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# Use of kidnapping and extortion as a tool for financing terrorism: the case of the PKK

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Pages 215-230 | Received 10 Jan 2020, Accepted 17 Mar 2020, Published online: 26 Mar 2020

 Cite this article

 <https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2020.1745257>



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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study focuses on the use of extortion and kidnapping for ransom as sources of financing terrorism by the Kurdistan Worker's Party, which is popularly known by its acronym 'PKK'. Using in-depth interviews with kidnapped businesspeople as its primary method, this study investigates extortion/kidnapping incidents committed by the PKK as the group's primary mode of operation. The rationale of kidnapped/extorted businesspeople for accepting to pay a ransom, its impacts on businesses, and the Turkish government's ineffective protection of the business people in the PKK terror zone in the Southeast of Turkey are examined. Our findings show that most business people/companies in the terror region in Turkey accept paying a ransom to continue their businesses. It was also found that businesspeople denied their kidnap after their releases by the PKK to avoid negative public image.

## KEYWORDS:

Terrorism financing

kidnapping

extortion

PKK

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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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## Additional information

### Notes on contributors

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Dr. Mutlu koseli is a former counterterrorism and criminal intelligence police chief. He has an MS in criminal justice from the University of North Texas and a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Koseli teaches courses in cybercrime, homeland security, terrorism and counterterrorism.

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Niyazi Ekici is an assistant professor in the School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration at Western Illinois University. Dr. Ekici earned a Ph.D. from Rutgers University, School of Criminal Justice. He has 18 years policing experience at different ranks and policing units including crime investigation, terrorism, and police training. Dr. Ekici lectures about terrorism, theories of crime, community policing, contemporary policing methods, public and private security, criminal justice systems, statistics, and research methods at undergraduate and graduate levels.

## Murat Erkan Eren

Dr. Murat Erkan Eren has a PhD in Information Science from University of North Texas. He is an experienced counter terrorism professional and served as chief of anti-terrorism unit in many provinces of Turkey. He wrote many journal articles and book chapters on homeland security and counter terrorism.

## Christopher Bitner

Chris Bitner is an assistant professor in the School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration at Western Illinois University. His research focuses on police work-groups, hiring/training, work climate, performance, supervision, and ethics.

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