

Beat: Politics

Islamic State threatens to behead Iraqi journalist

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USPA News - Islamic State fighters are threatening to behead an Iraqi journalist who was abducted in northern Iraq last week, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said on Thursday, expressing its concern over the targeting of journalists by the al-Qaeda splinter group. Raad Mohamed Al-Azaoui, a cameraman for Sama Salah Aldeen TV, was abducted by Islamic State fighters on Sunday when he was in Samara, in the northern province of Saladin, while accompanied by about 20 Iraqi nationals.

The group has since threatened to behead Al-Azaoui for refusing to work for the Islamic State. Reporters Without Borders expressed "grave concern" over Al-Azaoui's abduction and said it highlights the mounting dangers journalists face. "The Islamic State since its emergence has made journalists a terror target," said Virginie Dangles, RSF's assistant research director. "The terrorist organization, in setting up an apparatus for kidnapping and executing news professionals, is attempting to eliminate all those who refuse to swear allegiance to ISIS." Over the last month alone, the Islamic State has beheaded American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff in an attempt to stop U.S. military intervention in the region. The beheadings were shown in two separate videos which shocked Western nations and which highlighted the situation of about 20 other journalists who are still missing in Syria. But Iraqi and Syrian journalists have also faced mounting danger. Journalist Ahmed Khaled Al-Dlimi, who is known as Bassem Ahmed Al Watani, was abducted in the Iraqi city of Tikrit on August 15 and his fate remains unknown. There are also grave concerns for Yazidi journalist Tarek Salah Shankali, who was captured on August 13. The Islamic State, which was previously known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ISIS), is an al-Qaeda splinter group which declared itself an Islamic caliphate earlier this year after seizing much of northeastern Syria and making huge gains in parts of Iraq. Their rule has been marked with brutal violence - such as beheadings and crucifixions - of anyone opposing the "caliphate."

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