

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 9242

To require the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress a report on the recovery of certain United States nationals, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 10, 2026

Mr. HAMADEH of Arizona (for himself, Mr. MESSMER, and Mr. MILLS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

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## A BILL

To require the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress a report on the recovery of certain United States nationals, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “No American Left Be-  
5 hind Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE REPORT ON RECOVERY**  
7 **OF CERTAIN UNITED STATES NATIONALS.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1           (1) The United States has a longstanding obli-  
2           gation and commitment to recover, account for, and  
3           repatriate its citizens who are held hostage, unlaw-  
4           fully detained, or otherwise unaccounted for abroad.

5           (2) United States nationals have been held cap-  
6           tive, unlawfully detained, or killed in areas of cur-  
7           rent or recent United States military operations in  
8           the Middle East and Africa, particularly in Syria,  
9           Iraq, and Afghanistan, with some cases remaining  
10          unresolved.

11          (3) The recent successful recovery of isolated  
12          personnel, including the recent daring rescue of  
13          downed United States aircrew in Iran, demonstrates  
14          the unstoppable effectiveness of coordinated Amer-  
15          ican military, intelligence, and interagency capabili-  
16          ties.

17          (4) The recent successful releases of United  
18          States nationals wrongfully detained abroad dem-  
19          onstrate that relentless and coordinated diplomatic  
20          engagement, supported by economic and strategic le-  
21          verage, can decisively enable successful recovery out-  
22          comes.

23          (5) The Department of Defense plays a critical  
24          role in supporting interagency hostage recovery ef-  
25          forts pursuant to the Robert Levinson Hostage Re-

1       covery and Hostage Taking Accountability Act (22  
2       U.S.C. 1741 et seq.), including as a key participant  
3       in the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell.

4               (6) The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Spe-  
5       cial Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict serves as  
6       the Department's policy lead for personnel recovery,  
7       and United States Special Operations Command  
8       serves as the operational lead for hostage rescue  
9       missions.

10              (7) The recovery of deceased United States na-  
11       tionals and the repatriation of their remains is a sol-  
12       emn and enduring obligation of the United States  
13       Government.

14              (8) The consistent and credible application of  
15       diplomatic, economic, and military leverage can deter  
16       adversaries and non-state actors from targeting  
17       United States nationals for unlawful detention, hos-  
18       tage-taking, or harm.

19              (9) Changes in force posture, intelligence ac-  
20       cess, partner coordination, and operational presence  
21       can significantly affect the likelihood of successful  
22       recovery, remains repatriation, and accountability  
23       outcomes.

24              (10) Certain partner nations maintain institu-  
25       tional frameworks prioritizing the recovery and repa-

1       triation of their citizens, including efforts that con-  
2       tinue years after hostilities have ended.

3           (11) Congress has a responsibility to ensure  
4       that recovery, repatriation, and accountability con-  
5       siderations are incorporated as a core mission in de-  
6       fense planning, contingency operations, and inter-  
7       agency coordination, with the objective that no  
8       American is left behind.

9       (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
10      gress that the United States should maintain a sustained  
11      and coordinated commitment to the recovery, repatriation,  
12      and accountability of United States nationals held hos-  
13      tage, unlawfully detained, or otherwise unaccounted for  
14      abroad, and should evaluate the feasibility of establishing  
15      a formal, enduring “No American Left Behind” doctrine  
16      to guide such efforts.

17      (c) REPORT.—

18           (1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 180 days  
19      after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
20      retary of Defense shall submit to the congressional  
21      defense committees a report on the support by the  
22      Department of Defense for the recovery, repatri-  
23      ation, and accountability of United States nationals  
24      abroad.

1           (2) SCOPE.—The report required under para-  
2           graph (1) shall address cases involving United  
3           States nationals who are deceased, unlawfully de-  
4           tained, missing, or of unresolved status, including in  
5           areas of current or recent United States military op-  
6           erations in the Middle East and Africa, and particu-  
7           larly in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

8           (3) ELEMENTS.—The report required under  
9           paragraph (1) shall include the following:

10                   (A) An assessment of how the interaction  
11                   between the Assistant Secretary of Defense for  
12                   Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict  
13                   and the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell informs  
14                   contingency planning for the rescue or recovery  
15                   of United States nationals in areas of hos-  
16                   tilities.

17                   (B) An assessment of how the geographic  
18                   combatant commands incorporate the rescue or  
19                   recovery of United States nationals into oper-  
20                   ational plans, the effect of such contingency  
21                   missions on force requirements, and how such  
22                   planning accounts for effects on intelligence col-  
23                   lection, detainee access, and recovery or ac-  
24                   countability options resulting from changes in  
25                   force posture or operational presence.

1           (C) The criteria that must be met for the  
2 Department to recommend the use of military  
3 assets to execute a rescue or personnel recovery  
4 of detained United States nationals in a poten-  
5 tial hostile area, including how such criteria dif-  
6 fer in areas where the United States does not  
7 maintain permanent or temporary military in-  
8 frastructure.

9           (D) An assessment of how the Department  
10 maintains intelligence and situational awareness  
11 on detained United States nationals in areas  
12 where the United States no longer has a mili-  
13 tary presence.

14           (E) An identification of any statutory au-  
15 thority, policy constraint, intelligence limitation,  
16 or resource gap affecting the ability of the De-  
17 partment to support such efforts, including rec-  
18 ommendations to address such gaps and an as-  
19 sessment of whether existing authorities suffi-  
20 ciently authorize the Department to condition  
21 or sequence detainee transfers, releases, or  
22 partner detention arrangements considering on-  
23 going United States recovery, intelligence, or  
24 accountability equities, including an identifica-  
25 tion of factors that have supported or con-

1           strained successful recovery outcomes in recent  
2           cases.

3           (F) An assessment of best practices em-  
4           ployed by partner nations with established doc-  
5           trines prioritizing the recovery, repatriation,  
6           and accountability of detained or deceased citi-  
7           zens, including efforts conducted years after  
8           hostilities.

9           (G) An assessment of the feasibility and  
10          operational implications of establishing a for-  
11          mal, enduring, doctrine of the Department of  
12          Defense, to be referred to as the “No American  
13          Left Behind” doctrine, and of integrating such  
14          doctrine into operational and contingency plan-  
15          ning, resource allocation, detainee policy consid-  
16          erations, and interagency coordination.

17          (H) A detailed assessment of case-specific  
18          Department of Defense support equities related  
19          to cases of deceased United States nationals  
20          whose remains have not been recovered, as well  
21          as cases involving United States nationals who  
22          are wrongfully detained, missing, or of unre-  
23          solved status, as appropriate, including in  
24          Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and select areas of Af-

1           rica associated with counterterrorism oper-  
2           ations.

3           (4) FORM.—The report required under para-  
4           graph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form,  
5           but may include a classified annex with respect to  
6           the element specified in paragraph (3)(H).

7           (d) CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES DE-  
8           FINED.—In this section, the term “congressional defense  
9           committees” has the meaning given that term in section  
10          101 of title 10, United States Code.

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