

**FOREIGN CLAIMS SETTLEMENT COMMISSION
OF THE UNITED STATES
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20579**

In the Matter of the Claim of	}	
	}	
	}	
5 U.S.C. §552(b)(6)	}	Claim No. IRQ-II-328
	}	Decision No. IRQ-II-081
	}	
Against the Republic of Iraq	}	
	}	

Counsel for Claimant:	William R. Stein, Esq. Hughes Hubbard & Reed, LLP
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PROPOSED DECISION

Claimant brings this claim against the Republic of Iraq (“Iraq”) alleging that Iraq held him hostage in violation of international law in August and September 1990. Because he has established that Iraq held him hostage for 42 days, he is entitled to an award of \$360,000.

BACKGROUND AND BASIS OF THE PRESENT CLAIM

Claimant alleges that he was a United States citizen living in Kuwait with his family when Iraq invaded the country on August 2, 1990. He asserts that, beginning with the invasion and for approximately six weeks thereafter, he and his family were forced to hide in their home in Salmiyah, Kuwait in constant fear of being captured by Iraqi authorities. He further claims that during this entire period, the Iraqi government in effect forcibly prevented him (and other U.S. nationals) from leaving Kuwait and/or Iraq and did so with the express purpose of compelling the United States government to acquiesce

to certain Iraqi government demands. After the Iraqi government purportedly authorized foreign nationals of Arab origin to leave, Claimant, who was born in the Gaza Strip, flew out of Kuwait (via Baghdad, Iraq) on September 12, 1990.

Although Claimant was not among them, many of the U.S. nationals in Iraq and Kuwait at the time of the 1990-91 Iraqi occupation of Kuwait sued Iraq (and others) in federal court for, among other things, hostage-taking.¹ Those cases were pending when, in September 2010, the United States and Iraq concluded an *en bloc* (lump-sum) settlement agreement.² The Agreement, which entered into force in May 2011, covered a number of personal injury claims of U.S. nationals arising from acts of the former Iraqi regime occurring prior to October 7, 2004, including claims of personal injury caused by hostage-taking.³ Exercising its authority to distribute money from the settlement funds, the U.S. Department of State provided compensation to numerous individuals whose claims were covered by the Agreement, including some whom Iraq had allegedly taken hostage or unlawfully detained following Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Under the International Claims Settlement Act of 1949 ("ICSA"), the Secretary of State has statutory authority to refer "a category of claims against a foreign government" to this Commission.⁴ The Secretary has delegated that authority to the State Department's Legal Adviser, who, by letter dated October 7, 2014, referred three

¹ See, e.g., *Hill v. Republic of Iraq*, 175 F. Supp. 2d 36 (D.D.C. 2001); *Vine v. Republic of Iraq*, 459 F. Supp. 2d 10 (D.D.C. 2006).

² See *Claims Settlement Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Iraq*, Sept. 2, 2010, T.I.A.S. No. 11-522 ("Claims Settlement Agreement" or "Agreement").

³ See *id.* Art. III(1)(a)(ii).

⁴ See 22 U.S.C. § 1623(a)(1)(C) (2012).

categories of claims to this Commission for adjudication and certification.⁵ This was the State Department's second referral of claims to the Commission under the Claims Settlement Agreement, the first having been by letter dated November 14, 2012 ("2012 Referral" or "November 2012 Referral").⁶

One category of claims from the 2014 Referral is applicable here. That category, known as Category A, consists of

claims by U.S. nationals for hostage-taking¹ by Iraq² in violation of international law prior to October 7, 2004, provided that the claimant was not a plaintiff in pending litigation against Iraq for hostage taking³ at the time of the entry into force of the Claims Settlement Agreement and has not received compensation under the Claims Settlement Agreement from the U.S. Department of State. . . .

¹ For purposes of this referral, hostage-taking would include unlawful detention by Iraq that resulted in an inability to leave Iraq or Kuwait after Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

² For purposes of this referral, "Iraq" shall mean the Republic of Iraq, the Government of the Republic of Iraq, any agency or instrumentality of the Republic of Iraq, and any official, employee or agent of the Republic of Iraq acting within the scope of his or her office, employment or agency.

³ For purposes of this category, pending litigation against Iraq for hostage taking refers to the following matters: *Acree v. Iraq*, D.D.C. 02-cv-00632 and 06-cv-00723, *Hill v. Iraq*,

⁵ See Letter dated October 7, 2014, from the Honorable Mary E. McLeod, Acting Legal Adviser, Department of State, to the Honorable Anuj C. Desai and Sylvia M. Becker, Foreign Claims Settlement Commission ("2014 Referral" or "October 2014 Referral").

⁶ Although the November 2012 Referral involved claims of U.S. nationals who were held hostage or unlawfully detained by Iraq, it did not involve hostage-taking claims *per se*. Rather, it consisted of certain claimants who had *already received* compensation under the Claims Settlement Agreement from the State Department for their hostage-taking claims, and it authorized the Commission to award additional compensation to those claimants, provided they could show, among other things, that they suffered a "serious personal injury" during their detention. The 2012 Referral expressly noted that the "payment already received by the claimant under the Claims Settlement Agreement compensated the claimant for his or her experience for the entire duration of the period in which the claimant was held hostage or was subject to unlawful detention and encompassed physical, mental, and emotional injuries generally associated with such captivity or detention." Letter dated November 14, 2012, from the Honorable Harold Hongju Koh, Legal Adviser, Department of State, to the Honorable Timothy J. Feighery, Chairman, Foreign Claims Settlement Commission, at ¶3 n.3.

D.D.C. 99-cv-03346, *Vine v. Iraq*, D.D.C. 01-cv-02674; *Seyam (Islamic Society of Wichita) v. Iraq*, D.D.C. 03-cv-00888; *Simon v. Iraq*, D.D.C. 03-cv-00691.

2014 Referral at ¶ 3.

On October 23, 2014, the Commission published notice in the *Federal Register* announcing the commencement of the second Iraq Claims Program pursuant to the ICSA and the 2014 Referral.⁷

On February 21, 2017, the Commission received from Claimant a completed Statement of Claim seeking compensation under Category A of the 2014 Referral, together with exhibits supporting the elements of his claim.

DISCUSSION

Jurisdiction

This Commission's authority to hear claims is limited to the category of claims referred to it by the United States Department of State.⁸ The Commission's jurisdiction under the "Category A" paragraph of the 2014 Referral is limited to claims for hostage-taking of (1) "U.S. nationals," provided that the claimant (2) was not a plaintiff in any litigation against Iraq for hostage taking pending on May 22, 2011 (the "Pending Litigation"), and (3) has not received compensation under the Claims Settlement Agreement from the Department of State. 2014 Referral at ¶ 3.

Nationality

This claims program is limited to claims of "U.S. nationals." Here, that means a claimant must have been a national of the United States when the claim arose and

⁷ *Program for Adjudication: Commencement of Claims Program*, 79 Fed. Reg. 63,439 (Oct. 23, 2014).

⁸ See 22 U.S.C. § 1623(a)(1)(C) (2012).

continuously thereafter until May 22, 2011, the date the Agreement entered into force.⁹ Claimant satisfies the nationality requirement. He has provided a copy of his U.S. passport originally valid from April 1987 to April 1997, which shows that he was a U.S. national at the time of the alleged hostage-taking (August and September of 1990). He has also provided a copy of a recent U.S. passport, which is valid from February 2017 to February 2027 and establishes that he remained a U.S. national through the effective date of the Claims Settlement Agreement.

No Pending Litigation

Additionally, Category A states that the claimant may not have been a plaintiff in any of the so-called Pending Litigation cases at the time of the entry into force of the Claims Settlement Agreement.¹⁰ Footnote 3 of the 2014 Referral specifically lists the Pending Litigation cases for purposes of the Referral. Claimant has averred, and the pleadings in the cases cited in footnote 3 confirm, that he was not a plaintiff in any of those Pending Litigation cases. The Commission thus finds that Claimant has also satisfied this element of his claim.

*No Compensation under the Claims Settlement Agreement
from the Department of State*

The Claimant also satisfies the final jurisdictional requirement. Claimant has stated that he has not “received compensation from the U.S. Department of State under the United States-Iraq Settlement Agreement dated September 2, 2010.” Further, we have no evidence that the State Department has provided him any compensation under the Claims Settlement Agreement. Therefore, Claimant meets this element of his claim.

⁹ See Claim No. IRQ-II-161, Decision No. IRQ-II-003, at 4-5.

¹⁰ The Agreement entered into force on May 22, 2011. See Claims Settlement Agreement, art. IX.

In summary, this claim is within the Commission's jurisdiction pursuant to the 2014 Referral and is entitled to adjudication on the merits.

Merits

Factual Allegations

Claimant states that Iraq held him hostage from August 2, 1990 until September 12, 1990, a total of 42 days. Claimant alleges that he was living in Kuwait with his family when Iraq invaded the country on August 2, 1990. He alleges that after the invasion, he and his family hid inside his home in constant fear of being apprehended and taken into custody by Iraqi forces. On September 11, 1990, Claimant was advised by the U.S. Embassy that it had arranged for his family to leave Kuwait.¹¹ Between September 1, 1990 and September 23, 1990, the U.S. government organized several charter flights from Iraq and Kuwait to repatriate those released U.S. nationals wishing to return to the United States.¹² On September 12, 1990, Claimant flew to Baghdad with his family on one of these U.S. chartered flights. They then flew to England and then to Raleigh-Durham International Airport arriving on September 13, 1990.

Supporting Evidence

Claimant has supported his claim with, among other things, his sworn Statement of Claim, a copy of his passport, which contains an Iraqi exit stamp dated September 12, 1990, and three news articles. Claimant has also provided a declaration that describes the circumstances of his alleged detention and ultimate departure from Kuwait.

Moreover, while Claimant did not submit this evidence, the Commission takes notice of two *Federal News Service* transcriptions of press briefings by U.S. State

¹¹ See Claim No. IRQ-II-161, Decision No. IRQ-II-003, at 11.

¹² See *id.* at 12-13.

Department officials in August and September of 1990. In a press briefing that took place on August 31, 1990, Margaret Tutwiler, who was Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs at the time, stated that Iraqi officials had informed the chargé d'affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on August 30, 1990 to “submit passports for all Arab-born American men, women and children, plus all other American women and children” for the purpose of processing exit permits that were necessary for departure.¹³ On September 11, 1990, State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher announced an “important development” in its guidance for U.S. nationals held in Iraq and Kuwait, which was that “US citizen males born in Iraq, Kuwait, or any other Arab country should contact the US Embassy in Kuwait immediately as it [was] [the State Department’s] understanding that they may be eligible for departure.”¹⁴ Boucher also made clear that Iraq’s release of men of Arab origin or descent did not affect other adult males holding U.S. citizenship, who “[remained] subject to detention and arrest” and were not allowed to leave Iraq and/or Kuwait.¹⁵ While Boucher was not aware of Iraq’s reasons for allowing only those adult male U.S. nationals who were born in Arab countries to leave at that time (September 11, 1990), he suggested that the release could have been an extension of Iraq’s practice of permitting male foreign nationals who were born in Arab countries to leave Iraq and/or Kuwait.¹⁶ This practice had been in effect for a few weeks prior to the specific assurances from Iraqi officials that resulted in the change of guidance broadcast to U.S.

¹³ *CB State Department Regular Briefing Briefer: Margaret Tutwiler*, FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, Aug. 31, 1990, at 1.

¹⁴ *CB State Department Regular Briefing Briefer: Richard Boucher*, FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, Sep. 11, 1990, at 1.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *See id.* at 2.

nationals on September 11, 1990.¹⁷ Yet, it was not clear at that time whether male U.S. nationals were covered by Iraq's release of male foreign nationals of Arab origin.¹⁸ Several days before the State Department broadcast its September 11, 1990 guidance, Iraqi officials had announced that all Arab-born U.S. citizens could leave but had apparently refused to process exit permits for men that were in that particular group of U.S. nationals.¹⁹

Legal Standard

To make out a substantive claim under Category A of the 2014 Referral, a claimant must show that (1) Iraq was engaged in an armed conflict and (2) during that conflict, Iraq took the claimant hostage.²⁰ The Commission has previously held that, to establish a hostage-taking claim, a claimant must show that Iraq (a) seized or detained the claimant and (b) threatened the claimant with death, injury or continued detention (c) in order to compel a third party, such as the United States government, to do or abstain from doing any act as an explicit or implicit condition for the claimant's release.²¹ A claimant can establish the first element of this standard by showing that the Iraqi government confined the claimant to a particular location or locations within Iraq or Kuwait, or prohibited the claimant from leaving Iraq and/or Kuwait.²²

Application of Standard to this Claim

(1) Armed Conflict: Claimant alleges that Iraq took him hostage in Kuwait on August 2, 1990 and held him hostage for 42 days, until September 12, 1990, when Iraqi

¹⁷ See *id.*

¹⁸ See *id.*

¹⁹ See *id.*

²⁰ See Claim No. IRQ-II-161, Decision No. IRQ-II-003, at 16. An estate claimant would of course need to make this showing as to its decedent.

²¹ See *id.* at 17-20.

²² See *id.* at 17.

officials allowed him to leave Iraq. In its first decision awarding compensation for hostage-taking under the 2014 Referral, the Commission held that during this entire period, Iraq was engaged in an armed conflict with Kuwait.²³ Thus, Claimant satisfies this element of the standard.

(2) Hostage-taking: To satisfy the hostage-taking requirement of Category A of the 2014 Referral, Claimant must show that Iraq (a) seized or detained him and (b) threatened him with death, injury or continued detention (c) in order to compel a third party, such as the United States government, to do or abstain from doing any act as an explicit or implicit condition for his release. Claimant satisfies this standard for the 42 - day period from August 2, 1990 to September 12, 1990.

(a) Detention/deprivation of freedom: For purposes of analyzing Claimant's allegations of having been detained, his time in Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion can be divided into three periods: (i) between the Iraqi invasion on August 2, 1990 and the Iraqi government's formal closing of the borders on August 9, 1990; (ii) from that August 9th formal closing of the borders until Iraq purportedly authorized the release of adult male Arab-born U.S. citizens (on or around September 11, 1990); and (iii) from that date until Claimant's departure on September 12, 1990.²⁴

From August 2, 1990 until Iraq formally closed its borders to foreign nationals on August 9, 1990, Iraq confined Claimant to his home by threatening all U.S. nationals with immediate seizure and forcible detention.²⁵ Although some foreign nationals did manage to leave Kuwait and/or Iraq during this period, Claimant could not reasonably be

²³ See *id.* at 16-17.

²⁴ See *id.* at 20-21.

²⁵ See *id.* at 21.

expected to have escaped.²⁶ Iraqi authorities were forcibly detaining foreign nationals (including U.S. nationals) in Kuwait, relocating many to Baghdad against their will.²⁷ Claimant understandably had, as the United Nations Compensation Commission has put it, a “manifestly well-founded fear” of being killed or forcibly detained if he had made any attempt to leave the country.²⁸ The Commission has previously recognized that for the purposes of the legal standard applicable here, putting Claimant in this situation in effect amounts to detention.²⁹ Iraq thus detained Claimant from August 2, 1990 to August 9, 1990.

From August 9, 1990 until Iraq purportedly authorized the release of all Arab-born U.S. citizens (on or about September 11, 1990), the Iraqi government confined Claimant to Kuwait, preventing him from leaving the country by the threat of force. Starting on August 9, 1990, the Iraqi government formally closed Kuwait’s borders, forcibly prohibiting U.S. nationals from leaving.³⁰ As the Commission has previously held, as of that date, Iraq prohibited Claimant from leaving the country, effectively detaining him within the borders of Kuwait and Iraq.³¹ Therefore, Iraq detained Claimant from August 9, 1990 until it purportedly authorized the release of all Arab-born U.S. citizens (on or about September 11, 1990).

Moreover, Iraq continued to detain Claimant in Kuwait from the date it purportedly authorized the release of all Arab-born U.S. citizens (on or about September

²⁶ *See id.*

²⁷ *See id.*

²⁸ Report and Recommendations Made by the Panel of Commissioners Concerning the First Instalment of Individual Claims for Damages up to US \$100,000 (Category “C” Claims), UN Doc. S/AC.26/1994/3 (1994), at 93.

²⁹ *See* Claim No. IRQ-II-161, Decision No. IRQ-II-003, at 21.

³⁰ *See id.* at 21-22.

³¹ *See id.* at 22.

11, 1990) until Claimant left the country on September 12, 1990. As the Commission has previously recognized, a claimant's detention ends only on the date that he is released from the control of the person or entity that detained him.³² Any attempt "[by the perpetrator] to restrict [the] movements" of a claimant establishes control,³³ whereas a claimant who has a reasonable opportunity to leave the site of his or her captivity is deemed no longer to be under the perpetrator's control.³⁴

Under this standard, Claimant, who was born in the Gaza Strip in 1952, remained under Iraq's control until September 12, 1990, irrespective of whether it formally authorized him, as an Arab-born U.S. citizen, to leave any earlier. The Commission has recognized that Iraq imposed conditions on air travel in September 1990 that limited the ability of foreign nationals, including U.S. nationals, to leave Iraq and/or Kuwait immediately after their formal release.³⁵ Indeed, the available evidence indicates that Claimant left Kuwait and Iraq at the first reasonable opportunity, on the September 12, 1990 U.S. government-chartered flight that left Iraq. Because there is no evidence that Claimant remained voluntarily in Kuwait at any time during this period, we conclude that he was under Iraq's control and thus detained from the date Iraq purportedly released all Arab-born U.S. citizens (on or about September 11, 1990) to September 12, 1990.³⁶

In sum, Iraq thus detained Claimant from August 2, 1990 until September 12, 1990.

³² See Claim No. IRQ-II-161, Decision No. IRQ-II-003, at 22; *see also* Claim No. LIB-II-183, Decision No. LIB-II-178 (Proposed Decision), at 13 (2012).

³³ Claim No. IRQ-II-161, Decision No. IRQ-II-003, at 22 (citing Claim No. LIB-II-183, Decision No. LIB-II-178 (Proposed Decision), at 12 (2012)).

³⁴ *See id.*

³⁵ See Claim No. IRQ-II-161, Decision No. IRQ-II-003, at 22.

³⁶ We make no findings with respect to Arab-born U.S. citizens who departed *after* the initial period that women and children were allowed to leave (*i.e.*, after September 23, 1990).

(b) Threat: In its first decision awarding compensation for hostage-taking under the 2014 Referral, the Commission determined that the Iraqi government threatened U.S. nationals in Kuwait and Iraq numerous times with continued detention.³⁷ This included Claimant.³⁸ Both Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the Speaker of Iraq's National Assembly Saadi Mahdi made clear that American nationals (as well as those from numerous other countries) would not be permitted to leave.³⁹

In short, the Iraqi government made unequivocal threats to continue to detain U.S. nationals in Kuwait and Iraq. Claimant was a U.S. national in Kuwait at the time. Claimant has thus established that Iraq threatened to continue to detain him.

(c) Third party coercion: The Commission has previously held that Iraq detained all U.S. nationals in Kuwait or Iraq at the time and threatened them with continued detention in order to compel the United States government to act in certain ways as an explicit and/or implicit condition for their release.⁴⁰ Iraq itself stated that it sought three things from the United States government before it would release the detained U.S. nationals; it wanted the United States (i) not to attack Iraq, (ii) to withdraw its troops from Saudi Arabia; and/or (iii) to end the economic embargo imposed on

³⁷ See *id.* at 23.

³⁸ While we determine that these statements apply to Claimant and other similarly situated U.S. nationals who were prevented from leaving Iraq or Kuwait after the invasion, we do not make any findings as to whether they also apply to U.S. nationals with diplomatic status: Iraqi officials made specific representations about the ability of diplomatic and consular staff members with U.S. nationality (and their relatives) to leave Iraq and Kuwait throughout the crisis. See *In Iraq: 'We Have A Problem' Iraq Holds Fleeing U.S. Diplomats Staff from Kuwait Reaches Baghdad, But Can't Leave*, PHILA. INQUIRER, Aug. 24, 1990, <https://perma.cc/B2YF-79AY>.

³⁹ See Claim No. IRQ-II-161, Decision No. IRQ-II-003, at 23.

⁴⁰ See *id.*

Iraq.⁴¹ Indeed, at the time, the U.S. government itself understood Iraq's actions to be hostage-taking.⁴²

In sum, this claim meets the standard for hostage-taking within the meaning of the 2014 Referral. Iraq held Claimant hostage in violation of international law for a period of 42 days, and Claimant is thus entitled to compensation.

COMPENSATION

Having concluded that the present claim is compensable, the Commission must next determine the appropriate amount of compensation.

In its first decision awarding compensation for hostage-taking under the 2014 Referral, the Commission held that successful claimants should be awarded compensation in the amount of \$150,000 plus an additional \$5,000 for each day the claimant was in captivity.⁴³ Therefore, for the 42 days Iraq held Claimant hostage, he is entitled to an award of \$360,000, which is \$150,000 plus (42 x \$5,000). This amount constitutes the entirety of the compensation to which Claimant is entitled under the Claims Settlement Agreement.

The Commission hereby enters the following award, which will be certified to the Secretary of the Treasury for payment under sections 7 and 8 of the ICSA.⁴⁴

⁴¹ See *id.* at 23-24.

⁴² See George H. W. Bush, "These Innocent People . . . Are, In Fact, Hostages" in U.S. Dep't of State, *American Foreign Policy Current Documents 1990* 484 (Sherrill Brown Wells ed. 1991); see also 2014 Referral at ¶ 3; cf. S.C. Res. 674 (Oct. 29, 1990) ("actions by ... Iraq authorities and occupying forces to take third-State nationals hostage" and demanded that Iraq "cease and desist" this practice).

⁴³ See Claim No. IRQ-II-161, Decision No. IRQ-II-003, at 24-26.

⁴⁴ 22 U.S.C. §§ 1626-1627 (2012).

AWARD

Claimant is entitled to an award in the amount of \$360,000.

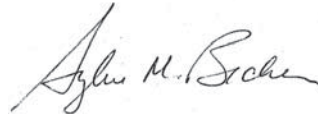
Dated at Washington, DC, April 27, 2017
and entered as the Proposed Decision
of the Commission.

**This decision was entered as the
Commission's Final Decision
on**

June 6, 2017



Anuj C. Desai, Commissioner



Sylvia M. Becker, Commissioner

NOTICE: Pursuant to the Regulations of the Commission, any objections must be filed within 15 days of delivery of this Proposed Decision. Absent objection, this decision will be entered as the Final Decision of the Commission upon the expiration of 30 days after delivery, unless the Commission otherwise orders. FCSC Regulations, 45 C.F.R. § 509.5 (e), (g) (2016).