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New threats to kill BBC journalist

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28th June, 2007

THE ARTICLE

New threats to kill BBC journalist

The militant group holding the BBC correspondent Alan Johnston has renewed its threats to execute the British journalist, who has been held captive in Gaza since March 12. The group, Army of Islam, made the threat after they blamed rival faction Hamas for kidnapping two members of its gang. A spokesman said Hamas' abduction amounted to a declaration of war. Hamas has confirmed that it arrested two men with links to Army of Islam. A brief statement from Army of Islam seems to link the detention of its members with the renewed threat to Johnston's life – Hamas leaders have been active in seeking the safe release of Mr Johnston. This latest communication also contained a demand for Britain to free radical Muslim cleric Abu Qatada, who Britain describes as an "inspiration" for the terrorists behind the September 11 attacks.

The Army of Islam posted a video of Mr Johnston wearing what looks like a vest packed with explosives. The group said they would detonate it and kill the reporter if any group tried to release him by force. In the video, the journalist said: "I do appeal to the Hamas movement and the British government not to resort to the tactics of force in an effort to end this." He warned that his captors would turn their hideout into a "death zone" if any rescue attempt were made. His release had seemed imminent after Hamas seized control of the whole of Gaza but events have since taken a turn for the worse. Johnston, 45, joined the BBC in 1991. He reported in a video released at the beginning of June that he was being treated well and was in good health. News agencies around the world are holding daily vigils, hoping for his safe return.

WARM-UPS

1. THE BBC: Walk around the class and find out from other students what they know about the BBC. Is it better than CNN? Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

militant groups / correspondents / being held captive / gang members / 9-11 / videos / explosives / the use of force / rescues / taking a turn for the worse

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. JOURNALISM: In pairs / groups, discuss which of the areas in the table you would like to report on. What are the good and bad things about each of them? Rank them in order of which you'd most like to cover.

- Palestine
- sport
- national politics
- fashion
- motoring
- technology
- Wall Street
- environmental issues
- travel
- Hollywood and gossip

4. I'M A JOURNALIST: Your partner will decide what kind of journalist you are. You are an internationally famous reporter in that area. Walk around the class and talk to the other "journalists" about life as a journalist.

5. KIDNAPPED: Talk with your partner(s) about what you think it's like to be kidnapped. Use these words to guide your conversation. Change partners and share what you said and heard.

- a) breakfast
- b) cell / room
- c) the kidnappers
- d) your family
- e) freedom
- f) exercise

6. GAZA: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Gaza. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

7. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think journalists should stop reporting in Gaza because it's too dangerous. Students B think it's important to have journalists in Gaza. Change partners often. Share your findings.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. A group in Gaza has threatened to execute a BBC correspondent. T / F
- b. The journalist has been in captivity for over three months. T / F
- c. The kidnappers have declared war against the BBC. T / F
- d. The kidnappers main demand is for Britain to get out of Iraq. T / F
- e. The journalist appeared on a video wearing an expensive vest. T / F
- f. The gang warned people not to try to forcefully free the journalist. T / F
- g. There were earlier hopes that the reporter would be released. T / F
- h. The journalist filed a report stating he was in poor health . T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. militant | a. kidnapping |
| 2. execute | b. turn to |
| 3. rival | c. full |
| 4. abduction | d. deteriorated |
| 5. inspiration | e. enemy |
| 6. packed | f. explode |
| 7. detonate | g. extreme |
| 8. resort to | h. guiding light |
| 9. imminent | i. impending |
| 10. taken a turn for the worse | j. put to death |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. The militant group | a. radical Muslim cleric Abu Qatada |
| 2. they blamed rival | b. imminent |
| 3. Hamas' abduction amounted | c. the September 11 attacks |
| 4. a demand for Britain to free | d. packed with explosives |
| 5. inspiration for the terrorists behind | e. to a declaration of war |
| 6. wearing what looks like a vest | f. faction Hamas for kidnapping... |
| 7. tried to release him | g. holding the BBC correspondent |
| 8. not to resort | h. daily vigils |
| 9. His release had seemed | i. by force |
| 10. agencies around the world are holding | j. to the tactics of force |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

New threats to kill BBC journalist

The militant group _____ the BBC correspondent Alan Johnston has renewed its _____ to execute the British journalist, who has been held captive in Gaza since March 12. The group, Army of Islam, made the threat after they _____ rival faction Hamas for kidnapping two members of its gang. A spokesman said Hamas' abduction _____ to a declaration of war. Hamas has confirmed that it arrested two men with links to Army of Islam. A _____ statement from Army of Islam seems to link the detention of its members with the _____ threat to Johnston's life – Hamas leaders have been active in seeking the safe release of Mr Johnston. This latest communication also contained a _____ for Britain to free radical Muslim cleric Abu Qatada, who Britain describes as an "inspiration" for the terrorists _____ the September 11 attacks.

brief
blamed
behind
holding
renewed
demand
threats
amounted

The Army of Islam _____ a video of Mr Johnston wearing what looks like a vest _____ with explosives. The group said they would detonate it and kill the reporter if any group tried to release him by force. In the video, the journalist said: "I do _____ to the Hamas movement and the British government not to resort to the tactics of force in an effort to end this." He warned that his captors would turn their _____ into a "death zone" if any rescue attempt were made. His release had seemed imminent after Hamas _____ control of the whole of Gaza but events have since taken a _____ for the worse. Johnston, 45, joined the BBC in 1991. He reported in a video released at the beginning of June that he was being _____ well and was in good health. News agencies around the world are holding _____ vigils, hoping for his safe return.

turn
packed
seized
daily
appeal
posted
treated
hideout

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

New threats to kill BBC journalist

The militant group holding the BBC correspondent Alan Johnston has _____ the British journalist, who has been held captive in Gaza since March 12. The group, Army of Islam, made the threat _____ Hamas for kidnapping two members of its gang. A spokesman said Hamas' abduction _____ war. Hamas has confirmed that it arrested two men with links to Army of Islam. A brief statement from Army of Islam _____ of its members with the renewed threat to Johnston's life – Hamas leaders have been active in seeking the safe release of Mr Johnston. This latest communication _____ Britain to free radical Muslim cleric Abu Qatada, who Britain describes as an "inspiration" for _____ September 11 attacks.

The Army of Islam posted a video of Mr Johnston _____ vest packed with explosives. The group said they would detonate it and kill the reporter if any group _____ force. In the video, the journalist said: "I do appeal to the Hamas movement and the British government _____ force in an effort to end this." He warned that his captors would turn their hideout into a "death zone" if _____. His release had seemed imminent after Hamas seized control of the whole of Gaza but events have since taken a turn for the worse. Johnston, 45, joined the BBC in 1991. He reported in a video released at the beginning of June _____ and was in good health. News agencies around the world are holding daily vigils, hoping for his safe return.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'brief' and 'statement'.

brief	statement

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• militant• held• blamed• brief• demand• inspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• posted• packed• appeal• resort• imminent• daily
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STUDENT KIDNAPPING SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about KIDNAPPING in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What do you think about Alan Johnston's kidnapping?
- c) What do you think it would be like to be held in captivity?
- d) What kind of relationship do you think there is between Alan and his kidnappers?
- e) Why do you think Army of Islam kidnapped Mr Johnston?
- f) What would you think about every day if you were kidnapped?
- g) What kind of group do you think Army of Islam is?
- h) Do you think the British government should release Abu Qatada in exchange for Alan Johnston?
- i) Would you like to be a journalist and report in Palestine?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Alan Johnston?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think Army of Islam would detonate Alan's explosive belt?
- c) Do you think the British government should try and rescue Alan?
- d) Why do you think journalists report in dangerous areas?
- e) What do you think Alan's parents do every day?
- f) What do you know about the different factions operating in Gaza?
- g) Do you think peace and security will come to Gaza soon?
- h) Would you sign the petition on the BBC website calling for Alan's release?
- i) Do you think being kidnapped would change you as a person?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

New threats to kill BBC journalist

The militant group (1) _____ the BBC correspondent Alan Johnston has renewed its (2) _____ to execute the British journalist, who has been held captive in Gaza since March 12. The group, Army of Islam, (3) _____ the threat after they blamed rival faction Hamas for kidnapping two members of its gang. A spokesman said Hamas' abduction (4) _____ to a declaration of war. Hamas has confirmed that it arrested two men with links to Army of Islam. A brief statement from Army of Islam seems to link the detention of its members with the renewed threat to Johnston's life – Hamas leaders have been active in (5) _____ the safe release of Mr Johnston. This latest communication also contained a demand for Britain to free radical Muslim cleric Abu Qatada, who Britain describes as an "inspiration" for the terrorists (6) _____ the September 11 attacks.

The Army of Islam (7) _____ a video of Mr Johnston wearing what looks like a vest packed with explosives. The group said they would detonate (8) _____ and kill the reporter if any group tried to release him by force. In the video, the journalist said: "I (9) _____ appeal to the Hamas movement and the British government not to resort to the tactics of force in an effort to end (10) _____." He warned that his captors would turn their hideout into a "death zone" if any rescue attempt were made. His release had seemed imminent after Hamas (11) _____ control of the whole of Gaza but events have since taken a turn for the worse. Johnston, 45, joined the BBC in 1991. He reported in a video released at the beginning of June he was being treated well and was (12) _____ good health. News agencies around the world are holding daily vigils, hoping for his safe return.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. | (a) held | (b) holding | (c) holds | (d) handing |
| 2. | (a) threats | (b) treats | (c) threatens | (d) throats |
| 3. | (a) given | (b) done | (c) made | (d) did |
| 4. | (a) valued | (b) added | (c) amount | (d) amounted |
| 5. | (a) seeking | (b) seek | (c) searching | (d) seeing |
| 6. | (a) in front of | (b) next to | (c) beside | (d) behind |
| 7. | (a) parted | (b) posted | (c) pasted | (d) painted |
| 8. | (a) their | (b) it's | (c) it | (d) him |
| 9. | (a) be | (b) have | (c) do | (d) make |
| 10. | (a) this | (b) his | (c) then | (d) him |
| 11. | (a) seasoned | (b) seized | (c) ceased | (d) resized |
| 12. | (a) on | (b) of | (c) at | (d) in |

WRITING:

Write about *journalism* for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about Alan Johnston's kidnapping. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. GAZA: Make a poster on relations between the different factions operating in Gaza. Show your posters to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about the effects of being kidnapped. Describe what someone might do in captivity.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Alan Johnston's kidnappers. Ask them questions about the kidnapping. Give three suggestions about what they can do to release him. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. T c. F d. F e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. militant | a. extreme |
| 2. execute | b. put to death |
| 3. rival | c. enemy |
| 4. abduction | d. kidnapping |
| 5. inspiration | e. guiding light |
| 6. packed | f. full |
| 7. detonate | g. explode |
| 8. resort to | h. turn to |
| 9. imminent | i. impending |
| 10. taken a turn for the worse | j. deteriorated |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. The militant group | a. holding the BBC correspondent |
| 2. they blamed rival | b. faction Hamas for kidnapping... |
| 3. Hamas' abduction amounted | c. to a declaration of war |
| 4. a demand for Britain to free | d. radical Muslim cleric Abu Qatada |
| 5. inspiration for the terrorists behind | e. the September 11 attacks |
| 6. wearing what looks like a vest | f. packed with explosives |
| 7. tried to release him | g. by force |
| 8. not to resort | h. to the tactics of force |
| 9. His release had seemed | i. imminent |
| 10. agencies around the world are holding | j. daily vigils |

GAP FILL:

New threats to kill BBC journalist

The militant group **holding** the BBC correspondent Alan Johnston has renewed its **threats** to execute the British journalist, who has been held captive in Gaza since March 12. The group, Army of Islam, made the threat after they **blamed** rival faction Hamas for kidnapping two members of its gang. A spokesman said Hamas' abduction **amounted** to a declaration of war. Hamas has confirmed that it arrested two men with links to Army of Islam. A **brief** statement from Army of Islam seems to link the detention of its members with the **renewed** threat to Johnston's life – Hamas leaders have been active in seeking the safe release of Mr Johnston. This latest communication also contained a **demand** for Britain to free radical Muslim cleric Abu Qatada, who Britain describes as an "inspiration" for the terrorists **behind** the September 11 attacks.

The Army of Islam **posted** a video of Mr Johnston wearing what looks like a vest **packed** with explosives. The group said they would detonate it and kill the reporter if any group tried to release him by force. In the video, the journalist said: "I do **appeal** to the Hamas movement and the British government not to resort to the tactics of force in an effort to end this." He warned that his captors would turn their **hideout** into a "death zone" if any rescue attempt were made. His release had seemed imminent after Hamas **seized** control of the whole of Gaza but events have since taken a **turn** for the worse. Johnston, 45, joined the BBC in 1991. He reported in a video released at the beginning of June that he was being **treated** well and was in good health. News agencies around the world are holding **daily** vigils, hoping for his safe return.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - b 2 - a 3 - c 4 - d 5 - a 6 - d 7 - b 8 - c 9 - c 10 - a 11 - b 12 - d