

Captive for a cause

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Journalism is generally not thought of as a dangerous field but over the past couple of years, it has become more and more dangerous.

In 2012, 141 journalists were reportedly killed in various countries experiencing unrest. In 2013 at least 70 journalists were killed throughout the world, 29 covering the civil war occurring in Syria and 10 in Iraq. The most alarming part of this is that these numbers are only rising as conflict continues and becomes more deadly all around. Journalists are often targeted by terrorist organizations because of the nature of their work. Current examples that reflect this trend include the group ISIS and the hostages they have held and executed.

ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, is an organization created with the intention of creating an independent state that would be controlled by one Supreme religious leader who would govern the residents of the state under harsh religious rule. There are currently approximately 20 journalists missing in Syria, 8 of which are or were believed to be held captive by ISIS. One nature of the group is its extreme violence and this can also be witnessed in the fate of three of the hostages. Two American journalists- James Wright Foley and Steven Sotloff- as well as one English journalist by the name of David Haines, have been filmed speaking a message to their own countries, blaming them for their deaths and listing the grievances of ISIS.

They were then beheaded on film as examples to Americans and other countries. Their claim stands that if we do not stop the actions we are taking, more journalists and civilians will die. When looking at how these

circumstances fit into the larger framework of our foreign policy, our country becomes divided into two. Some believe that we should do whatever is needed to ensure the safety of the journalists, including paying ransom and agreeing to do what terrorist groups ask of us. Another faction of the American people believes that these people should not be allowed to influence the decisions we make when it comes to terrorists.

While everyone is horrified to see the brutal ends many of these men and women have come to, terrorism is bigger than any one person. Paying ransoms would only exacerbate the problem, giving the groups the money and resources to continue their reigns of organized terror both in their countries and in ours. Journalists enter war zones with full knowledge of the danger they are putting themselves in the midst of and no matter how inhumane it may seem, many of them are beyond saving. Today our government is struggling with how to best approach the situation, including ensuring the safety of the journalists. President Obama is trying to come up with an efficient way to deal with the organization while also helping the Syrian rebels but as of now, no consensus has been reached. This, however, is not an isolated case and journalists have been and will continue to be targeted around the world.

How to change that fact is an even broader problem, one that will take time to solve. Until then, men and women will continue to put their lives on the line in an attempt to bring light to situations where there is none.