local driver while traveling from their workplace in the Inata gold mine to Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. The hostages were reportedly abducted somewhere between Inata and the town of Djibo, Soum province. Burkinafaso security forces attempted to pursue the kidnappers but were ambushed in the Tonhomayel commune, resulting in three gendarmes being killed. According to eyewitnesses, the victims’ vehicle was sighted crossing the Malian border. So far, no group has claimed the incident publicly, and there are no reports of a ransom demand having been made by the kidnappers, believed to be jihadi militants.
In September and October, Asia’s relative incidence of kidnapping events remained within the parameters observed through 2018, accounting for approximately 10% of the total number of kidnapped foreigners recorded globally. An outstanding problem affecting the region is crime linked to loan-sharking activities, particularly carried out by Chinese syndicates. While mostly affecting Chinese citizens or Chinese speakers (from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, etc.), nationals from other countries and ethnicities have also been affected after contracting large debts with these groups, especially at casinos where they operate freely. Chinese loan-shark syndicates lend money at extremely high interests with a short maturity. These groups are additionally known to violently extract payments through different methods, ranging from harassment and threats, to kidnapping for ransom, torture and in some cases, murder. Given the extent of the problem, a number of countries in the region, such as the Philippines, have sought to increase penalties for individuals involved in usury and loan-sharking operations.

**CASES:**

- On 22 October, the Philippine National Police (PNP) filed criminal charges against two Chinese and two Filipinos for the alleged kidnapping of a Chinese man. The suspects, believed to be members of a loan-sharking ring, allegedly kidnapped Zhirong Lin in front of a casino in Parañaque City on 13 October. According to reports, the suspects initially demanded a ransom of 200 million yuan (nearly USD 29 million), which they later lowered to 160,000 yuan (USD 23,000). The victim’s relatives sought the help of the Philippine anti-kidnapping police, who conducted an entrapment operation on 19 October at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 in Pasay City, where the ransom payment was to take place. The kidnappers were arrested in possession of the victim at the checkpoint set up by the police outside the airport.

- In Thailand, on 17 September, a local national and a Chinese man were arrested for the kidnapping of a Chinese businessman in Bangkok. According to reports, the perpetrators had deliberately crashed into the victim’s car as he was leaving a restaurant in the Meng Jai area of northern Bangkok. A who-exiting his vehicle, he was forcefully held by the two men, who demanded the payment of 700,000 baht (approximately USD 21,600). Even after he paid, the perpetrators then alerted the police, who tracked down the perpetrators to a property in Pattaya. The victim was rescued unharmed.

In Pakistan, there is high threat of kidnapping as it is prevalent across the country. Both organized crime syndicates and Islamic militants carry out kidnappings, on occasion acting together. Most kidnappings target wealthy locals and Pakistani expatriates who are visiting the country. However, kidnappers in Pakistan are known to target foreigners, regarded as higher-value targets both in economic and political terms. Visitors of Pakistani origin are often targeted by criminals in the country. Kidnappers in Pakistan, particularly those linked to militant organizations, are capable of conducting sophisticated operations that can take place across borders, particularly that with Afghanistan.

**CASES:**

- On 20 October, Pakistani authorities announced the dismantling of a kidnapping gang in Karachi whose leader was identified to be a high ranking member of the Islamic State (IS) in the city. Three members of the gang were arrested as the police investigated the kidnapping for ransom of a Karachi businessman. The victim was reportedly released by the group after a ransom payment of over Rs10 million (more than USD 75,000) was made. The arrested suspects confessed to their involvement in several other cases of kidnapping for ransom in the city. The funds generated through these activities were reportedly sent to the head of IS in Afghanistan through hundi and hawala systems (traditional systems of money transfer prevalent in Muslim countries, based on a network of agents in different locations), allegedly to fund terrorist acts in Pakistan. The arrested men claimed their activities funded a number of terror attacks in Sindh and Baluchistan, including the deadly bombings in Sehwan Sharif and Shah Noorani in 2017 and 2016 respectively.

- On 2 October, the Pakistani Supreme Court rejected an appeal for acquittal filed by a police officer who was handed a life sentence for abducting a Belgian citizen of Pakistani-origin. According to the prosecution, police officer Mohammad Zubair kidnapped the foreign tourist in the city of Kharian, Punjab province, and received a ransom payment of Rs200,000 (USD 1,700).

- In Afghanistan, security personnel arrested seven members of a kidnapping gang and freed a victim in northern Kunduz province, on 9 October. According to police reports, the detainees, including an Afghan local policeman, held the 18-year-old for two weeks in Ali Abad district after his abduction in Kunduz City. Reportedly, the kidnappers had used a fake social media profile to lure the victim. The kidnappers demanded USD 500,000 from the victim’s father, but he was only able to pay 500,000 afghans (USD 24,000), this being the reason why the teenager had not been released.
For the kidnapping of foreign citizens in Sept-Oct 2018

**Regions**

- **Africa**: 55%
- **Middle East**: 13.5%
- **Europe**: 11.7%
- **Asia & Pacific**: 10.8%
- **Americas**: 9%
- **Rest of the World**: 25.3%

### Statistics for Sept-Oct 2018

- **Africa**: 61 victims
- **Middle East**: 15 victims
- **Europe**: 13 victims
- **Asia**: 12 victims
- **Americas**: 10 victims

### Detailed Regional Distribution

- **Africa**: Nigeria (23), Turkey (5), Syria (5), Lebanon (1), Iran (1), Moldova (6), Malaysia (6)
- **Middle East**: Saudi Arabia (5), Iran (1), UAE (1), Sudan (12), Greece (2), Iran (1), Lebanon (1)
- **Europe**: Turkey (5), Syria (5), Lebanon (1), Iran (1), UAE (1), Yemen (1), Belgium (1)
- **Asia & Pacific**: Malaysia (6), Philippines (2), Thailand (1), Costa Rica (2), Panama (2), Venezuela (2), Cuba (2)
- **Americas**: Mexico (1), Chile (1)

*Statistics for September-October 2018 are drawn from Constellis’ record of 111 kidnapped foreign nationals. Over July-August 2018, Constellis recorded a total of 160 foreign nationals kidnapped across the world.*
SEPT-OCT 2018

KIDNAPPED FOREIGN CITIZENS

REGIONAL ORIGINS OF VICTIMS

- SOUTHEAST ASIAN (31) 27.9%
- LATIN AMERICAN (3) 2.7%
- AFRICAN (4) 3.6%
- UNKNOWN (5) 4.5%
- SOUTH ASIAN (5) 4.5%
- NORTH AFRICAN (14) 12.6%
- EUROPEAN (27) 24.4%
- MIDDLE EASTERN (19) 17.1%

MOST VICTIMIZED SINGLE NATIONALITY

- Filipino
- Libyan
- Polish
- Chinese
- Turkish
- Palestinian
- Indonesian
- Indian
- Ukrainian
- American

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

MOST VICTIMIZED OCCUPATIONAL SECTOR

- BUSINESSPEOPLE 50.5%
- CONSTRUCTION 11.7%
- MARITIME 8.1%
- TOURISTS 1.8%
- UNKNOWN 1.8%
- JOURNALISTS 1.8%
- EDUCATION 1.8%
- OIL & GAS 0.9%
- RELIGIOUS 0.9%
- PROFESSIONALS 1.8%
- DIPLOMATS 0.9%
- MINING 6.3%
- UNSKILLED 0.9%

MOST VICTIMIZED OCCUPATIONAL SECTOR BY REGION

- Africa
- Americas
- Asia
- Middle East

- Maritime
- Businesspeople
- Maritime
- Tourists

- (Number of Victims)
Severe political instability and conflict in Somalia and Yemen continued to undermine security in the Gulf of Aden. Over September and October 2018, there were five hostile maritime incidents in the region, including a hijacking attempt east of Mogadishu. This was the first confirmed hijacking attempt against a commercial ship in Somalia’s High Risk Area since 22 February 2018, when guards aboard a Singaporean-flagged chemical tanker repulsed pirates who had opened fire on the vessel. No ships have been successfully hijacked for ransom in the area over the past year. Nonetheless, continued piracy attempts demonstrate that piracy networks remain active. On 6 November 2018, the UN Security Council passed resolution 2442, granting a 12-month extension to international naval forces fighting piracy off the Somali coast, clearly reflecting the enduring threat levels. Meanwhile, attacks off Yemen’s coast over September and October 2018 included the use of armed guards, remained the most common incidents globally, accounting for 52% of the total incident pool. Nine hijackings were reported in the September – October 2018 period, an increase from two in the previous two months.

14 October 2017. It is suspected Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) was behind the attack. Although ASG activity has declined markedly as a result of operations by the Philippines’ military as well as bilateral maritime patrols by the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, ASG retains both the capability and intent to carry out kidnappings. Furthermore, recent intelligence reports indicate ASG commanders are regrouping and forming specialized kidnap for ransom cells. As recently as 30 October, the Philippine Coast Guard released information indicating a group of ASG militants, armed with rifles and a grenade launcher, are planning to kidnap businessmen or crew of foreign vessels off Sabah. The warning illustrates the enduring threat of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off eastern Sabah. Vessels are advised to exercise caution when transiting the area and re-route if possible.

**CASES:**

- On 16 October, security guards aboard a Hong Kong-flagged cargo ship thwarted an apparent hijacking attempt approximately 341 nautical miles east of Mogadishu, Somalia. Freighter MV KSL was approached by pirates on a speedboat. The assailants, armed with AK-47s, opened fire on the bulk carrier, attempting to board it. The Master raised the alarm, contacted local authorities, activated SSAS and all crew mustered in the citadel. Onboard armed guards returned fire, causing the pirates to abort the attack.

- On 22 September, Nigerian pirates kidnapped 12 crew members from a Swiss bulk carrier approximately 48 nautical miles south of Bonny Island, Nigeria. Massoel Shipping said its vessel, MV Glarus, was carrying wheat, from Lagos to Port Harcourt when it was attacked. The assailants boarded the ship using long ladders and cutting the razor wire on deck, 12 (seven Filipinos, a Croatian, a Bosnian, a Slovenian, a Ukrainian, and a Romanian) out of 19 crew were kidnapped. The hostages were released on 26 October, according to Swiss authorities. The shipping company failed to provide details on how it secured the freedom of its crew, “as to do so would only encourage further criminal acts of this kind.” This clearly suggests a ransom had been paid. Furthermore, earlier reports indicated the company was in communication with the kidnappers for the negotiation of the sailors’ release. It has been reported the Nigerian militant group Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) was responsible for the abduction.

- A Malaysian-flagged fishing trawler was hijacked three nautical miles off Pulau Gaya, Semporna (Sabah, Malaysia), during curfew hours on 11 September. Two masked men, carrying M16 rifles, approached and boarded the trawler, kidnapping two Indonesian crew members. Another two sailors managed to escape by hiding in an on board compartment. Once the perpetrators left the vessel, the remaining crew sailed to a safe port and reported the incident. On 18 September, the kidnappers demanded a RM 4 million (over USD 950,000) ransom for the victims’ release. Two days later, police in Sabah killed two men believed to be involved in the abduction after a high-speed chase at sea near Bohayan Island. It is suspected ASG was behind the kidnap, with the fate of the hostages unknown. The incident came weeks after suspected ASG militants attempted to hijack a tugboat off Sabah on 10 August and another off the Philippines’ Baslian province in February.

**GLOBAL PIRACY UPDATE**

The incidence of piracy and armed robbery over September and October 2018 increased more than 30% compared to the July – August period. This was largely due to a rise in activity in the Gulf of Guinea, most certainly facilitated by the improvement of weather conditions. The Gulf of Guinea remains the area worst affected by piracy and armed robbery worldwide, followed by Southeast Asia. Maritime hostile activity over September and October 2018 largely conformed to established trends. During the period, criminal boardings remained the most common incidents globally, accounting for 52% of the total incident pool. Nine hijackings were reported in the September – October 2018 period, an increase from two in the previous two months.
The proliferation of threats against IoT devices

The term ‘Internet of Things’ (or IoT) essentially refers to ‘smart devices’, i.e. devices that are connected to the internet and controlled through it, or used to collect and share data. There are numerous applications to this technology, from being able to switch on a home lighting system via a smartphone app, to sensors located in aircraft jet engines that can transmit data to technicians to ensure their operability. The growth in IoT devices over the past few years has been exponential. The UK government has estimated that, within the next three years, there will be over 420 million internet-connected devices in use across the UK, while global projected figures for 2020 are in the tens of billions. Notwithstanding, it is widely acknowledged that IoT security has not kept pace with the proliferation of devices in use, both by individuals and organizations. As such, a vast number of vulnerabilities have been exposed by cyber criminals, often having a significant impact on businesses and governments.

With the rapid adoption and application of IoT devices by organizations, IoT cyberattacks have become an increasing concern. A primary threat is cyber criminals using IoT devices to gain access to corporate networks. The vast majority of IoT devices have limited processing capabilities, and were built without security features in mind. Therefore, any number of items on the network, from thermostats to air conditioning systems, or employees connecting their own IoT devices, expand the attack area for hackers. Once a device is compromised, cyber criminals are able to extract data or implant malicious code that grant them back door access to the system.

In a similar vein, another threat comes from industrial capabilities, and were built without security features in mind. Therefore, any number of items on the network, from thermostats to air conditioning systems, or employees connecting their own IoT devices, expand the attack area for hackers. Once a device is compromised, cyber criminals are able to extract data or implant malicious code that grant them back door access to the system. In a similar vein, another threat comes from industrial

In a similar vein, another threat comes from industrial jets engines that can transmit data to technicians to ensure their operability. The growth in IoT devices over the past few years has been exponential. The UK government has estimated that, within the next three years, there will be over 420 million internet-connected devices in use across the UK, while global projected figures for 2020 are in the tens of billions. Notwithstanding, it is widely acknowledged that IoT security has not kept pace with the proliferation of devices in use, both by individuals and organizations. As such, a vast number of vulnerabilities have been exposed by cyber criminals, often having a significant impact on businesses and governments.

The interception of data via vulnerable IoT devices does not however only apply at a corporate level. The very nature of smart devices incorporates the collection of private information, whether it be related to finance, health, education etc. The potential for such devices to be compromised may leave users open to fraud, or even put them under physical threat. This was recently highlighted by leaked global heat maps detailing the running routes of joggers wearing ‘Fitbit’ devices. It became apparent to the US military that access to public infrastructure such as GPS tracking systems, which in this instance could be used to track the routes of individual members of the armed forces in conflict zones, could pose a significant risk of targeted attacks and kidnappings.

While most major corporate cyberattacks still utilize traditional methods to access systems, such as phishing emails, there has been an increasing number of breaches via weak IoT devices. One of the key reasons behind this is that traditional strategies often leave the hacker open to early detection. Entering via susceptible IoT devices, however, is much harder to detect as hackers are able to bypass mainstream devices such as computers and servers. In addition, due to their vulnerabilities, hackers are able to employ vast numbers of IoT devices as botnets. Botnets are, in effect, networks of devices that use bots (software applications that run automated scripts) to automatically spread malware. One of the most devastating IoT botnet attacks was the Mirai Botnet, which infected IoT devices, such as digital cameras and digital video recorders (DVRs), with malware. Such devices are particularly vulnerable as they are often shipped with factory-set admin passwords, which many people do not bother to change. Furthermore, with the growing demand for IoT devices, many manufacturers have taken a low-cost approach, often to the detriment of security.

In a bid to stem the growing threat against IoT devices, the UK government recently published a ‘Code of Practice’ for consumer IoT security. This provides detailed guidelines and establishes what is considered good practice for all parties involved in the development, manufacturing and retail of internet-connected devices. Several major tech companies, such as Hewlett-Packard, have already signed up and committed to the code, paving the way for future improvements to IoT cyber security. Nevertheless, given the abundance of IoT devices already on the market and their rapid proliferation, they will remain an attractive avenue for cyber criminals to exploit. McAfee recently disclosed a number of recommendations to businesses and IoT users to keep their devices protected:

- Keep security software up to date
- Change your device’s factory security settings
- Set up a separate IoT network that does not share access to other devices and data
- Use a firewall
- Do not open suspicious emails or links

In October 2016, the Mirai Botnet took advantage of insecure IoT devices by initially infecting computers with the Mirai malware. Once computers were infected, the malware used them to search for vulnerable IoT devices and then input default usernames and passwords to log in, also infecting them with malware. Unlike other botnets, which typically use computer networks, the Mirai botnet was able to spread rapidly and devastatingly because it had a vast array of IoT devices to choose from. It went on to infect several systems, including the servers of internet provider Dyn, which were the target of a distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack. This subsequently caused a massive internet outage, bringing down a number of sites in Europe and the US, including Twitter, Netflix, Reddit, CNN and many others.

In January 2018, the US military announced it was revising its guidelines for the use of IoT devices at military facilities after it emerged that GPS tracking company Strava published global heat maps showing the names and locations of people working in sensitive places. By doing so, Strava unintentionally highlighted the location of US bases in Iraq and Syria for example. Moreover, it quickly became apparent that such maps could be used to track and reveal the positions of international aid workers and intelligence operatives. By using Strava’s website, one user was able to track and identify the jogging route of a US Army major at a base in Afghanistan. Though the leaking of this data was not an attack, this was a security oversight by the US government, and could have been used by malicious actors to conduct terrorist attacks, before the vulnerability had been noticed.

In April 2018, the CEO of cybersecurity company Darktrace revealed that an unnamed casino had been attacked by hackers using an internet-connected thermometer in an aquarium of the casino lobby. The hackers had reportedly exploited a vulnerability in the thermostat to breach the casino’s network, from where they accessed the ‘high-roller’ database.

active-shooter events do not last long. According to US government sources, most of these incidents are over before law enforcement arrives on scene, which is typically within 15 minutes. Reportedly, approximately in 69% of recorded events, the shooting lasted less than 5 minutes. Nonetheless, it is clear that in few minutes, a shooter can cause significant harm, inflicting multiple casualties.

In this context, and given the impossibility to predict when or if an active shooter will target an organization, American law enforcement agencies such as the FBI and the Ministry of Homeland Security, promote the adoption of a ‘Run-Hide-Fight’ protocol.

1. Run. This should always be the first choice. Take note of the nearest exits in any facility you enter, and have an escape route in mind. Leave your belongings behind, and help others if possible. Do not let anyone’s indecisiveness slow you down and evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow. Call the authorities when you are safe.

2. Hide. If running is not an option, look for a safe hiding place, where the active shooter is less likely to find you. This should primarily be a place out of the active shooter’s view; if possible, a place that can protect you if shots are fired in your direction. In either case, it should not trap you or restrict your movement. To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place, lock the door or barricade the entry, stay quiet and silence your cell phone and any other source of noise. Authorities should be called only when it is safe to do so.

3. Fight. As a last resort, fight the shooter, but only if your life is in imminent danger. Recommended actions include acting aggressively, throwing items at the shooter and trying to incapacitate them.

In a similar manner, governments of other countries such as the UK, France, Australia and New Zealand, use the protocol ‘Run, Hide, Tell’. While not infallible, these steps can help protect people when an active-shooter event occurs.

From available statistical data, it has been determined that most active-shooter incidents in the US have occurred at businesses, followed by education institutions as the second most common setting for these events. Incidents have also been recorded at government and military installations, religious and non-profit institutions, as well as healthcare facilities. Despite the increasing trend, mass shootings in public spaces remain relatively rare occurrences. In summary, no organization or space is immune from an active shooter, and thus, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with these situations. While governments do have a general protection responsibility towards their citizens, organizations should ensure that their duty of care obligations are met. Additionally, individuals should understand that that they are ultimately responsible for their own security and thus should adopt a proactive, protective security posture.

Creating an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and pre-incident training is important to enable personnel to react appropriately if confronted with an active-shooter situation. Further risk management measures may also include, among others, the creation of specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for response, the establishment of regular active-shooter drills in order to practice the immediate response to an incident; and providing anonymous reporting systems to mitigate against the insider threat. As these situations evolve rapidly, taking the right decisions in a swift manner could mean the difference between life and death. Additionally, preventative measures such as promoting a respectful work environment, creating awareness of indications of potential workplace violence and its triggers, and taking corrective actions accordingly, play a vital role in mitigating the risk of such events.
Constellis is a leading provider of risk management, humanitarian, social intelligence, training and operational support services to government and commercial clients throughout the world. Operating in over 45 countries, Constellis’ 20,000 employees bring unparalleled dedication and passion for creating a safer world by upholding the highest standards of compliance, quality, and integrity.

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

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

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

Contact:

Crisis Response Emergency Numbers:

NORTH/SOUTH AMERICA  
+1 713 916 6401

EUROPE, AFRICA, ASIA, AUSTRALIA  
+44 (0) 20 7 240 3237

GENERAL INQUIRIES  
+971 800 100 100

For more information on this report please contact:

BEATRIZ SANCHEZ-GARRIDO  
Information Analysis Manager  
beatriz.sanchez-garrido@constellis.com

For all inquiries on Constellis’ advisory & consulting services please contact:

MARK ALLISON  
Vice President, Crisis & Risk Services  
Mobile: +44 7791 495 057  
mark.allison@constellis.com

The information in this report is provided “as is” without any warranties, express or implied, including but not limited to the implied warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, or non-infringement. Constellis makes no representation or warranty that the information contained in this report will be timely or error-free. In no event shall Constellis be liable for any damages whatsoever, including any direct, indirect, special, consequential or any other damages, arising out of or in connection with the use of or reliance on information available within this report. In using this information, you agree to the limitations and disclaimers provided here.

Disclaimer: In no event shall Olive Group be liable for any damages whatsoever, including any direct, indirect, special, consequential or any other damages, arising out of or in connection with the use of or reliance on information available within this report. In using this information, you agree to the limitations and disclaimers provided here.