

Under Trump, No Margin for Terror

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She didn't live to see justice done. By 26, Kayla Mueller was already gone—killed a world away from home, in ISIS captivity. For four years, her parents have struggled to make sense of her death, “haunted every day,” they say, by the fact that her country was silent. Today, that country—led by a man determined to find the terrorists responsible—can rest a little easier, knowing that the butcher behind Kayla's murder—and so many others'—has finally met his maker.

Most Americans were just sitting down to take in Game 4 of the World Series when U.S. forces were preparing to launch one of the most significant military operations since 2011. With President Trump and high-ranking security and military personnel watching from a situation room thousands of miles away, White House officials got the news they'd been waiting since 2011 to hear: the reign of the world's most wanted terrorist, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was over.

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It was a significant moment, not just for the administration—but for parents like Kayla's, James Foley's, and countless families across the country whose courageous sons and daughters risked their lives to see this mission accomplished. After a raid [that spanned two hours](#), the president told the nation that “a brutal killer, one who has caused so much hardship and death, has been violently eliminated... The world is now a much safer place. God bless America.”

For Marsha and Carl Mueller, the news was bittersweet. “We are so grateful for [the special operations and military]... so grateful. I still say Kayla should be here, and if Obama had been as decisive as President Trump, maybe she would have been,” an emotional Marsha said afterward. She and Carl, [who begged the Obama administration](#) to take “forceful action against these people,” felt the sting of the previous president’s silence. “[ISIS] need[s] to know if you kidnap Americans, you are going to die,” Carl said at the time. “Right now, they’re given a free pass.”

Under Trump’s predecessor, the world watched as ISIS burned its way across Iraq and Syria, destroying villages, systematically raping and kidnapping women and children. Ancient tribes and communities that date back to the age of Christ were suddenly the scene of mass executions and beheadings. Nadia Murad, [an ISIS sex slave](#)-turned-human rights activist, says her people—the Yazidis—[are still on Mount Sinjar](#), because of the Obama administration’s indifference. The others were murdered on the way. She called the death of al-Baghdadi “welcoming news for the world, especially for those [minorities] who were targeted by ISIS.” “Baghdadi died as he lived—a coward using children as a shield. Let today be the beginning of the global fight to bring ISIS to justice.”

But, Nadia [went on](#), it’s important not to forget that those who suffered at the hands of al-Baghdadi and his militants still need help. “In particular, religious minorities in Iraq like the Yazidis and Christians. Yazidis are still displaced and thousands (mostly women and children) remain missing.” She, [like Diane Foley](#), mother of slain journalist James Foley, hopes the captured ISIS fighters will be “held accountable”—something that never happened under Obama, who refused even to call the annihilation of her people “genocide.” Instead, this “[JV team](#)” was left unchecked, going from “obscurity,” ABC News noted, “to the world’s most brutal terrorist network.”

“By the end of Obama’s second term,” Forbes’s Thomas Del Beccaro [points out in his column](#), even CNN had warned that the ‘self-proclaimed Islamic State has conducted or inspired more than 140 terrorist attacks in 29 countries other than Iraq and Syria, where its carnage has taken a much deadlier toll. Those attacks have killed at least 2,043 people and injured thousands more.’ That is an enormous growth spurt by any stretch of the imagination.”

All of it led to the rise of monsters like al-Baghdadi and armies of fighters just like him. Together, they led thousands of innocent girls like Kayla to a fate no parent can’t fathom. “She was held in many prisons. She was held in solitary confinement. She was tortured. She was intimidated. She was ultimately [raped by al-Baghdadi himself](#),” an emotional Carl said. “He either killed her, or he was complicit in her murder. I’ll let people who read this make up their own mind how a parent should feel.”

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For now, at least, he can take comfort that the mission [named after his daughter](#) was a success. America's commander-in-chief has sent a message to the world that terrorists can run and hide, but they can't hide forever - the United States will hunt them down. Obviously, the end of al-Baghdadi isn't the end of the ISIS threat. According to the intelligence community, there are still as many as 18,000 fighters still in the Middle East—with its tentacles deep into unsuspecting countries. While our troops continue to prove why they're the most elite force in the world, a new chapter in the war on terror awaits. And Americans everywhere will be grateful to know: this president takes it seriously.

Tony Perkins's Washington Update is written with the aid of FRC senior writers.