

U.S. Military Detention in Iraq: Just How Many ISIS Detainees So Far?

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Just how many ISIS detainees have been in U.S. military custody over the past year?

[As I noted earlier this week](#), the first publicly-known instance arose last summer with the capture and detention of Umm Sayyaf, and the second publicly-known instance happened earlier this week as part of the initial wave of kill-or-capture ground operations conducted by what has been described as a new SOF Expeditionary Targeting Force.

Is it possible there have been others in between, though?

Yes, according to a little-noticed assertion in a [N.Y. Times article two days ago](#). After describing the recent capture by the Expeditionary Targeting Force, the article asserted without elaboration that:

“Although American commandoes have captured a handful of Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria in discrete operations in recent years, the Pentagon is now faced with the prospect of detaining a larger group of captives...” (italics added)

This is remarkable, if true (perhaps this was just an editing error?). To the best of my knowledge, there had been no prior public reports of U.S. ground operations resulting in a capture other than the Umm Sayyaf example.

If true, here are the questions journalists (and SASC and HASC staffers) should be asking: Precisely how many captives are we talking about, where and when were they captured, and by whom? How long did each one remain in U.S. custody, and were they held in Erbil as in the case of Umm Sayyaf and this week’s capture? To whom were they released? And bearing in mind that Kurdish authorities have yet to bring charges against Umm Sayyaf (raising the prospect that she might one day walk free), what has happened post-transfer to these other detainees?

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