

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/yemen-al-qaeda-threatens-to-execute-us-05-12-2014,47341.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Yemen

Threatened hostage

RWB calls for release of US photojournalist held hostage in Yemen

5 December 2014

Reporters Without Borders is extremely worried about Luke Somers, a US press photographer who is being held hostage in Yemen by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and who appears in a video that AQAP released two days ago.

Somers was kidnapped in September 2013 but the media did not report his abduction until now because his family thought it would put him in even greater danger.

In the three-minute [video](#), an AQAP leader [criticizes](#) America's "criminal" policies in the region and threatens to execute Somers within three days if its demands – known to the US government – are not met. Somers then says his life is in danger and requests help.

"We call on Somers' abductors to release him without delay," Reporters Without Borders programme director Lucie Morillon said. *"This photojournalist helped to provide independent coverage of the unrest in Yemen in recent years. He cannot be held responsible for the US government's actions."*

Morillon added: *"We also urge the Obama administration, which recently said it was reviewing its handling of hostage cases, to examine all the alternatives to the military option, in order to avoid the worst, and we urge the Yemeni authorities to cooperate and to do everything possible to obtain Somers' release."*

A British-born freelancer, Somers, 33, was [kidnapped](#) by gunmen in Sanaa on 17 September 2013. No group claimed his abduction at the time and the video only confirms that AQAP is currently holding him. His family released a [video](#) yesterday appealing for his release.

Somers distinguished himself with his coverage of the 2011 uprising in Yemen, where he has been based for just over three years working for photo agencies such as Corbis and Demotix, and for several local English-language newspapers such as *National Yemen*.

AQAP released the video just days after an unsuccessful military attempt by the United States and Yemeni special forces to free a group of AQAP hostages, including Somers, in Hadhramaut, a southern province not currently controlled by the central government.

Somers friends issued a petition urging the Obama administration to use its resources to secure his immediate release. [Sign the petition](#).

You can download those documents on our website :

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