



# MEXICO

## Security situation deteriorates

Since 2005, Mexico has experienced a deteriorating security situation, including an increase in kidnappings for ransom. Reported kidnapping incidents had declined to 325 in 2005, but have steadily increased since then to 785 in 2007, 1,028 in 2008 and over 1,200 in 2009. Since few Mexicans report crimes to police authorities, the actual number of kidnappings is significantly higher.

The deteriorating security parallels an increase in violence resulting from the campaign against Mexican drug cartels. As the Mexican Federal Police have been focused on a war against the cartels, they have given less attention to more conventional crimes, including kidnapping. State and municipal police departments remain unprofessional and are not a viable deterrent against professional criminal organizations.

Nonetheless, Mexico is a large country with regional differences, including the risks of kidnap for ransom. The risk of being kidnapped is the greatest along the northern Mexican border states of Baja California, Chihuahua, Michoacan, and the cities of Torreon, Nuevo Laredo and Reynosa because the presence of drug cartels is heaviest here. Conversely, there are actually a few Mexican states and several cities that are virtually immune to kidnappings.

The creativity and sophistication of kidnap gangs continue to grow, including wearing police uniforms to simulate a police roadblock or roadway-construction uniforms to detour and detain kidnap targets.