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## **UN's reaction in the Middle East: respecting tradition and religious standards versus imposing human rights**

### **Human Rights Violations in the Middle East and the UN's Response**

Human rights violations have been a longstanding issue in the Middle East. The Islamic State, in particular, is known for their incredible human rights violations. In the New York Times article "The Horror Before the Beheadings," Rukmini Callimachi reports the incredible torture many hostages endure when kidnapped by the Islamic State. Many of the hostages were beheaded if they were not released for ransom, but one released hostage was able to report on the horrors within the cell walls. The kidnapers would take journalists and aid workers, mostly from countries who will pay ransom, such as France, then demand for the passwords to their phones and laptops, accusing them of being spies (Callimachi). Once being accused of spying, the kidnapers would hold them in cells and ask for ransom from their home countries, terrorizing the prisoners through torture, such as hanging them upside down by their ankles, while waiting for ransom replies (Callimachi). In the BBC article "Islamic State militants 'filmed torturing Syrian boy,'" Quentin Sommerville reports about an even more horrendous violation of human rights: torturing children and requiring them to join the military. IS captured a Syrian boy at only 14 years old, hung him by his wrists, and tortured him by beating and electrocution (Sommerville). The article also touches on the fact that the "Islamic State has ended secular education and instead created military-style schools which indoctrinate children and train them to kill" (Sommerville).

The United Nations is attempting to stop the incredible human rights violations in the Middle East, but unfortunately there is not much that can be done in order to stop a group who is not a legitimate state. The problem of human rights violations in the Middle East is especially tough because there is almost no way to enforce the human rights declaration. The UN is doing everything it can to help stop the violations, but this has been an ongoing issue for many years. In an article in Al Jazeera, it is reported that the UN has decided to blacklist six people in the Islamic state, including the group's spokesman. The UN has also threatened sanctions against the group's financiers and weapons suppliers ("UN moves to rein in Islamic State group"). This movement by the UN is one of the only ways to try and stop the incredible violence in the Middle East. BBC also has an article on UN movements against human rights violations in the Middle East, reporting that "[a]ny individual, group, undertaking or entity supporting the groups and their offshoots will be subject to UN sanctions, including an asset freeze, travel ban and arms embargo" ("Islamic State: UN resolution aims to curb funding"). The Islamic State has, rather than trying to become a legitimate state, announced that they are forming a caliphate. IS basically believes that they are or should be the only governing unit in the world, based on Islamic practices. Since they truly believe they are the only governing body that matters in the world, they are not going to follow the human rights declaration formed by the UN. This is a huge problem in the world, considering there is virtually no way the Islamic State is going to follow international law. If there was ever an issue getting nations to follow international law before, it just became even harder under recent circumstances in the Middle East, who truly believes they are the only governing body and will not worry about human rights.

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