

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/syria-islamic-state-takes-brutality-20-08-2014,46825.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Syria

Barbaric crime

Islamic State takes brutality towards hostages to extreme

20 August 2014

Video apparently shows Islamic State beheading US journalist James Foley

Reporters Without Borders is appalled by yesterday's release of a video that purportedly shows kidnapped US journalist **James Foley** being beheaded by the Jihadi armed group known as Islamic State or ISIS.

A masked man dressed in black is seen in the video cutting the throat of a man wearing the same kind of orange jumpsuit as detainees in Guantánamo. The man in black said Foley was being executed in revenge for the recent US air strikes on Islamic State positions in Iraq.

The White House said the US intelligence agencies were trying to verify the video's authenticity as quickly as possible. In the same video, Islamic State threatens to execute US journalist **Steven Sotloff**, who was abducted in Syria in August 2013, if President Obama does not end the US air strikes in Iraq.

"If the authenticity of this video claiming responsibility for James Foley's murder is confirmed, Islamic State would seem to be pushing its brutal treatment of hostages to the extreme," said Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire.

"Foley did not work for the US government. He was an experienced international reporter whose sole interest was to report the news, not represent his nation. We express our heartfelt condolences to his family, his father, his mother, who we know, and his friends. And we pay tribute to a man who helped us to provide support to the family of one of his friends, a photographer killed in Libya."

A veteran reporter, Foley, 40, was kidnapped near the town of Taftanaz, in northern Syria, on 22 November 2012. He covered the conflict in Libya in 2011 before going to Syria to cover the uprising against the Assad regime for the US news site GlobalPost, the French news agency AFP and other media. His is the first execution of a foreign journalist to be claimed by Islamic State, which has killed Syrian citizen-journalists in recent months.

In a January 2013 interview, Foley's mother Diane said her son was *"passionate about covering the story in Syria, passionate about the people there."* In a [Facebook message](#) to supporters late yesterday, she wrote: *"He gave his life trying to expose the world to the suffering of the Syrian people."*

Three foreign journalists are still being held hostage in Syria, while four others are missing there. Armed groups are currently holding around 20 Syrian (professional and non-professional) journalists, while the Syrian authorities are holding more than 30 Syrian news providers despite the amnesty announced in June.

A total of 39 professional journalists (12 of them foreigners) have been killed in connection with their work in Syria since the start of the conflict in March 2011, and 122 Syrian citizen-journalists have been killed.

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