APU Plays Critical Role In Cross-border Crime Agencies' Dismantling Of London-based Ugandan Car Theft Ring

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A high-level, international car theft operation focused on theft of high value 4x4 vehicles and those equipped with keyless go ignition systems has been broken up by law enforcement agencies and anti-fraud investigators APU Ltd, part of the Automotive Insurance Solutions Group.

APU's unique blend of covert, fourth-generation tracking technology, forensic analysis capabilities and human intelligence expertise allowed officers from the National Crime Agency (NCA) to trace the journey of a Lexus stolen in London to the Ugandan capital, Kampala, where more than a million pounds worth of stolen vehicles were discovered and the car-smuggling ring dismantled.

Identified motor insurance fraud costs the UK an estimated £1.3 billion a year but NCA claims suggest that £100 million in irrecoverable insurance monies were lost in the first three months of 2015 alone due to vehicles being stolen.

NCA officers see these acquisitive vehicle offences as part of a national threat but believe the impact of the operation has shut down the criminal syndicate in Uganda, previously one of the most prevalent destinations for cars stolen from the UK.

In total, the APU-monitored Lexus led Police to 28 high-value vehicles stolen from the UK, which are now in the process of being repatriated.

Using APU's covert technology, NCA regional manager Paul Stanfield was able to trace the progress of the stolen Lexus on an intuitive Smartphone app as it was shipped illegally from Oman to Mombasa in Kenya and then by road to Kampala in a steel container. It also allowed Police to identify corrupt officials in both Kenya and Uganda, infiltrate the criminal syndicate and understand its operation.

Meanwhile, the co-operation of the team at APU, uniquely made up of ex-Police officers and insurance fraud investigators, was key to the success of the investigation.

Mr Stanfield said: "This investigation is an excellent example of the close co-operation between the UK National Crime Agency, National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service (NVCIS), Interpol and APU to tackle the increasing threat from organised vehicle crime. Working with the Police and security services in Kenya and Uganda, we have been able to dismantle an international criminal network that has been responsible for stealing high-value cars from the UK and exporting them to East Africa.

"The role that APU and its unique technology played in the operation was crucial; without its innovative method of locating the asset and its team's experience in both converting location data into usable content as well as understanding how such a complex investigation is executed, we would not have been able to bring this operation to a successful conclusion.

"Having seen how private and public sectors have worked hand-in-hand so perfectly during this investigation, I am in no doubt what it means for the success of future operations and the importance of collaboration and looking at organisations like APU."

APU's forensic data expertise has helped secure convictions in many domestic court cases. Stolen vehicle recovery and false insurance claim prevention undertaken by APU has also been solely responsible for saving approximately £350,000 in the past 12 months.

To watch the Ugandan operation video, as described by Paul Stanfield of the National Crime Agency, please visit the microsite or YouTube:

http://opnav.apultd.co.uk/
www.youtube.com/APU

Please visit the microsite:

http://opnav.apultd.co.uk/

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Notes for editors:

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