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|  | **KENT DENVER AND LITTLETON HIGH SCHOOL**  **Model United Nations**  **Conference**  **October 11, 2014** |  |

**Background Guide**

**Beginner Security Council**

**Topic 1: Combating the Islamic State (IS)**

**Topic 2: Hostages and Ransom Payments**

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**General Overview of Council**

The Security Council is an essential body of the United Nations, obligated to maintain international peace and security. As one of the six major organs of the United Nations, it is integral to the preservation of amity and goodwill in the international community. The United Nations Security Council convenes to investigate, mediate, and make recommendations to parties and states involved in conflict. It is also the sole UN body that has the authority to implement and enforce peacekeeping operations, sanctions or other punishments, and military intervention in times of escalating conflict.

The United Nations Security Council contains fifteen nation-state members: five permanent states (Russia, China, U.S.A., U.K., and France) and ten elected, rotating states with two-year terms. The five permanent members have the ability to veto any resolution the Council discusses on the floor, completely nullifying it from consideration. The ten rotating nations serve to create a global perspective and are chosen on the basis of geographic representation. The current Security Council is comprised of delegations from the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, The United States, The United Kingdom, France, The Russian Federation, and the People’s Republic of China.

In addition to its fifteen members, the Security Council invites non-voting countries to attend Security Council meetings and present their views on certain issues. For the purpose of this Beginner Security Council, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Syrian Arab Republic will be attending as non-voting observers in order to debate the topics, as it is imperative that nations directly affected by this new Islamic extremist threat are represented.

**Topic 1: Combating the Islamic State (IS)**

From its beginnings as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), the Islamic State (IS) has been intent on forming a caliphate (an Islamic state led by a supreme religious leader) in Iraq and the area known as the Levant. The Levant consists of Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus, and Hatay in Southern Turkey. The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia have identified the Islamic State as a terrorist organization. Given its aggressive insurgence into Iraq and parts of Syria, as well as its media campaign, the Islamic State’s violent actions have reverberated around the world. This pressing international issue must be debated in order to protect Middle Eastern nation states from further IS aggression.

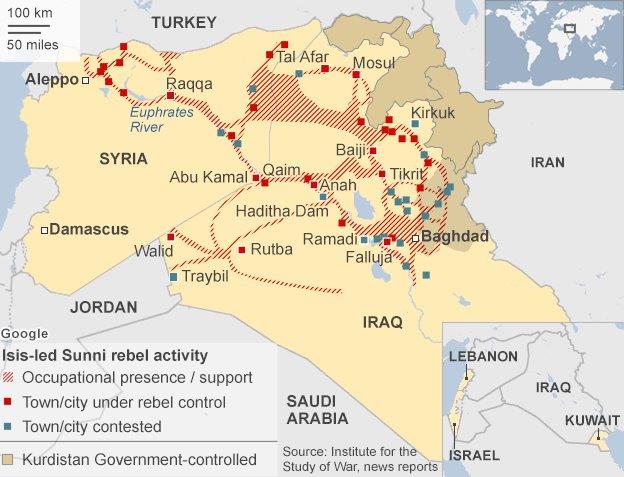
The goal of this Security Council is to make specific recommendations or take certain actions regarding IS. It is imperative for delegates to consider not only the most effective and swift way to halt IS in its tracks, but also how to stop foreign IS fighters returning to their respective countries and carrying out terrorist activities. Countries should also think about how to bring to justice these returning IS fighters. In addition, the Security Council also needs to debate possible plans to cut off IS's sources of funding.

As this is an ongoing issue, it is important for delegates to keep updated on the current situation involving the Islamic State through the use of news, radio, or other media sources. The most recent update of this background guide was on September 19, 2014.

**History of the Islamic State and its Origins**

The origin of the Islamic State, led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, can be traced back to the terrorist groups al-Qaeda, led by Ayman al-Zawahiri, and the al-Nusra Front, led by Abu Mohammad al-Jawlani. Though IS believed it could cooperate with al-Nusra, a schism occurred in February, 2014, as a result of internal tensions between al-Zawahiri, al-Jawlani, and al-Baghdadi. The leader of al-Nusra accused al-Baghdadi and IS of contributing to the imprisonment of three Jihadist clerics and the murder of al-Nusra’s chief Abu Mohammed al-Ansari and his family. Conversely, IS believes that under Zawahiri’s reign, al-Qaeda has strayed from the true form of jihad set out by Osama bin Laden. Another difference between the two groups is that IS searches for territorial control with no tolerance for other interpretations of Islam. The al-Nusra Front and al-Qaeda, however, believe that all jihadists, despite their differences, must unite in order to fulfill all goals. Once the split occurred, 65% of al-Nusra Front jihadists separated from the Front and declared their true allegiance to al-Baghdadi and IS. Due to these defections, the IS has gained power over swaths of land within Syria, including Raqqa, parts of Aleppo, Manbaj, al-Bab and Azaz. In Iraq, the Islamic State currently controls Mosul, Sinjar, Falluja, and has made significant inroads in northern and eastern Iraq (see "Islamic State Strongholds" map below).An excellent multi-media source to consult to better understand IS advances and various parties both fighting against and allying with IS is the New York Times' page, "The Iraq-ISIS Conflict in Maps, Photos, and Video." (<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/06/12/world/middleeast/the-iraq-isis-conflict-in-maps-photos-and-video.html?_r=0>)

**Islamic State Strongholds in Syria and Iraq**

Map from BBC report, August 2, 2014 (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24179084)

The real name of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is believed to be Hamed Dawood Mohammed Khalil al-Zawi. He is an experienced militant and tactician, as opposed to the leader of al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is a theologian. Therefore, al-Baghdadi's IS is a more attractive organization for young, violent jihadists. Though most IS members originate from Middle Eastern countries, IS has also attracted thousands of fighters from Western countries, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the United States. Professor Peter Neumann of King’s College London approximates that of the Western fighters that have travelled to the region, approximately 80% of them have now joined or become affiliates with IS. These foreign fighters are attracted by the goal of IS to create a worldwide caliphate, beginning with Iraq and Syria, so that the entire globe will be united under the IS banner.

Funding for the Islamic State was originally provided indirectly by wealthy individuals in Gulf Arab states, such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia, whose intentions were to back opposition groups fighting against Bashar al-Assad, President of Syria. Now that IS has control over a large area of land, it has become largely self-sustaining financially. The Islamic State controls granaries and oil fields and also uses extortion of local businesses in order to help pay for its activities. The IS has also obtained funding through raiding banks in the cities it has captured: the largest being $425 million from Mosul's central bank. Once IS captured the oil-rich city of Mosul, Iraq, its assets increased from $900 million to $2 billion. The Islamic State has been smuggling oil out of Northern Iraq and illegally selling up to $1 million of oil per day. This has become a primary source of funding. Additionally, IS has made millions of dollars through the kidnapping and ransoming of Europeans. In particular, countries believed to have made ransom payments to IS include France, Italy, Spain, and Germany. For example, four journalists who were being held with American journalist, James Foley, were freed by the IS and returned to France in April. While there is widespread suspicion that the French government paid ransoms to for the return of these hostages, French President Francois Hollande adamantly denies this. The Islamic State is estimated to be gaining between 2 and 4 million dollars a day through its myriad illegal activities. With these funds, IS is pushing farther and farther into Syria and Iraq, quickly gaining ground and enforcing its caliphate on local populations.

**Funding ISIS Infographic**



Inforgraphic from http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/funding-isis-infographic

**Present Situation**

The Islamic State has murdered at least 500 members of Iraq’s Yazidi ethnic minority, internally displaced 1.2 million Iraqis, and killed more than 1,000 civilians. Dohuk, a Kurdish city, now houses over 150,000 refugees fleeing from the turmoil that the IS has caused. Jordan also currently houses approximately 1.4 million Syrian refugees seeking protection from both IS and their country's civil war. The Islamic State has also released two videos showing the beheadings of American journalist James Foley and American-Israeli journalist Steven Sotloff in response to over 150 American airstrikes on IS targets. Moreover, a recent video released on September 13 shows the murder of British aid worker David Haines.

On September 5, the United States created a “core coalition” to combat Islamic militants in Iraq. This coalition is comprised of ten countries, including the U.S., the U.K., France, Italy, Germany, Australia, Turkey, Poland, Denmark and Canada. So far, it is without the endorsement of the United Nations Security Council. Barack Obama, president of the United States, declared the coalition was “ready to confront this terrorist threat (IS) with military, intelligence, law enforcement, as well as diplomatic efforts.”[[1]](#footnote-1) The core coalition has developed a three-phase plan. First, its goal is to complete further airstrikes to protect ethnic and religious minorities and push back the territorial advances made by IS. The second phase is to intensify the training of the Iraqi military, Kurdish fighters, and some Sunni tribes to combat IS. Finally, the third and most difficult phase is to destroy “the terrorist army in its sanctuary inside Syria.”[[2]](#footnote-2) The coalition is not concerned about violating Syrian borders, despite state sovereignty being a direct right granted to all members of the United Nations. Arab allies in the fight against IS are also paramount for the coalition to achieve its goals. In particular, the Arab League, comprised of twenty-two member states including Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, have agreed to provide military assistance to combat IS along with the coalition. Specifically, the coalition and its allies are looking toward Saudi Arabia, which has promised to provide training bases for moderate Syrian rebels to support coalition efforts.

On September 10, U.S. President Barack Obama extended this three phase plan to include the provision of humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians caught up in IS advances. He also spelled out the importance of disrupting IS funding and propaganda. In addition, President Obama called for international support in implementing these strategies and will personally preside over a U.N. Security Council meeting on September 24 to seek support for his plan.

**UN Action**

Resolution 1373 was adopted by the Security Council on September 28, 2001. This resolution directly asserts that member states must “prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts.” It also emphasizes that all member states must prosecute and bring to justice those who aid or take part in terrorist acts. Resolution 1373 further allows countries to curb terrorist activities through effective border control. Emphasizing the illegality of financing terrorists and terrorist activities, Resolution 1373 prohibits countries from directly or indirectly giving monetary support to terrorists. This resolution also created the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). The purpose of this committee is to provide assistance to all member states to implement the goals outlined in Resolution 1373. Country visits, reports, and special meetings are all conducted by the CTC to aid member states.

The United Nations has declared the highest level of humanitarian emergency in Iraq and accused the IS of barbaric acts of sexual violence against women, teenage boys, and girls of Iraqi minorities. A humanitarian emergency has also been declared in Syria by the United Nations. It is called a “Level 3 Emergency,” which will “facilitate mobilization of additional resources in goods, funds, and assets to ensure a more effective response to the humanitarian needs of populations affected…”

Furthermore, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2170 on August 15, 2014. This resolution condemns the enormity of human rights abuses performed by the IS in Iraq and Syria. The resolution also demands that terrorist organizations in any way affiliated with al-Qaeda cease all violence and terrorist acts, and disarm and disband with immediate effect.”[[3]](#footnote-3) The Security Council also recognizes that IS is generating its income through oil fields, and reminds member states that it is illegal to provide financial assets or economic resources directly or indirectly to IS. It urges all members of the international community to assist in bringing to justice, under international law, the leaders and participants in terrorist acts carried out by IS. This is the most recent UN resolution on the topic of IS and its presence in the Middle East.

**Timeline**

* September 28, 2001: The United Nations adopts Resolution 1373 to provide counter-terrorism measures for the international community.
* March, 2013: IS captures Raqqa, Syria, the first provincial capital to fall.
* January, 2014: IS captures the Sunni city of Fallujah in Anbar Province, Iraq. IS also seizes Ramadi, Iraq, and cities bordering Syria and Turkey.
* June, 2014: IS captures Mosul, Iraq.
* June 29, 2014: IS declares a caliphate from Aleppo, Syria to Diyala, Iraq.
* August 15, 2014: the United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 2170.
* September 5, 2014: the United States forms a "core coalition" with nine other states to combat IS.
* September 7, 2014: the Arab League agrees to take "all necessary measures" to confront IS and cooperate with all international, regional, and national efforts to combat militant groups.
* September 10, 2014: President Obama announces his Four Point Plan.

**Key Actors/Positions**

**The United States**

President Obama recently revealed his Four Point Plan for combating the Islamic State. His plan is to increase airstrikes to roll back the territorial gains made by the IS and to provide humanitarian aid. He has also stated that the United States has decided to “hunt down terrorists wherever they are,” including in Syria, without the support of the Syrian government. His second point is to strengthen troops in the Middle East by sending an additional 475 service members to assist fighters against the IS, though these service members will not engage in combat themselves. Third, President Obama is committed to stemming the flow of foreign fighters wishing to fight with IS. Finally, his last point is to promise to protect civilians in the region. As mentioned above, the United States has created a core coalition to combat the IS. The United States currently supplies weapons to Kurdish Peshmerga forces against IS, and has conducted more than 150 air strikes in Iraq. In response, IS has beheaded two American journalists, James Foley and Steven Sotloff.

**The People’s Republic of China**

The People’s Republic of China has significant national interest in the future of the Middle East, and especially Iraq, since it has invested billions of dollars in Iraqi oil. Approximately 10% of all Chinese oil imports are exported by Iraq. In early July, IS promised retaliatory action against China’s violations of Muslim rights in China. This is in response to China’s tightened security against Muslim Uighurs in the western region of Xinjiang Province. China claims that these actions are due to an increase in violent attacks allegedly instigated by the Uighurs. Furthermore, China has banned Muslims from fasting during Ramadan. The leader of IS, al-Baghdadi, claims that “Muslim rights are forcibly seized in China…” and promises to retaliate. China generally disapproves of U.S. military involvement in the Middle East or any other country, claiming national sovereignty must be upheld at all costs. The main goals for China in Iraq are simply to preserve the national sovereignty of all parties involved, secure oil interests, and improve security in Iraq and Syria.

**Jordan**

King Abdullah II of Jordan has publicly likened the IS leadership to ‘Heretics’ of Islam and strongly objects to their actions in the Middle East. In addition, Jordan has taken in vast numbers of political asylum seekers in the wake of IS’s advances across the region and is struggling to cope with the influx. King Abdullah II estimates that 1.4 million people from the region have sought safety within the confines of the Jordanian border so far.  Jordan remains a strong ally of both the United States and the United Kingdom and has provided a conduit for supplies directed to moderate Syrian rebels.

While Jordan is clearly an ally of the West, it remains cautious in its publicly stated commitments to the Western coalition for fear of reprisal from neighboring states and IS itself. Jordan has much to lose sharing its borders with Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, and it likely to proceed in its support of the destruction of IS with caution publically, if not privately.

**The United Kingdom**

The British Prime Minister, David Cameron, has decided to send military equipment in order to arm the Kurds against IS. The U.K., however, is against sending British troops to the region. In addition, the U.K. refuses to consider an alliance with President Bashar al-Assad of Syria. Approximately 500 British citizens are fighting for IS, twice as many as the United States, and among the highest number of any Western country. Furthermore, around 250 have already returned to British soil after training with the IS. The Prime Minister has declared that terror suspects returning to the U.K. will be “forced to enter de-radicalisation programmes and could be forced to relocate.” The United Kingdom must be aware of possible retaliation of jihadists in its own country. The U.K. is even considering legislation to allow the government to take passports away from British citizens involved with IS. The government has also granted the police the power to temporarily seize the passports of suspected religious extremists. It is essential to the U.K. that the safety of its citizens is assured within its own borders.

**Key Questions to Consider:**

* What immediate political, economic, and social impacts do the actions of the IS have on your country, and how has your country attempted to oppose the influence of the IS?
* What are achievable goals for the international community to halt the advance of the IS?
* What existing international laws and treaties can the Security Council call upon to garner international support in the fight against IS?
* How can the Security Council best support ground troops in Iraq and Syria who are fighting IS?
* Does the U.S. need Security Council endorsement to implement its Four Point Plan?
* How should member states respond to citizens who join IS forces?
* Should the Security Council support the al-Assad regime or opposition forces in Syria in the fight against IS?

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**Topic 2: Hostages and Ransom Payments**

Due to numerous kidnappings by the Islamic State, recent news has brought to light the problems and difficulties involved with the payment of ransoms, with special focus on how to respond to the kidnapping of journalists, humanitarian aid workers, and other civilians. Countries all respond differently to hostage situations. For example, the United States and United Kingdom are firmly against paying ransoms, and prefer to depend on extracting kidnapped citizens through use of force or diplomacy. Troublingly, evidence shows that coalition allies France and Italy have agreed to pay ransoms for the safe return of kidnapped citizens despite their denial of these practices. Many U.N. Security Council resolutions already exist that address the issue of ransom payments. In particular, Security Council Resolution 2133 (January, 2014) prohibits U.N. member states from indirectly or directly paying ransoms or making political concessions to secure the release of hostages. States are also held responsible for individuals and enterprises in their countries who might wish to pay ransoms for their family members or employees. The issue with Resolution 2133, as Argentina has stated, is that it "lacks legal specifications and definitions."[[4]](#footnote-4) The goal of this council is to discuss whether it is feasible to agree upon a universal procedure and behavior for countries when its citizens are kidnapped. In addition, this council should discuss how nations could work together in order to solve hostage situations and, if nations seek resolutions outside of this framework, how they should be held accountable to the international community.

In recent years, ransom payments have become second only to state sponsorship as the primary sources of income for terrorist organizations. Since 2008. more than $125 million has been collected by Al Qaeda and its affiliates in ransom payments alone. The New York Times reports that $66 million in ransom was paid to these terrorist organizations in just the past year. The Islamic State in particular has a history of demanding and receiving millions of dollars in ransom for European hostages. In March of 2014, IS released two Spanish hostages after reportedly collecting ransom payments. Qatar has been known to broker these agreements, though leaders in Qatar have not publicly admitted to this. While refusal to pay ransoms can result in the murder of innocent hostages, giving in to IS and other terrorist organizations' demands funds further terrorist operations and makes future kidnappings more likely, as these groups begin to rely on ransom payments as a steady source of income.

Delegates should stay well informed on the current situation of hostages, as news is released constantly. The last edit of this background guide was made on September 19th.

**Relevant Background Information**

On September 5th, 1972, eleven Israeli athletes were taken hostage by members affiliated with the Palestinian terrorist organization, Black September. They intended to raise international awareness of the fight between Palestine and Israel. Bruno Merk, the Interior Minister of Bavaria, a province in Germany where the Munich games were being held, had attempted to negotiate with the terrorists. The members of Black September, however, refused trading the hostages for German officials, as well as the money that was offered as ransom for the hostages. In return for the hostages, the terrorists demanded the release of 234 prisoners held in Israeli jails and a plane to fly back to an Arab capital. Germany and Israel attempted to save the hostages through a military rescue mission. This ultimately resulted in the deaths of all the Israeli hostages after five German soldiers decided to leave their posts. Germany’s first attempt at subduing the hostage situation was to negotiate with the terrorists through ransoms, and then to engage in an unsuccessful military operation. Germany and Israel did not consult the international community to aid in the decision-making process.

On November 4th, 1979, the American embassy in Tehran, Iran was attacked and occupied by Islamic revolutionaries who wanted the Shah returned to Iran from the United States in order to face justice. Sixty hostages were taken in the embassy. Instead of asking the United Nations to step in, President Carter attempted a military rescue mission in April 1980, called Operation Eagle Claw. It was unsuccessful due to a desert sandstorm that made some of the helicopters inoperable; eight men were killed. After 444 days of captivity, the hostages were released on January 21, 1981, soon after President Reagan was sworn into office. In this case, the United States first attempted a military operation which violated Iran’s national sovereignty, and then decided to wait out the hostage crisis.

On February 23, 2002, Ingrid Betancourt Pulecio was kidnapped by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). When she was captured she was running for the Colombian presidency. She had dual citizenship from Colombia and France. The French government decided to intervene and ventured to rescue Betancourt from the FARC. This, however, failed, and caused an international scandal for the government. After other attempts by the French government, allied with Cuba, failed, one mission finally succeeded. The Colombian secret service had worked months to gain access into the upper echelons of the FARC and succeeded in rescuing Betancourt. It is important to note that Betancourt was a citizen of both France and Colombia, and that the French government violated Colombia’s national sovereignty in its endeavor to try and rescue her.

Also, from February to April of 2003, the Salafist Organization for Prayer and Combat (GSPC), an Islamic extremist group with links to Al-Qaeda, kidnapped a total of 32 European tourists in southern Algeria. In May, the Algerian Army freed 17 of the hostages in a raid in In Salah, Algeria. The captors transported the remaining hostages to Mali, where GSPC began negotiations for the hostages' release. That August, German officials delivered 5 million euros in cash to the president of Mali, allegedly to fund humanitarian aid for the country. Unofficial reports by senior diplomats claim that the money instead went to pay ransom to GSPC in return for the remaining 15 hostages, who were released soon after the money was delivered. The German and Swiss governments expressed frustration at the Algerian government for using force to free the first group of hostages. Germany has also publicly denied that it paid ransom for the release of the second group.

One of the biggest issues with international law is its difficulty to enforce. The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established to end “impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.” Although the ICC is not a branch of the United Nations, both organizations work together at times to provide international justice and peace. Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines crimes against humanity as murder, torture, imprisonment that violates international human law, and more. Article 8 of the Rome Statute describes war crimes as willful killing, torture, and taking of hostages, among other acts. One of the major problems faced by the ICC is that some major countries are not participants in the ICC. These countries include the United States, India, and China. It is paramount for enforcement to be stepped up in order to maintain international humanitarian law.

**Present Situation**

Among the most recent news regarding activities having to do with the Islamic State is the murder of two American journalists and a British aid worker. On August 18, IS told the Western world, particularly the United States, “We will drown all of you in blood.” A five minute video titled, “A Message to America” was released, showing the decapitation of American journalist James Foley by the Islamic State. IS informed the world that his murder was in response to American air strikes in the region. If the United States refused to halt its strikes another death would follow. A week later, another video appeared, showing the beheading of American journalist, Steven Sotloff. The second video says to the United States, “So just as your missiles continue to strike our people, so our knife will continue to strike the necks of your people.” A further warning shows a member of IS holding another man, cautioning other nations not to ally with the United States and let the Islamic State fulfill its purpose.

On September 13th, British aid worker David Haines was murdered by IS. It was a message to the allies of the United States in which British journalist John Cantlie explained that this was the first of several videos that would explain the ideology of IS. Moreover, he indicated to the international community that other European countries have negotiated ransoms for their hostages, however the US and UK have not. He questioned why these two countries make separate decisions from the others. Despite any justification for its actions, the Islamic State has committed offenses against the Geneva Accords and international law. These murders and violent actions only attest to the serious and dangerous situations journalists, aid workers, and others are facing in the Middle East and around the world.

On September 20, IS freed the 49 staff members of the Turkish Consulate whom it took hostage on June 11. During the hostages' captivity, Turkey had devised three plans for the rescue of the hostages. These included conducting a military operation to free the hostages, using close ties with a Sunni Arab tribe in Mosul to persuade IS to release the hostages, or paying ransom. Turkish officials claim that the hostages were released through friendly negotiations that did not include any ransom payments. Many in the international community are suspicious of this claim. Turkey also stated that the rescue operation was carried out completely independent of any input from foreign intelligence services.

**UN Action**

Security Council Resolution 2133, adopted on January 27th, 2014, called upon member states to “keep ransom payments, political concession from benefitting terrorists.” It reminds the Security Council of Resolution 1373, which says that all countries must “prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts.” Both Resolution 2133 and 1373 demand that member states ban their citizens or entities from giving any kind of financial assistance, whether directly or indirectly, to terrorist organizations. In addition, the resolution asks countries to “cooperate closely” when a kidnapping has occurred. The resolution cites the Global Counterterrorism Forum, a multilateral counterterrorism organization determined to create international foundations for dealing with 21st century terrorism. This includes bringing to justice those involved in war crimes, and cooperating with all nations to create a healthy dialogue in order to share information regarding terrorism. Resolutions 2133 and 1373 solicit all nations to withhold from paying ransoms and counseling individual citizens and entities, such as businesses, from giving funds to terrorists. There is no strict guideline for the implementation of this resolution.

**Key Positions:**

**The United States**

The United States had attempted to rescue journalists James Foley, Steven Sotloff, and others in a secret military operation. This, however, failed. The United States would rather fund an operation to rescue its citizen than pay a ransom to fund terrorist activities. Although the lives of American citizens are of great importance to the government, the United States is vehemently against bartering and bargaining with terrorist organizations. "Hostage takers looking for ransoms distinguish between those governments that pay ransoms and those that do not - and that they make a point of not taking hostages from those countries that refuse to make concessions," said U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power. The U.S. recognizes that supplying IS with monetary funds will only fuel the violence and destruction IS uses to force its caliphate on others. The United States has not ratified the Rome Statute and is not a participant in the International Criminal Court, and would therefore be skeptical of referencing the Statute or the ICC in any resolutions.

**France**

Although some countries have accused France of willfully paying ransoms to IS and other organizations, France’s Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius, has denied these claims. Four French journalists who were being held with American journalist, James Foley, were freed by the IS and returned to France in April. While there is widespread suspicion that the French government paid ransoms to for the return of these hostages, French President Francois Hollande adamantly denies this. Evidence has surfaced, however, that France has spent $58 million on ransoms since 2008. A covert way for governments to pay ransoms is through the citizen’s employment. Many countries have cited that France pays its ransoms this way in order to hide the government's involvement. This raises the question of whether governments are responsible for the actions taken by individuals or corporations within their borders.

**The Russian Federation**

In December of 2013, before Russia's membership in the G8 was suspended, Russia made a public statement at a G8 meeting along with Britain, France, the U.S., Italy, Canada, Japan, and Germany that it supports all efforts to secure the safe return of hostages without succumbing to paying ransoms. That said, Russia has had internal troubles with kidnapping and ransom demands for years. At particular risk have been wealthy Russians' children. As many as 300 Russian children are kidnapped each year by opportunists intent on exacting millions of dollars from their wealthy parents. Russian tycoons have been known to succumb to this pressure, despite the Russian government's stated position on paying ransoms.

**The United Kingdom**

The United Kingdom has similar interests to the United States concerning the safety of journalists. The fact that James Foley was murdered by a British citizen involved with IS adds fuel to the United Kingdom’s anger at the actions of the Islamic State. David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, believes that agreeing to pay ransoms only incentivizes more terrorist organizations to capture additional journalists and other civilians. At a meeting of the G8 in 2013, Cameron persuaded other leaders to sign a communiqué that argued “Ransoms enabled terrorist groups to successfully recruit and enhance their operational capability.” The United Kingdom believes it is necessary for the all governments to weigh the political consequences of paying ransoms to terrorist organizations wishing to use that money to continue terrorizing other people.

**Key Questions:**

* Is the Security Council willing to pass sanctions or take some sort of legislative measure against countries paying terrorist organizations for the return of their captive citizens?
* How could the Security Council better work in conjunction with the ICC to enforce international law?
* How is your country willing to deal with individuals or businesses willingly paying ransoms to terrorist organizations in return for their family members and staff?
* What does international cooperation mean in addressing hostage situations? Is the sovereignty of a state taken into account when a rescue mission is planned?
* Considering existing resolutions addressing ransom payments, how is it possible to better enforce them?

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