

# Special Contingency Risks (SCR)

## Security Risk Management

Willis

Monthly Incident Report

April 2007

### Algeria Security Environment Deteriorates in North Africa



Two bombings in Algiers on April 11 produced an estimated 33 dead and at least 220 wounded. Responsibility for these bombings was claimed by al-Qaeda's branch in North Africa, formerly known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). The recent name change signaled the group's development into a regional organization in North Africa. The latest attacks show a wider resurgence of militancy in the region that observers fear could spread to Tunisia, Libya and countries farther south. (See Morocco below.)

### Heightened Kidnap-for-Ransom Risk

An independent candidate in the legislative elections scheduled for March 31 was released after a reported \$140,000 ransom payment. Kidnappers generally target wealthy Algerians or their family members and enter in direct contact with the victim's family to secure a ransom payment. Victims are commonly released unharmed after a substantial ransom is paid. Because the number of kidnap-for-ransom cases has increased and such cases have acquired a higher profile, the future targeting of expatriates is probable.

### Bolivia Oil Facilities Invaded

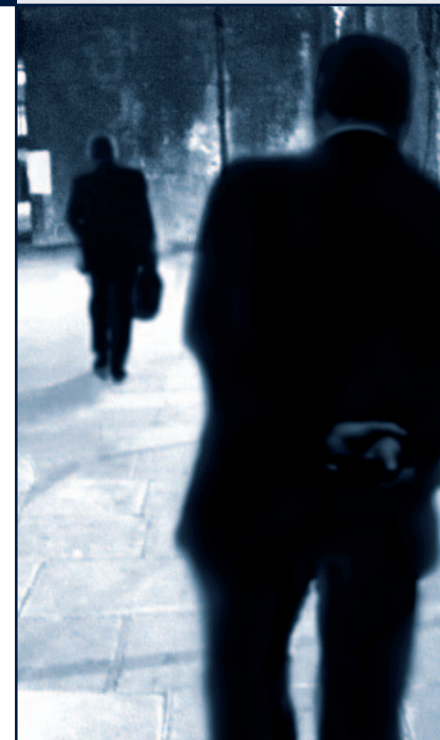


On April 18, demonstrators invaded oil well facilities operated by Transredes in Gran Chaco province. They looted the installations, stealing dozens of gas canisters, taking more than 200 police officers hostage and shutting down the pipeline for the export of gas to Argentina. They are demanding that the government improve living conditions in the area.

### Brazil Federal Troops Called in to Help Improve Security



Rio de Janeiro state governor Sérgio Cabral officially requested on April 10 that federal troops be sent to the state to help combat rising crime levels. Security risk to foreigners is expected to continue unabated. Business personnel are advised to continue basic security precautions to mitigate the risks.



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## Democratic Republic of Congo

### US Travel Warning



On March 23, the US Embassy in Kinshasa released the following Travel Warning: "The Department of State continues to warn US citizens against travel to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and notes that while the current security situation in the DRC has stabilized following the second round of Presidential elections and the inauguration of President Joseph Kabila on 6 December 2006, there remain many dangerous conditions for both residents and visitors.

"Although UN observer forces are deployed throughout the country, armed militia groups and some active duty troops are known to pillage, carjack and steal vehicles, kill extra-judicially, rape, kidnap, and carry out military/paramilitary operations. The large number of soldiers to be integrated into the Congolese army or reinserted in civilian society as a result of the peace process remains a security concern.

"Travelers have been detained and questioned by ill-disciplined security forces at numerous military roadblocks throughout the country. Government-imposed curfews, not currently in effect, could be reinstated upon short notice if the security situation deteriorates. Visitors should restrict their travel, particularly at night, to areas with which they are familiar. In the event of political disturbances, they should avoid the areas where the disturbances occur, especially at night. During periods of violence, the number of checkpoints in and around Kinshasa increases. These checkpoints bring traffic delays and demands for payment of bribes in order to be allowed to proceed."

## Ethiopia

### Rebel Leader Threatens Kidnapping of Foreigners



On March 21, the leader of the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union Front (ARDUF) issued a warning that any foreigners traveling into the Afar region without the group's permission risk being kidnapped. The group has claimed responsibility for the recent kidnapping of five Europeans, who were released unharmed on March 13 in the Eritrean capital of Asmara.

## Guinea

### Managing Director of Total in Guinea Kidnapped



The head of Total, a French oil company, was kidnapped in the capital Conakry and released on April 1 after a 24-hour ordeal, the firm said. Total claims it did not pay a ransom to secure his release.

Kidnapping of expatriates has been rare. Political and economic conditions, however, are ripening for kidnappings. These conditions include falling incomes, rising costs of living, widening income distribution disparities, low crime prevention and response capabilities, and an increasing presence of organized crime. Triggers are difficult to identify and could be internal or external; one trigger could be the involvement of transnational criminal gangs exploiting new areas.

## Israel

### \$5 Million Demanded for Release of BBC Reporter



On April 19, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas announced that kidnapped BBC reporter Alan Johnston is alive and being held by a Palestinian clan in the Gaza Strip.

According to Palestinian security officials, Johnston's captors are demanding a \$5 million ransom and have threatened to either sell Johnston to another group or kill him if the money is not paid.

The officials identified the kidnappers as the Dugmash family, a powerful Gaza-based Palestinian clan affiliated with local terrorist organizations and ideologically aligned with global jihad groups.

The information follows claims by a previously unknown Islamist group this weekend that it killed the British reporter.

Officials said Abbas and other parties involved in the investigations are hesitant to allow the ransom to be paid for fear the money will be used to enhance the position of the

Dugmash clan against other Gaza-based factions, including Abbas' Fatah organization.

"We are sure any ransom money will be used to purchase weapons and make the Dugmashes stronger," said a top Palestinian security official.

## Kenya

### Kidnap of US National Underlines Continuing Threats to Foreign Nationals

The US embassy in the capital Nairobi issued a message on April 1 detailing the kidnap of a US national by a group of unidentified gunmen. Violent crime poses a persistently high risk to business travelers and expatriate personnel in Kenya.



## Morocco

### US Consulate Attacked

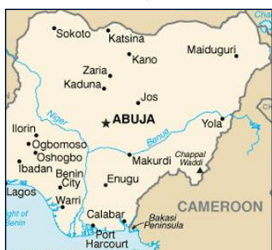


On April 14, two Moroccan suicide bombers blew themselves up outside the Dar America Cultural Center (US cultural center) and the US Consulate in Casablanca. One of the bombers reportedly sought access to the building, but when asked for a reason, set off his explosives; while the other one – his brother – set off

explosives 197 feet (60 meters) from the heavily guarded entrance to the US consular building. Both men died in the incident and a female passerby was injured. The blasts came just days after suicide bombings in Morocco's largest city and two deadly attacks in the Algerian capital of Algiers – including one on the prime minister's office – that have raised concerns about a resurgence in militancy in North Africa.

## Nigeria

### Turkish Engineers Kidnapped



Two Turkish engineers were kidnapped in Port Harcourt on April 7 after militants intercepted their vehicle. The victims were working for Merpa, a company that handles telecom equipment for Agip, an Italian oil firm. Kidnappings in the

Niger Delta are commonly used to demand ransom payments or to pressure local oil firms.

### Four Foreign Kidnap Victims Released

Four foreign workers who had been kidnapped in three separate incidents in the Niger Delta region were released unharmed, according to April 4 reports. This included two Lebanese men seized on April 2 while working at a construction site in Bayelsa State; officials stated that no ransom payment was made. A British oil worker kidnapped on March 31 while working at the Bulford Dolphin oil rig was also released. It was not disclosed whether or not a ransom was paid. A Dutch employee who was seized on March 23 while working for German contractor Bilfinger & Berger at a construction site in Port Harcourt was reportedly released at the same time as the British worker.

### Two Oil Workers Released

Two foreign oil workers, kidnapped from their workplace near Warri in Delta State on March 22 were released three days later. The hostages – of Indian and Lebanese nationalities – both worked for Setraco, a road construction company. A Dutch security manager who was kidnapped by an armed group on the same day in a separate incident remains in captivity. No group claimed responsibility for the kidnappings.

### British National Abducted from Oil Rig

Unidentified armed men traveling in two speedboats early in the morning of March 31 abducted a British national from an oil rig 40 miles off the coast of Bayelsa. The seizure is the latest in a series of recent kidnaps that has pushed abductions of expatriate workers in the Niger delta – particularly those working in, or contracted to, the oil and gas sector – to an all-time high. Local reports indicate that the kidnappers come from a community in the Niger Delta that is known to have had disputes with the rig operator in the past.

## Paraguay

### Japanese Nationals Kidnapped



A Japanese businessman and his secretary were kidnapped on April 2 while driving on a highway 125 miles east of the capital, Asunción. Police sources have indicated that the kidnappers were demanding US\$2 million and safe passage out of the country. It was reported that relatives and friends of the Japanese executive had only collected US\$100,000 and the captors had rejected that amount.

The businessman, Hirokazu Ota, is a 62-year-old executive at the agro-industrial firm Victoria. His female Japanese secretary, Sawako Takayama, turned up April 10 in Asunción. The kidnapping was the latest in a series of abductions for ransom that have garnered widespread attention and irate public calls for the government of President Nicanor Duarte to crack down on crime.

### Attempted Abduction of US National Reported

A US embassy report issued on March 26 stated that a group of armed men wearing local police uniforms robbed and temporarily abducted a US national, along with two family members, as they traveled from Silvio Pettirossi International Airport (ASU) in Asunción to the city center during the early hours of March 6.

### Peru Workers Strike Against US-Controlled Mining Company



Residents of the town of La Oroya launched a strike April 4 against the Doe Run mining company, paralyzing the town. Workers of the US-controlled mine demanded that the company pay them a larger percentage of the company's profits. The strike closed businesses, stopped public transportation and blocked roads. Clashes between police officers and demonstrators resulted in at least 15 arrests and several injuries. The strike was suspended later the same day.

### Philippines Abu Sayyaf Beheads Hostages



On April 19, members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) beheaded seven civilians they had been holding hostage since April 17. The bodies were discovered near Parang, Jolo, where they were kidnapped. The victims, six of whom were working on a government road project, were traveling from Parang to Indanan when ASG members intercepted their vehicle and seized them at gunpoint.

Police officers received a ransom demand via text messaging on April 18. The construction company reportedly refused to pay it.

### Extortion Demands Lead to an Attack

On April 3 in Masbate Province, 220 miles southeast of the capital Manila, communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels attacked a gold mine run by a subsidiary of Canada-based Thistle Mining Inc., killing at least three. The rebels disarmed the mine's guards and set fire to five buildings and several pieces of mining equipment. This was the fourth NPA attack in less than a month against companies that refuse to pay "revolutionary taxes." The attack underlines the persistent risk of extortion by the NPA, which is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Extortion demands have become more common since mid-2002, when the US and the EU designated the CPP and NPA as terrorist organizations, thereby closing off overseas fund-raising channels.

### Body of US Missionary Found

Philippine police officers announced on April 18 that they had found the body of a US Peace Corps volunteer reported missing on April 8. The body was found buried in a shallow grave in a dry creek bed outside of Batad village, located in the northern province of Ifugao, prompting police officials to treat the case as a criminal incident. It is not yet known if rebels were involved in the incident. The NPA have previously kidnapped and killed US citizens and humanitarian workers.

### Saudi Arabia Suspected Killers of French Expatriates Arrested



On April 19, eight Saudis reportedly were arrested for involvement in the February 26 murders of four Frenchmen in a desert area approximately 30 miles north of the Islamic holy city of Madinah. The mastermind of the murders was a 23-year-old Saudi who was on a June

2005 list of 36 most-wanted suspected al-Qaeda militants. Police officers killed him in Madinah on April 6. The Frenchmen were in a group of nine people traveling from the northwestern part of the kingdom – an area popular with expatriates – when they got lost and asked the main suspect for directions. Those killed included a teenager, two employees of Schneider Electric and a teacher at the French school in Riyadh.

The attack was the first in three months against Westerners in Saudi Arabia, which since May 2003 has experienced a series of bombings and shootings blamed on suspected al-Qaeda militants. Despite a tough security crackdown on militants, Saudi authorities have repeatedly warned Western governments

of the danger of further attacks on foreigners. The British and US embassies have joined the French in issuing warnings to their nationals.

## Turkey

### Attempted Hijack of Commercial Flight



A Turkish man hijacked a domestic commercial flight en route to Istanbul from the southeastern city of Diyarbakir on April 10, claiming that he had explosives on board

and demanding that he be flown to Iran. The aircraft's pilot issued a distress signal, and the flight landed safely at Ankara's Esenboga International Airport (LTAC/ESB), where the hijacker surrendered to authorities after approximately 40 minutes. The plane, operated by Pegasus Airlines, was carrying 178 passengers and six crewmembers. There were no reports of injuries, and no explosives were found on the aircraft.

## Worldwide

### Worldwide State Department Warning

On April 10, the US Department of State issued the following warning: "This Public Announcement updates information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against Americans and interests overseas. This supersedes the Worldwide Caution dated 11 October 2006 and expires on 9 October 2007.



"The Department of State remains concerned about the continued threat of terrorist attacks, demonstrations and other violent actions against US citizens and interests overseas. Current information suggests that al-Qaeda and affiliated organizations continue to plan terrorist attacks against US interests in multiple regions, including Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. These attacks may employ a wide variety of tactics to include assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings and bombings."

## Contact Information

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