

Statement by Secretary of Defense Ash Carter on Counter-ISIL Operation in Syria

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Immediate Release

May 16, 2015

Last night, at the direction of the Commander in Chief, I ordered U.S. Special Operations Forces to conduct an operation in al-Amr in eastern Syria to capture an ISIL senior leader known as Abu Sayyaf and his wife Umm Sayyaf. Abu Sayyaf was involved in ISIL's military operations and helped direct the terrorist organization's illicit oil, gas, and financial operations as well.

Abu Sayyaf was killed during the course of the operation when he engaged U.S. forces.

U.S. forces captured Umm Sayyaf, who we suspect is a member of ISIL, played an important role in ISIL's terrorist activities, and may have been complicit in what appears to have been the enslavement of a young Yezidi woman rescued last night.

No U.S. forces were killed or injured during this operation.

The operation represents another significant blow to ISIL, and it is a reminder that the United States will never waver in denying safe haven to terrorists who threaten our citizens, and those of our friends and allies.

I thank the extraordinary men and women in uniform who executed this complex and challenging mission, along with all those who supported it. Their professionalism, dedication, and valor are a deep source of pride and inspiration to us all.
