

Appendix 4

List of reported kidnapping incidents overseas involving Australians since 2001

This list of reported kidnappings has been sourced from media releases, newspaper articles and information provided to the committee by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It should not be considered a definitive list of all kidnapping incidents involving Australians overseas.

2001—Turkey: Michael Musgrave, Ian Burton, George Jones and eight other Australians were held at gun-point, either in the lobby of the Swisshotel in Istanbul or in their rooms, by a group of Chechen militants on 23 April. The hostage takers surrendered peacefully after 12 hours. They stated that their wish was to bring international attention to their political cause.¹

2001—Colombia: An Australian man was reportedly abducted in February. The victim claimed he was drugged and had his bank accounts drained before being released two days later.²

2001—Nigeria: Three Australians reportedly among 91 oil workers released after being held hostage for five days in August on an oil rig.³

2001—Afghanistan: Peter Bunch and Diana Thomas, Christian missionaries, were detained by the Taliban along with other foreign nationals on 6 August for preaching Christianity. In November they were transferred from Kabul and handed over to a local warlord in Ghanzi. The hostages were freed on 15 November by Afghan 'Northern Alliance' forces and were repatriated by US Special Forces.⁴

2002—Russia: Alex Bobik, a Melbourne academic, and his Russian student, Natalia Kalinina were amongst more than 800 people taken hostage in a Moscow theatre by Chechen militants on 23 October. Bobik and his student survived unharmed following the rescue attempt by Russian forces on 26 October when more than 100 of the

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- 1 M Colvin, 'Istanbul hotel hostage drama', *PM*, ABC Radio National, 23 April 2001, accessed on 5 September 2011, <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/stories/s281622.htm>; M Musgrave and J Walsh, 'Midnight gunmen in Istanbul', personal account, 23 April 2001, web.me.com/mmus/files/.../IstanbulMIDNIGHTGUNMEN23Apr2001.pdf
 - 2 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'List of Australians who have been kidnapped while overseas', 19 July 2011.
 - 3 'Australians kidnapped abroad', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 2005.
 - 4 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'List of Australians who have been kidnapped while overseas', 19 July 2011.

hostages were killed. The hostage takers had demanded the withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya.⁵

2003—Nigeria: Joshua Nijam, oil worker for Bredero Price was kidnapped from a boat in the Niger delta with six other foreign workers in November. He was released four days later as part of a goodwill gesture following the payment of part of the ransom. Others were released the following day.⁶

2004—Iraq: Robert Colvill, an American-Australian sound engineer for NBC was kidnapped with three colleagues in Fallujah. He was released three days later after the NBC reportedly paid a ransom.⁷

2004—Iraq: Two Australian security guards were reportedly taken hostage with their clients by a group known as the 'Horror Brigades of the Islamic Secret Army' in September. The group demanded that Australian forces be withdrawn from Iraq. The kidnapping was never confirmed but media reports stated that an SAS team was dispatched to Iraq and that an AFP team specially trained for hostage crises in the Middle-East was on standby.⁸

2004—Iraq: Sheik Mohamed Alsibiyani (also known as Mohammed Naji) was held by Sunni insurgents for four days before being released. The hostage takers demanded a ransom but he was eventually released after they had taken the cash being carried by the Sheik.⁹

2004—Iraq: John Martinkus, journalist, kidnapped with two local companions outside his hotel in Baghdad and held for 20 hours by Sunni insurgents before being released.¹⁰

2005—Iraq: Douglas Wood, engineer, kidnapped with two Iraqi colleagues on 30 April in Baghdad by the Shura Council of the Mujahadeen of Iraq. The hostage takers demanded that Australian forces leave Iraq. An 'emergency response' team was dispatched from Australia to Iraq. Wood was released by Iraqi forces during a

5 C Nelson, 'Russians saved me', *Age*, 1 November 2002; K O'Brien, 'Transcript: Bobik relays Moscow nightmare', *7.30 Report*, ABC TV, 13 November 2002, <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2002/s726257.htm>

6 R Wells, 'Beer, prayers help kidnap man's family', *Age*, 2 December 2003.

7 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'List of Australians who have been kidnapped while overseas', 19 July 2011.

8 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'List of Australians who have been kidnapped while overseas', 19 July 2011; J Kerin and B Norington, 'SAS team flies into Iraq as hostage mystery deepens' *The Australian*, 15 September 2004.

9 E Connolly, 'Released hostage grateful to be alive', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 September 2004; 'Australians kidnapped abroad', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 2005.

10 J Martinkus, *Submission 4*.

'random' operation on 15 June 2005. His two colleagues a killed at an earlier date by the hostage takers.¹¹

2005—Gaza: Brian Ambrosio, deputy principal at a private American school, was kidnapped with a Dutch colleague in December by a group connected to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Released unharmed after being held for two days.¹²

2006—Gaza: Kaye Bennett and Oles Shchyrytsya were abducted with seven other foreigners at the American International School at Beit Lahiya in Gaza. They were held for two hours before being released at a nearby police station after the captors determined that none of the hostages were American.¹³

2007—Nigeria: Jason Lane, oil worker, kidnapped with four other foreign contractors on 4 July from an oil rig operated by Shell in the Niger Delta. The hostages were released after seven days.¹⁴

2007—Mali: Des Gregor, farmer, was kidnapped after travelling to Bamako to meet a woman he had met over the internet whom he believed would be his bride. He was held by a criminal gang who demanded a ransom of \$100 000 from Mr Gregor's friends and family in Australia. Mr Gregor was held for 12 days before AFP negotiators persuaded the kidnappers that there was money to be collected by the captive from the Canadian Embassy in Bamako. The gang released Mr Gregor near the embassy and he was rescued by police.¹⁵

2008–09—Somalia: Australian with dual nationality kidnapped with colleagues working for an NGO. Their employer conducted negotiations with support of a security consultancy firm and the hostages were released after an estimated ransom of US\$4.1 million was paid. The family requested that his Australian nationality not be disclosed at any point in the negotiations.¹⁶

2008–09—Somalia: Nigel Brennan, photo journalist, kidnapped with Canadian journalist, Amanda Lindhout, and a number of Somali nationals on 23 August 2008 outside of Mogadishu. Hostage takers demanded a multi-million dollar ransom.

11 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'List of Australians who have been kidnapped while overseas', 19 July 2011.

12 'Freed Aussie teacher talks of hopes for Gaza peace after kidnapping', *Canberra Times*, 23 December 2005.

13 C Hart and A Rabinovich, 'Teachers freed after Gaza kidnapping "outing"', *The Australian*, 16 March 2006.

14 B Way, 'Father warned son of kidnap threat', *Adelaide Advertiser*, 7 July 2007.

15 S Larkin, 'Scam victim lucky to be alive', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August 2007; 'Kidnapped Des trapped by love', *Sunday Mail Adelaide*, 12 August 2007.

16 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'List of Australians who have been kidnapped while overseas', 19 July 2011.

Somali nationals were released in January 2009. Brennan and Lindhout were released on 25 November 2009 after their families engaged a security consultancy firm and paid ransom of around US\$600 000.¹⁷

2009—The Gambia: Justin Liebig, lured by a scam and kidnapped on 2 February. Freed on 10 February after a reported €5000 in ransom was paid. DFAT and the Australian Federal Police officers were reportedly sent to The Gambia to assist with investigations. Gambian police arrested the kidnappers and recovered most of the ransom.¹⁸

2011—East Africa: Australian ship captain with dual nationality taken hostage with crew by Somali pirates in February. Captain, crew and vessel were released two months later after ransom was paid by the shipping company.¹⁹

17 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'List of Australians who have been kidnapped while overseas', 19 July 2011.

18 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'List of Australians who have been kidnapped while overseas', 19 July 2011; 'Australian pensioner tied up for one week in a toilet', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 2009.

19 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'List of Australians who have been kidnapped while overseas', 19 July 2011.