

Statement by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa Monaco on Attempted Rescue Operation

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As the Department of Defense has now announced, earlier this summer the President authorized an operation to attempt the rescue of American citizens who were kidnapped and held by ISIL against their will in Syria. The President authorized action at this time because it was the national security team's assessment that these hostages were in danger with each passing day in ISIL custody. The U.S. Government had what we believed was sufficient intelligence, and when the opportunity presented itself, the President authorized the Department of Defense to move aggressively to recover our citizens. Unfortunately, that mission was ultimately not successful because the hostages were not present.

Given the need to protect our military's operational capabilities, we will not be able to reveal the details of this operation. But the President could not be prouder of the U.S. forces who carried out this mission and the dedicated intelligence and diplomatic professionals who supported their efforts. Their effort should serve as another signal to those who would do us harm that the United States will not tolerate the abduction of our people, and will spare no effort to secure the safety of our citizens and to hold their captors accountable.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the remaining hostages' families and their loved ones during this difficult time. We continue to call for their immediate release. On behalf of all Americans, we keep these individuals and their families in our thoughts and prayers.