



Specialised Security Services



**PROJECT:
SAFETY AND SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA
KIDNAPPINGS
PART 7**



Kidnapping Hits South Africa Hard
This is our most important project to date as every member of our society could fall victim to kidnapping.
Follow-up : Part 2

The holiday season is about to start, it's a time for kids to relax and enjoy some well-deserved freedom and fun.

Yet parents need to be aware that this time of the year is also when kids are the most at risk of kidnapping.

Christmas time has consistently shown an increase in kidnapping rates.

The risk for Kidnappings during the holiday season:

- Holiday destinations and resorts are also a good place for people traffickers and sexual predators to target kids.
- Kidnapping can occur anywhere in the world and no holiday destination should be considered completely safe.
- In many countries, extreme poverty and corruption mean that you or your children could be kidnapped for ransom.
- Parents who are in an unfamiliar place will find it harder to raise the alarm and search for their missing child.
- Children will not know how and whom to ask for help.
- These scheduled holidays on the school calendar are often a time when non-custodial parents or other family members have increased access to their children.
- Whilst stranger kidnappings are rare, most are opportunistic crimes.
- They are often not planned to a great degree, but rather an opportunity to carry out the crime is seized by the perpetrator on the spur of the moment.
- As children leave the safety of their schools to spend carefree summers playing outside, visiting amusement parks, beaches and malls and staying out later, they are making themselves more accessible to would-be kidnappers.
- Although we want our kids to continue to enjoy carefree holidays and we don't want them to be afraid, educating our children about the risks and how to stay safe can go a long way to prevent every parent's worst nightmare from coming true.
- Kidnappings by strangers during this holiday season are extremely rare but there is a greater risk of parental and family abductions.
- Non-custodial parents are often given access to their children for extended periods during the summer and some use this opportunity to take their children and not return them to the parent who has custody.
- Parents who are going through a breakup or custody battle should be aware of the increased risks, particularly if their (former) partner has ties to another country.

Parent Checklist to Keep Kids Safe:

- Before you travel to a foreign country, you should always consider the risks and decide if you need to take extra security measures.
 - Discuss the risks before going on vacation and get the whole family involved in practicing kidnapping scenarios.
 - Go over with your children what they should do if someone approaches them, tries to lure them or grabs them.
 - Children need to follow the same rules that they would do at home, but also need to be aware of increased risk and who they can approach for help when in a foreign country.
 - It is worth emphasizing to teenage girls that holiday romances are not always what they seem and that they could be being groomed and putting themselves in danger.
 - Make sure you keep your passports, IDs and travel documents in a safe place and make copies before you go as there is an increase for child trafficking.
 - Young children are prone to wandering off. Consider establishing a rule whereby they must have one hand on you at all times unless you say otherwise. This is especially important in airports, markets, amusement parks and other places where there are large crowds.
 - Establish a meeting place whenever you go somewhere new. If a child is lost they should go to the designated meeting place and remain there until you come to find them.
 - Dressing children in bright clothing can help you to spot them in a crowd.
 - Once you are at your holiday destination, identify people that your children can turn to for help. Point out local police officers and other families with children who can help them in an emergency or if they get lost.
 - Keep up-to-date records of your child's photograph, height, weight, and fingerprints.
 - Don't use your child's first name on labels for clothing, bags, etc. Kidnappers often use a child's name to establish trust.
 - When hiring a babysitter, make sure you know who they are and check out their references.
 - Accompany young children to the restroom when you are in a public place.
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- Never leave a child under the age of 9 unattended at home, in the car or a public place.
- When going on an outing, establish an emergency plan in case your child gets lost.
- Consider monitoring your child's phone to see who they are talking to and where they are going.
- As always, communicate with your child. Tell them about the risks of kidnapping in an age-appropriate way. Try not to scare them, but make sure they take their safety seriously.
- Make sure kids know that it's ok to scream and make lots of noise if they are in danger. They should do everything they can to attract attention.

What to do if you are kidnapped on holiday:

- It's hard not to panic in a situation such as this, but you have to try to stay calm so you can think clearly to protect yourself.
- If possible, you want to try to leave a trail of things that belong to you so police can track you.
- Try to get an idea of where you are going so if you can escape, you can get back to safety.
- Get to know your kidnapper. Getting to understand them and learn their behaviours can help you make them happy, potentially making them less likely to harm you.
- Cooperate as best you can.

Holidays are a relaxing time for most families. It's a time when you can forget about the worries of everyday life and have a well-deserved rest.

Unfortunately, being on holiday and a relaxed atmosphere often means that we let down our guard and act in ways that we wouldn't at home. This is a mistake. When you are in unfamiliar territory it is imperative to be extra vigilant.

Previous project documents:

<https://mailchi.mp/9454c0121a06/project-knocks-and-scams>

<https://mailchi.mp/2a1f655f2fb9/knocks-scams>

<https://mailchi.mp/b271d5db6bee/project-knocks-scams>

<https://mailchi.mp/67b2ada55854/project-knocks-scams>

<https://mailchi.mp/0400475b932e/project-knocks-scams>

<https://mailchi.mp/2f0cc19014df/project-knocks-scams>

<https://mailchi.mp/c19437d7a2b2/project-knocks-scams>

Regards

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