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Rescued Somali re-acculturation victim thanks embassy staff

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APRIL 9, 2019

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A Bureau of Diplomatic Security Assistant Regional Security Officer-Investigator and the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi's vetted police unit worked with Kenyan police to rescue 50 captives and arrest three suspects in an April 2017 raid at this re-acculturation facility in Nairobi. (U.S. Department of State photo)

It is not every day that a Bureau of Diplomatic Security Assistant Regional Security Officer-Investigator (ARSO-I) receives a thank you letter from someone they helped rescue overseas.

Since June 2017, the ARSO-I at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi has worked with State Department consular officers, other U.S. federal agencies, foreign embassies, and the Kenyan National Police Service's Serious Crime Unit to locate and rescue individuals held against their will at six ethnic Somali re-acculturation facilities.

In Kenya, there are government-licensed re-acculturation facilities that are set up to teach culture to Somalis whose families believe they have lost touch with tradition while living abroad. There are also

unlicensed facilities that often collaborate with family members to deceive relatives into traveling to Kenya from the United States and other nations. They abduct them upon their arrival and hold them captive inside their facilities (to read more about the DSS investigation of Somali re-acculturation centers, check out: [DSS investigator coordinates rescue of dozens from Somali re-acculturation facilities in Kenya](#)).



Thanks to the investigative collaboration of the ARSO-I and Kenyan police, authorities rescued over two

hundred victims, including eighteen U.S. citizens and over 50 foreign nationals, and arrested 15 suspects.

On March 2, 2019, nearly thirteen months after the rescue operation, one of the victims wrote a thank you letter to the embassy. She was graduating from high school and pursuing a career in the army. She thanked the embassy staff for helping her secure freedom from captivity and expressed hope for her future.

“DSS investigations safeguard the homeland and our fellow citizens,” said Office of Investigations and Counterintelligence Office Director Ronnie Catipon, “this is why we get into law enforcement.”

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