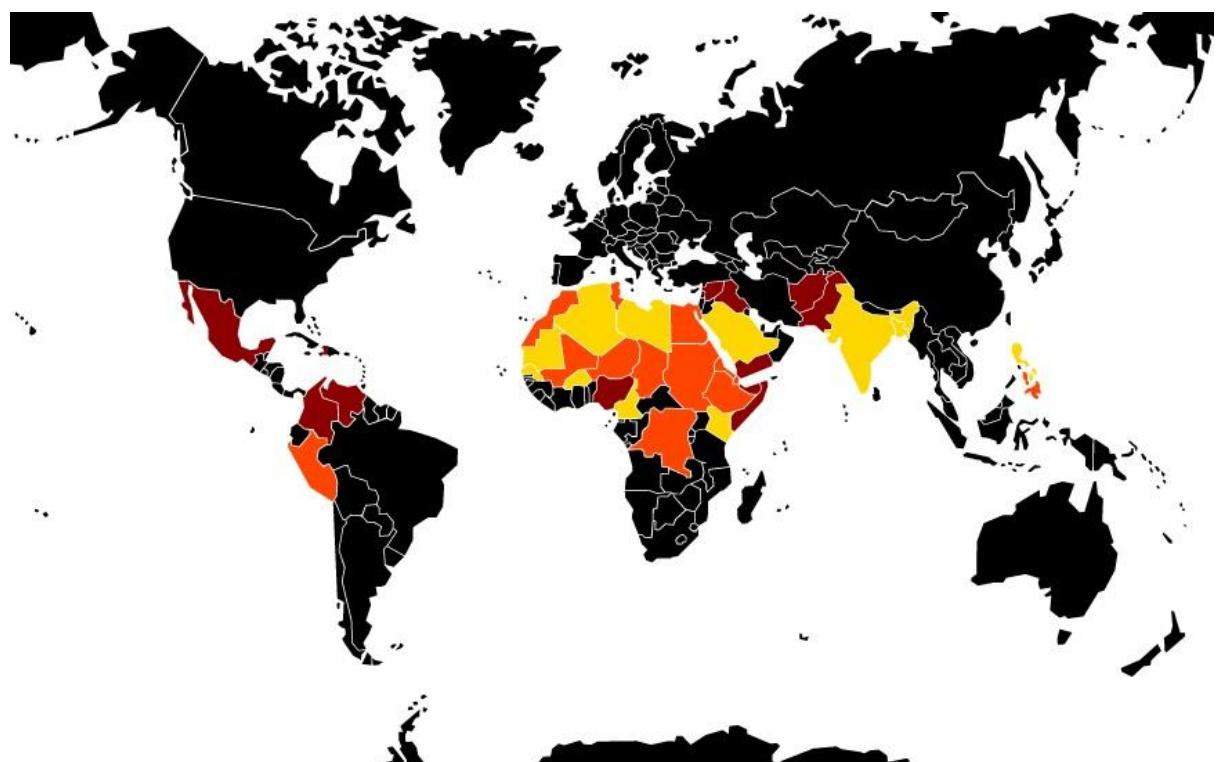


Information on Kidnapping for Australian Travellers

Warren Rodwell, Douglas Wood, Mohamed Abbass and Nigel Brennan are four Australian's with one sobering fact in common, all Australians who were kidnapped while overseas in recent years. The most recent a 61 year old man from Victoria was kidnapped while on business in Uganda. In the past year Australians took 8.4 million international trips, many to kidnapping hot spots of which they simply weren't aware.

Warren Rodwell was living in the Philippines, Douglas Wood working in war torn Iraq, Mohamed Abbass was travelling and visiting family, Nigel Brennan was working as a journalist and the Victorian man was on Business. All neatly fit into the varying reasons Australians travel abroad each year. While the bulk of Australians will have fun filled and fulfilling trips abroad there has been an increasing spotlight on those who have found their way into great legal difficulty abroad in the last decade. This should come as no surprise as overseas travel by Australians has increased threefold in that same time frame. While much more needs to be done to educate the Australian public on staying out of legal trouble overseas, the growing problem of kidnapping is now an immediate concern as very little is known about this issue amongst the Australian public and there is a limited amount of assistance the Australian Government can provide.



Kidnapping map for 2013 – **Red** Severe Threat, **Orange** High Threat, **Yellow** Elevated Threat

Afghanistan (Red), Algeria (Yellow), Bangladesh (Yellow), Burkina Faso (Yellow), Cameroon (Yellow), Chad (Orange), Colombia (Red), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Orange), Djibouti (Orange), Egypt (Orange), Eritrea (Orange), Ethiopia (Orange), Haiti (Red), India (Yellow), Iraq (Red), Kenya (Yellow), Libya (Orange), Mali (Orange), Mauritania (Yellow), Mexico (Red), Morocco (Orange), Niger (Orange), Nigeria (Red), Pakistan (Red), Peru (Orange), the Philippines (Orange/Yellow), Saudi Arabia (Yellow), Senegal (Yellow), Somalia (Red), South Sudan (Yellow), Sudan (Orange), Syria (Red), Tunisia (Orange), Venezuela (Red), Yemen (Red).

1. Afghanistan: Around 950 kidnappings for ransom per year but foreign exposure is currently limited due to travel restrictions.
2. Somalia: The offshore threat is well established; 24 vessels were seized in 2011 with over 400 hostages taken (and 265 still held captive).
3. Iraq: No official figures are available for 2011/2012; anecdotal evidence suggests the risks remain high. The country provides a complex kidnapping risk environment with criminal, terrorist and politically-motivated parties all carrying out kidnappings.
4. Nigeria: The country records well in excess of 1,000 kidnappings for ransom a year.
5. Pakistan: Official statistics reveal over 15,000 kidnappings a year and the true number is likely to be higher due to underreporting. However, only 10-20% of abductions are for ransom.
6. Yemen: Over 200 foreign nationals have been kidnapped over the past 20 years.
7. Venezuela: Official statistics revealed over 1,000 kidnappings for ransom in the first ten months of 2011, and the country has one of the highest per capita rates of abduction in the world.
8. Mexico: Official statistics for 2011 are likely to reveal over 2,000 kidnappings for ransom. However, the actual number is far higher and the Mexican NGO, Consejo para la Ley y los Derechos Humanos (CLDH), reported that its statistics revealed some 17,889 kidnaps.
9. Haiti: Incident numbers now in the low hundreds, which is a significant decline on 2006 when some 720 incidents were recorded. However, a significant threat persists and per capita abduction rates are second only to Venezuela.
10. Colombia: Despite a significant reduction in incidents over the past ten years, incident numbers in recent years are still high with 258 kidnappings recorded by the authorities in 2011.

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Syria: While not considered in the top ten for the period 2012/13 the ongoing Civil War has seen an increase in Kidnapping both as a tool of war and for ransom. This has elevated Syria to a red level alert with more accurate figures to be available in coming months.

Types of Kidnapping

Basic Kidnapping - By far the most common form of kidnapping, this can be accomplished in most parts of the world with minimal preparation, with a relatively low risk of failure, ransoms are generally low.

High Net Worth Kidnapping – Generally Businessmen and other persons believed to be financially well off are profiled and targeted by organised groups in seek of large sums of money.

Tiger Kidnapping – A person often in a vulnerable position is kidnapped and forced to take part in a crime, often with threats made to the individual's family. Vulnerable people may include those engaged in illegal behaviour, those travelling without valid documentation and those who may owe large debts to drug supply organisations.

Express Kidnapping – On the rise in many parts of the world, including those frequented by travellers Expressing Kidnapping involves the short term abduction of an individual so that money can be withdrawn from an ATM or Bank with the kidnappers in their presence. This may escalate to a Basic Kidnapping if finances are unavailable, to extract further money from where a daily withdrawal limit has been met or to ransom the individuals family.

Virtual Kidnapping – The family of an Individual is targeted when an individual is travelling in an area where they cannot be contacted. This might be in an area without communication (No Mobile reception, Internet Access) or when it is known the Individual will be taking part in an activity that prohibits them from making contact. The family is contacted and a ransom is requested, while no actual kidnapping has taken place.

Political/Bride/Child Kidnapping – This is the kidnapping of an individual for a purpose rather than for financial gain. It includes terrorist groups targeting Westerners, kidnapping political opponents, the abduction of children in custody disputes or the abduction of a woman for the purpose of forced marriage.

Kidnapping and Hostage Survival Guidelines

The chances of your being kidnapped or taken hostage are small. If it does happen, your chances of survival are high. Kidnapping is a terrifying experience, but you probably possess more personal resources than you think to cope with the situation. Remember, you are of value to those who are holding you only if you are alive, and they want to keep you that way. Your best defence is passive cooperation. The more time passes, the better your chances of being released alive.

Kidnapping can happen anywhere -- you can be taken off the street, from a car, or from your hotel room or residence. The best opportunity for escape is in the beginning, during the confusion of the apprehension while you are still in a public place. If escape is impossible or too risky, you should nevertheless try to cause as much commotion as safely possible to draw attention to the situation. You need to make others aware that an abduction has taken place so that the authorities are notified and the search can begin. Otherwise, it could be hours or days before your absence is reported.

Once you have been forced into a vehicle, you may be blindfolded, beaten (to cause unconsciousness), drugged, or forced to lie face down on the floor of the vehicle. In some instances, hostages have been forced into trunks or specially built compartments for transporting contraband. If drugs are administered, do not resist. Their purpose will be to sedate you and make you more manageable. It is probably better to be drugged than to be beaten unconscious. If you are conscious, follow your captors' instructions.

While being confined and transported, do not struggle. Calm yourself mentally and concentrate on surviving. Attempt to visualize the route being taken, make a mental note of turns, street noise, smells, etc. Try to keep track of the amount of time spent between points. You will be asked questions about this after your release in an effort to determine where you were held.

Once you have arrived at your destination, you may be placed in a temporary holding area before being moved again to a more permanent detention site. If you are interrogated:

- Retain a sense of pride but act cooperative.
- Divulge only information that cannot be used against you. Make every effort to avoid embarrassing your country and the host government.
- Do not antagonize your interrogator with obstinate behaviour.
- Concentrate on surviving. If you are to be used as a bargaining tool or to obtain ransom, you will be kept alive.

After reaching what you may presume to be your permanent detention site (you may be moved several more times), quickly settle into the situation.

- Be observant. Notice the details of the room, the sounds of activity in the building and determine the layout of the building by studying what is visible to you. Listen for sounds through walls, windows or out in the streets, and try to distinguish between smells. Note the number, names, physical description, accents, habits, and rank structure of your captors. Try to memorize this information so that you can report it after your release.
- Know your captors. Memorize their schedule, look for patterns of behaviour to be used to your advantage, and identify weaknesses or vulnerabilities. Use this information to assess opportunities to escape.
- Expect to be accused of being an intelligence agent and to be interrogated intensively. Do not admit to any accusations. Keep your answers short and don't volunteer information or make unnecessary overtures.
- Try to establish a rapport with your captors. Family is a universal subject. So are sports and many hobbies. Your goal should be to get the hostage takers to view you as a real person, rather than simply an object. Listen actively to the terrorists' feelings and concerns, but never praise, participate in, or debate their "cause." If you know your captors' language, use it. Ask them to teach you their language.
- Speak normally. Don't complain. Avoid being belligerent and comply with all orders and instructions. Once a level of rapport or communication is achieved, try asking for items that will increase your personal comfort. Don't be afraid to ask for anything you need or want such as medicines, books, or papers. Make requests in a reasonable, low-key manner.
- Plan on a lengthy stay and devise a way to keep track of the passage of time. If isolated, you can approximate time by noting changes in temperature between night and day, the frequency and intensity of outside noises (traffic, birds), and by observing the alertness of guards.
- Establish a daily schedule of mental as well as physical exercise. If your movement is extremely limited, use isometric and flexing exercises to keep your muscles toned. To maintain your strength, eat what you are given even if it does not look appetizing and you don't feel hungry. Use relaxation techniques to reduce stress.
- If you detect the presence of other hostages in the same building, try to devise ways to communicate.

During interrogation, do not be uncooperative, antagonistic, or hostile towards your captors. Captives who display this type of behaviour are often held longer or become the object of torture or punishment. Take a simple, tenable position and stick to it. Be polite and keep your temper.

Give short answers. Talk freely about nonessential matters, but be guarded when conversations turn to matters of substance. Don't be lulled by a friendly approach. Remember, one terrorist may play "Good Guy" and one "Bad Guy." This is the most common interrogation technique.

Watch for signs of "Stockholm Syndrome" which occurs when the captive, due to the close proximity and the constant pressures involved, begins to relate to, and empathize with, the captors. In some cases, this relationship has resulted in the hostage becoming sympathetic to the point that he/she actively participates in the activities of the group. Establish a friendly rapport with your captors, but maintain your personal dignity and do not compromise your integrity.

If forced to present terrorist demands to authorities, either in writing or on tape, state clearly that the demands are from your captors. Avoid making a plea on your own behalf.

Be patient, as hostage negotiations are often difficult and time consuming. Remember, your chances of survival increase with time. Most episodes of kidnapping or hostage-taking end with no loss of life or physical injury to the captive. Eventually you will probably be released or rescued. Do not try to escape unless you are certain of success. If you are able to escape, go first to an Australian Embassy or Consulate (Or U.S Embassy) to seek protection. If you cannot reach either, go to a host government or friendly government office.

If an attempt is made to rescue you, keep a low profile and immediately follow all instructions. Rescue will generally be attempted only after negotiations have failed. That means that lives of hostages, terrorists, and rescue forces are all at risk during the rescue. You don't want to be shot in the confusion while the rescue team identifies the terrorists, who may try to disguise themselves as hostages. To protect yourself, follow these rules:

- DO NOT RUN. Drop to the floor and remain still. If that is not possible, cross your arms on your chest, bow your head, and stand still. Make no sudden moves that a tense rescuer may interpret as hostile.
- Wait for instructions and obey all instructions you are given.
- Don't be upset if a rescuer isn't sure whether you are a terrorist or hostage. Even if you are handcuffed and searched, do not resist. Just wait for the confusion to clear.

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Australian's travelling abroad should take the time to read further information @ www.SmartTraveller.gov.au and www.foreignprisoners.com while those travelling for business into countries listed above should contact an appropriate security organisation.

Further information is available at Foreign Prisoners Support Service www.foreignprisoners.com for all matters related to overseas imprisonment, missing persons overseas, kidnapping overseas and other related Human Rights Issues.

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