

Brazilian Kidnappers Adopt Iraqi Style and Sell Victim to Other Gangs

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Borrowing a page from Iraq under US-occupation, where kidnap victims are sold to groups specialized in extorting ransom from the victim's families, some entrepreneurial Brazilian criminals have adopted the same kidnap outsourcing system.

That's what happened earlier this month to student Adriana Barbosa Garcia, 28, who passed through two different groups of kidnappers before being released 44 days after being captured. She was kept chained throughout her ordeal.

Agents from DAS, the São Paulo Anti-Kidnapping Division, say they were surprised at the chutzpah of the abductors. Garcia was kidnapped by a group and then sold to another that had some new ideas to extract a bigger ransom.

Garcia's father, an evangelical minister, terrified after having received a piece of the daughter's right earlobe, had already paid for the ransom when they found out that she already been bought by another gang.

The new gang, which moved the woman from a ranch in Poá, in the Greater São Paulo, to a shack in the Parque das Flores (Flowers Park) slum in the east site of São Paulo, wanted more money.

After arresting two men, including Paulinho Nego Cão (Little Paul Black Dog) who had kidnapped other people, the police seemed on the brink of solving the case. Feeling that they might be caught any minute the band let their prey finally go.

Adriana had been abducted September 25, about 9 am, when she was leaving home for work. She was left on November 7 in Sacomã, a neighborhood in the south of São Paulo and called her brother on the phone.

He went to meet her and took her to the Hospital das Clínicas. She seemed well, a little later, when she was discharged from the hospital and finally was reunited with her family in the police station.

Garcia, however, refused to talk to reporters and covered her face with a blouse so photographers could not take a picture of her face. Her parents own a small real estate agency in São Paulo's north side.

Wagner Giudice, the chief of the São Paulo Anti-Kidnapping Division informed that the order to free the woman came from the leaders of the gang responsible for her capture and who were arrested and put in jail.

The police thinks the gang was comprised of 8 to 10 people. Authorities say their specialization is cargo theft and only recently they started in the kidnapping business. They also suggest that the sale of the victim to another gang may have been a story invented by the group to get more ransom money.

Almost 2 Abductions a Week

This year, from January to September, more than 60 people were kidnapped in the Greater São Paulo, according to data from the State Public Safety Secretariat.

44 of them were abducted in the town of São Paulo and 19 others in neighboring cities. During the same period there were a total of 89 kidnappings in the state of São Paulo, a number similar to the 91 abductions that occurred last year during the same time frame.

According to Giudice, the number of kidnappings increase at the end of the year with the proximity of Christmas. At this time, he said, most kidnappers want to get their ransom money as soon as possible and have no interest in keeping a victim for a long time in captivity.

Monday, November 13, the police were able to free a 19-year-old student who stayed 58 days in the hands of his kidnappers. Even though this is considered a long captivity, the authorities in July had liberated a 6-year-old who had been abducted for 63 days.

Son of a businessman who lives in the closed and believed-safe community of Alphaville in the Greater São Paulo, the student, whose name was not released, was found in the dark bedroom of a two-story house in City Jaraguá in the west side of town. The youngster is said to be feeling well despite being 28 lbs lighter. Six kidnappers have been arrested in the case.

Police chief Fábio Guimarães says that the boy was already in his third hiding place and was going to a fourth one when

the police busted the house.

Due to a dispute among the kidnapers the youngster was under a lot of pressure and ran a high risk of being killed. There were two gangs involved. One from the south side of São Paulo and another one from the North.

The North side people negotiated the ransom and got the money, but never told the other group about it. The police believe that those who got the money intended to kill the victim because the boy had seen them and also because this would be a way to fool the other partners in crime.