

Aid agencies warn of Iraq pullout

Level 3 | Advanced

Aid agencies warn of Iraq pullout after kidnappings

1 Key Vocabulary

Fill the gaps using these keywords from the text:

prompt (vb)	abduction	expatriate	claim (vb)
right-hand man	deteriorate (vb)	sacred	reassess

1. _____ is another word for 'kidnapping'.
2. An _____ is someone who lives in a foreign country.
3. If you _____ something, you evaluate it again.
4. A _____ is the person that you regularly depend on to help you.
5. If a situation _____ it becomes worse.
6. To _____ means to cause something to happen or be done.
7. If you _____ something, you say that it is true, even if there is no specific evidence.
8. If something is _____, it is considered to be connected with God in a special way.

2 What do you know?

1. Two women were kidnapped recently in Iraq. What was their nationality?
2. Who is Silvio Berlusconi?
3. Ayman al-Zawahri is the right-hand man of which famous individual?
4. What is Medecins sans Frontiers?
5. Of which country is John Howard the prime minister?

Now look in the text and check your answers.

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Sophie Arie and Luke Harding

The remaining international aid agencies in Iraq were considering pulling out after the kidnapping of four humanitarian workers, including two Italian women, from their headquarters in Baghdad, it was claimed recently. Jean-Dominique Bunel, a coordinator for the agencies, said the abduction last week had already prompted some aid workers to leave and others would follow soon.

Speaking to Agence France-Presse, he said: "It seems that most of the international non-governmental organisations are preparing to leave Iraq and some expatriate [staff] already left . . . More will follow in coming days." Mr Bunel said he had no idea who had abducted the Italians, who work for Bridge to Baghdad, an organisation helping children across the country.

An Iraqi group called Ansar al-Zawahri said it had kidnapped the women. In a message on an Islamist website, it claimed: "This is the first of our attacks against Italy." The name, Partisans of Zawahri, appears to refer to Osama bin Laden's right-hand man, Ayman al-Zawahri. Almost all major aid organisations have left Iraq because of the deteriorating security situation, including the UN, the International Red Cross and Medecins sans Frontieres. Those that have stayed have had to reassess the situation because of the nature of the latest kidnapping, which involved 20 gunmen bursting into the organisation's office in central Baghdad. It marked a change in strategy by hostage-

takers, who have not targeted aid workers or women, except for one Japanese woman.

In Italy the prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, called on leftwing opposition leaders to stand with the right in the crisis. He was said to be "aghast and flabbergasted" that women were being harmed because "Islam teaches that they are sacred". Opposition leaders repeated their hostility to the war in Iraq and Italy's military presence there, but said the priority was to save the hostages. The deputy prime minister, Gianfranco Fini, said the kidnapping showed that "terrorists had made a quantum leap in their strategy".

The kidnapping came 10 days after the murder of the Italian journalist Enzo Baldoni, kidnapped while travelling to Najaf with the Italian Red Cross. Italy had rejected kidnappers' demands for its troops to quit Iraq. Another militant group released a video of a Turkish hostage having his head cut off. In the tape from Tawhid and Jihad, a group inconclusively linked to the Jordanian al-Qaida militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Durmus Kumdereli, a driver, said he had been captured while delivering goods to a US base in Mosul. He urged other transport companies and drivers "not to aid the occupiers". Masked men then beheaded him.

The Australian prime minister, John Howard, said he would not withdraw troops from Iraq as demanded by militants who claimed to have taken two Australians hostage.

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3 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer to each question.

1. Why are aid agencies considering pulling out of Iraq?
 - a. Because of the war last year.
 - b. Because their headquarters are being bombed.
 - c. Because of the number of kidnappings.
2. How were the Italian women kidnapped?
 - a. They were kidnapped while travelling to Najaf with the Red Cross.
 - b. Twenty armed men burst into their office.
 - c. They were taken from their hotel.
3. What was the priority of the Italian Opposition?
 - a. To oppose the war in Iraq.
 - b. To save the lives of the hostages.
 - c. To change the strategy of the terrorists.
4. Why was the Turkish lorry driver executed by his kidnappers?
 - a. Because his company was delivering supplies to the Americans.
 - b. Because Turkey supported the war in Iraq.
 - c. Because he was a fellow Muslim.
5. Which answer best reflects the general meaning of the text?
 - a. The situation in Iraq is bad and many aid agencies are thinking about leaving.
 - b. The situation in Iraq is bad and the few aid agencies that remain are thinking about leaving.
 - c. The situation in Iraq is bad and a few aid agencies are thinking of leaving.

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4 Find the word

Find the words or phrases that mean:

1. a verb that means 'to leave; to stop being involved in a situation'.
2. a verb which means 'to enter a room very suddenly'.
3. an adjective which means 'extremely shocked and upset'.
4. an adjective which means 'extremely surprised'.
5. an expression which means 'to make a very big change'.
6. an adverb which means 'without complete proof'.
7. a verb which means 'to cut someone's head off'.
8. a noun which means 'a person who has been kidnapped'.

5 Vocabulary -prepositions

Fill the gaps and complete the sentences.

1. Aid agencies are considering pulling _____ Iraq.
2. An Islamist website claimed the kidnapping was the first attack _____ Italy.
3. Targeting women is a change _____ strategy by the kidnappers.
4. Many Italians are hostile _____ the war in Iraq.
5. The gunmen burst _____ the women's office in Baghdad.
6. The women were abducted _____ their headquarters.
7. The group's name appears to refer _____ Osama bin Laden's right-hand man.
8. The Italian prime minister called _____ the opposition to support him.

Check your answers in the text.

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6 Grammar focus - past perfect forms

There are 6 examples of past perfect tenses in the text.

1. Find and underline or highlight the 6 examples of the past perfect.
2. Find the one example of the past perfect that is not an example of reported speech but is an action in the past occurring prior to another past action.
3. Find an example of a passive form of the past perfect.

7 Discussion points

Is it ever right for people to kidnap others in order to make political demands?

Should television stations broadcast pictures of kidnappers and their victims?

If your country is occupied by a foreign army, does that give you the right to kidnap and kill foreign civilians?

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Key

1 Key vocabulary

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1. abduction. | 2. expatriate | 3. reassess | 4. right-hand man |
| 5. deteriorates | 6. prompt | 7. claim | 8. sacred |

2 What do you know?

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Italian | 2. The Italian prime minister |
| 3. Osama bin Laden | 4. An aid agency (specialising in medical treatment) |
| 5. Australia | |

3 Comprehension check

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. c; | 2. b; | 3. b; | 4. a; | 5. b. |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|

4 Vocabulary find the word

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. to pull out (also to withdraw). | 2. to burst in. |
| 3. aghast. | 4. flabbergasted. |
| 5. to make a quantum leap | 6. inconclusively. |
| 7. to behead | 8. a hostage |

5 Vocabulary prepositions

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| 1. out of | 2. against |
| 3. in (of is also possible) | 4. to |
| 5. into | 6. from |
| 7. to | 8. on |

6 Grammar focus past perfect forms

1. had (already) prompted; had abducted; had kidnapped; had made; had rejected; had been captured
2. had rejected (prior to the murder of the journalist)
3. had been captured