The best defence against kidnapping is having and practising a high-quality, well-managed security management plan, which is based on a thorough understanding of the general context and risks, and on the context and threat of kidnapping specific to your location. Understanding who carries out kidnappings, and why, will help shape your avoidance and survival strategies.

The main reasons for kidnappings are:

* To hold for ransom
* To cause a political effect
* To achieve publicity
* To be used as human shields

The main actors that carry out kidnappings are:

* Criminals
* Political extremists
* Terrorists
* Militia groups
* Regimes that use terror

Factors which may encourage kidnapping:

* The state?s ability to provide protection from the crime, and prosecute those who engage in such activity
* A lack of political, legal or military response will encourage more actors to become involved
* Media coverage of successful kidnap attempts
* High financial rewards from kidnapping