

Will Mom's 'Prophet Muhammad' Plea Persuade ISIS to Free US Journo?

The mother of an American journalist held captive by militant group Islamic State released a video on Wednesday appealing directly to the group's leader for his release.

"I am sending this message to you, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Quraishi al-Hussaini, the caliph of the Islamic State. I am Shirley Sotloff. My son Steven is in your hands," Sotloff said in the video, given to *The New York Times*.

"I ask you to use your authority to spare his life and to follow the example set by the Prophet Muhammad, who protected people of The Book."

Sotloff, 31, went missing in Syria last year while covering the conflict there. Islamic State released a video last week in which he can be seen kneeling following the filmed decapitation of fellow journalist James Foley.

Islamic State, which declared a caliphate in territory it has captured in Syria and Iraq, threatened to kill Sotloff if its demands are not met, including the halting of American air strikes against the group.

"I want what every mother wants: to live to see her children's children. I plead with you to grant me this," she said.

Another American writer, Peter Theo Curtis, was released on Sunday after two years held captive by another militant group operating in Syria, the Nusra Front. He said on Wednesday he was emotionally overwhelmed by his welcome home.

The terms of Curtis's release, brokered in part by Qatar, have not been disclosed.

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