



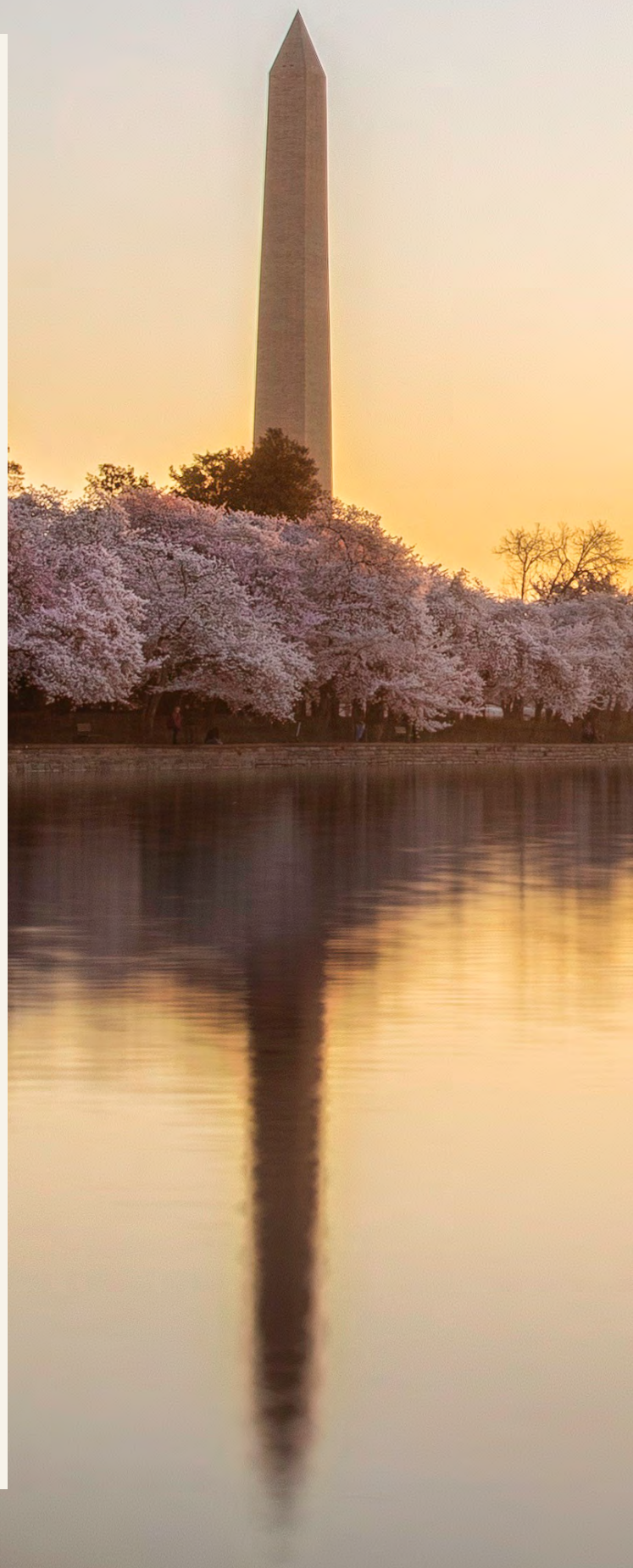
BEYOND RELEASE

Recovery After
Hostage-Taking
and Wrongful
Detention

**BRINGING AMERICANS HOME
RESEARCH SERIES**

2026

By **Elizabeth Richards**





ABOUT THE JAMES W. FOLEY LEGACY FOUNDATION

The James W. Foley Legacy Foundation (Foley Foundation) was established less than three weeks after the August 2014 brutal murder by ISIS of conflict journalist and humanitarian James Wright Foley.

With the firm conviction that the United States must prioritize the freedom of Americans unjustly held captive abroad, the Foley Foundation successfully advocated for and was a key participant in a 2015 review of the effectiveness of the U.S. government's policy on the hostage-taking of Americans internationally. Recommendations from the review led to the creation by executive order of the principal elements of today's U.S. government "hostage enterprise" including the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell, the Issue Manager for Detainee and Hostage Affairs at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Hostage Response Group at the National Security Council. This structure was later codified into law by the 2020 Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act. Since its creation in 2015, the hostage enterprise has secured the freedom of more than 200 Americans held hostage abroad.

The Foley Foundation connects families of those held hostage or wrongfully detained with the resources needed to endure their loved one's captivity and supports families' advocacy efforts to secure their freedom. Reports in the *Bringing Americans Home* research series have been a critical tool for educating policymakers and the public as to the nature of this national security threat. These reports identify and recommend reforms needed to accelerate the return of Americans held captive abroad, to better support families and returned hostages, and to deter and prevent future hostage-taking.

Learn more at www.jamesfoleyfoundation.org, by viewing the documentary, *Jim: The James Foley Story*, and by reading *American Mother* by Colum McCann with Diane Foley.

OUR MISSION

To advocate for American hostages and wrongful detainees held abroad and promote journalist safety.

OUR VALUES

Moral Courage

Inspired by Jim Foley, we seek to encourage and empower all to act with moral conviction—one person at a time for the good of others.

Justice

We are committed to resolving the injustice of hostage-taking through research that shapes policies to deter captors and hold them accountable.

Compassion

We empathize with and help hostage families confidentially by listening, identifying the resources they need and the obstacles they face while advocating for their loved ones' swift return.

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The Foley Foundation also expresses its gratitude to our partner, Global Reach, whose sustaining commitment makes this research possible. Global Reach is a nonprofit organization with the sole mission of bringing home Americans kidnapped or wrongfully detained abroad at no cost to their families.



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER

Dear Fellow Americans,

Welcome to the Foley Foundation's latest *Bringing Americans Home* research report and our first dedicated exclusively to the voices of Americans who have returned home after enduring hostage-taking or wrongful detention abroad, and to the families who stood beside them throughout their captivity and recovery.

The findings in this report underscore a reality that many Americans may never fully appreciate: bringing a loved one home does not mean the ordeal is over. Unjust captivity is a life-altering experience whose effects can endure long after a returnee is reunited with family and friends. Whether held by nation-states such as China, Russia, Venezuela, or Iran, or by terrorist organizations, returnees and their families described challenges that touched every aspect of their lives, including their physical and mental health, financial stability, relationships, and sense of identity. Their stories also reveal extraordinary resilience, courage, and hope.

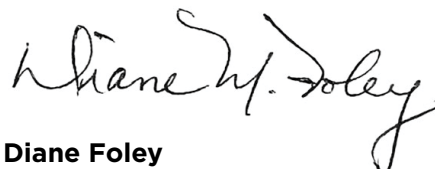
When my son Jim was taken hostage in Syria and murdered by ISIS in 2014, hostage families were alone and unheard. Since then, a remarkable transformation has occurred. Through the efforts of families, advocates, policymakers, and public servants, successive presidential administrations have elevated the return of Americans held hostage or wrongfully detained

abroad into a national priority. I am grateful to the current Trump Administration for continuing that commitment, and to the many officials across our government who have welcomed and applied the findings from the Foley Foundation's *Bringing Americans Home* research series since its launch in 2019.

I am deeply grateful to the returnees, family members, and subject matter experts who shared their experiences for this research. I also extend my sincere thanks to our generous partner, Global Reach, whose support made this study possible, and to the author of this report, Elizabeth Richards, and the Foley Foundation research team for their dedication and hard work in bringing these findings to light.

May this report deepen our understanding of the enduring impact of unjust captivity and strengthen our commitment to supporting those who have suffered it. Together, we can continue improving the care, services, and support available to Americans and families rebuilding their lives after captivity.

With sincerest gratitude,



Diane Foley

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



...the day you get back is
the day that your worries start.”

— Returnee

Unjust captivity alters the trajectory of a person’s life and the lives of their families. Across this study, returnees consistently described captivity as creating a distinct “before” and “after” in their lives, with lasting effects on physical and mental health, financial stability, employment, social relationships, and personal identity. Mental health and financial stability emerged as the most frequently reported reintegration challenges, while damaged credit, disrupted careers, altered family relationships, and ongoing reputational harm stemming from false allegations often persisted long after release.

At the same time, returnees demonstrated remarkable resilience. Many described returning to work, reconnecting with loved ones, finding meaning in sharing their stories, and developing new perspectives on family, freedom, and purpose. However, one of the clearest findings of this research is that recovery does not begin upon release. Returnees repeatedly identified concern for their families while in captivity, and families

emerged as the foundation of support upon return. These findings suggest that reintegration begins during captivity and that support provided to families during that period can shape recovery long after a returnee comes home.

The experiences shared by returnees, family members, and subject matter experts highlight the need for a more comprehensive approach to post-captivity recovery. Priority actions include reauthorizing federal support provisions scheduled to expire on December 31, 2027; strengthening support for families during captivity; assigning dedicated support-services specialists to coordinate care and services; expanding recovery and reintegration support; and improving financial recovery, workforce re-entry, and access to services. Together, these measures would help ensure that Americans returning from hostage-taking and wrongful detention receive not only the assistance necessary to come home, but also the support required to rebuild their lives.

Notable Finding: In this sample, the length of an individual’s detention was not associated with post-captivity outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on 31 semi-structured interviews with U.S. nationals who had been held hostage or wrongfully detained overseas and subsequently freed (“returnees” or “survivors”), family members of returnees, and subject matter experts with expertise in reintegration.^a With a few exceptions, the interviews and data collection were conducted from December 2025 through April 2026. Eligible individuals were contacted by email and invited to participate.

Returnee Sample

The recruitment process yielded a 36.8% response rate. Because this was the Foley Foundation’s first study focused exclusively on returnees, no time limits were placed on eligibility for the sample. Consequently, participants’ captivity experiences span a wide period, including years before the U.S. Department of State established a formal process through which the Secretary of State could designate a U.S. national as wrongfully detained.

The returnees in this sample were overwhelmingly male (85.7%), and most were held by nation states (80.95%). These individuals were unjustly held in eight captor countries for an average of 1,046 days (*SD*=851.8). At the time of the study, they had been free from captivity for an average of 1,099 days (*SD*=820.3).

Table 1

BREAKDOWN OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Total
Returnees	21
Family members of returnees	8
Subject matter experts	2

Qualitative Analysis

Unless participants requested otherwise, interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were then reviewed and personally identifiable information removed (e.g., names). Interview responses were recorded in a master database with rich quotes noted. All transcripts and the master data file are stored on a secure server. All recordings were subsequently destroyed.

A thematic review of all responses was accomplished after data collection. All tables in the report capture responses cited by at least three or more returnees in response to the question asked. The author identified the main findings detailed in this report based on a review of all transcripts. This information was shared with members of the Foley Foundation’s Board of Directors and Advisory Council, and their expertise was consulted in forming the recommendations presented in this report.

^a The Foley Foundation conducts an independent assessment of wrongful detentions using the factors outlined in the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act; the Foley Foundation includes exit bans within its definition of wrongful detention.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY

This research identified several themes that have received limited attention in previous studies of hostage-taking and wrongful detention:

- Reintegration begins during captivity, not upon release.
- Family support is a critical factor in long-term recovery.
- Returnees reported similar reintegration challenges despite diverse captivity experiences.
- Reputational harm emerged as a recurring and underexamined consequence of unjust captivity.
- Length of detention was not associated with post-captivity outcomes in this sample.

RESEARCH STUDY OVERVIEW

The principal findings and key recommendations are presented below. The remainder of this report provides a deeper examination of the experiences and challenges returnees reported related to their physical and mental health, financial stability and employment,

social relationships, and pursuit of justice and accountability for the crimes committed against them. The report concludes with a discussion of study limitations and recommendations for future research.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

“ This is one of the tragedies that changes your life.”

— Returnee

FINDING 1

Unjust captivity, whether conducted by a terrorist organization or a nation state, is life-altering, both for the person taken and their family, impacting nearly all areas of life.

Two-thirds of returnees interviewed discussed how their unjust captivity changed the trajectory of their lives, and the lives of their families.^b The effects of the unjust captivity touched on every facet of their lives, physical and mental well-being, financial stability and employment, and their social relationships. One returnee stated, “...it’s difficult to underestimate the impact that a detention has on someone’s life. It’s a maximal impact on every part of your life...mental, physical, professional, financial, yeah, social, everything...”¹

This observation may appear obvious at first glance; however, two returnees described exchanges with family members and employers that underscored those individuals’ expectations that they should have returned to their pre-captivity

selves.² This expectation stands in contrast to the lived experiences of returnees. One returnee described their experience as “there is a before [wrongful detention] and there’s an after.”³ Another returnee described the experience by saying, “It’s a new life. Nobody understands that you’re not [yourself] anymore.”⁴ Recognizing the profound and lasting effects of unjust captivity and how those effects ripple through the lives of returnees and their families is crucial to marshalling services and resources to support the returnee and their family as they rebuild after release.

While advances have been made in bringing Americans home since the creation of the U.S. hostage enterprise, more work is needed to support returnees and their families

^b The term unjust captivity is used throughout this report to reflect both non-state hostage-taking and wrongful detention.

after they come home.⁵ One returnee shared, “We’re not being honest with ourselves if we say that, you know, we’re meeting the needs of return detainees.”⁶

Additionally, in many cases, the impacts of unjust detention are interconnected. For example, a few returnees who reported needing

medical care because of their captivity also reported delaying that care because they lacked the financial resources necessary to pay for it.⁷ Furthermore, some returnees discussed the toll financial stress had on their mental health.⁸ One returnee stated, “How...do you recover your mental health when you cannot buy even a water?”⁹

FINDING 2

Returnees reported similar reintegration challenges, with mental health and financial stability cited as the top issues.

When asked what challenges they experienced since their return, responses among returnees were similar. Challenges with mental health (40% - see Table 2) and financial stability (35%) were the top responses. However, returnees also cited issues with recovering their physical health, reconnecting with family and friends, returning to work, and adapting to changes in technology and society.

Within these broad concerns, each returnee’s experience contains important nuances. For example, while discussing concerns related to their mental health, some returnees discussed ongoing anxiety from their unjust captivity,¹⁰ others discussed symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD),¹¹ and one returnee shared how they were working on letting go of coping mechanisms they used to survive while held.¹² When discussing financial challenges, four returnees specifically cited the issues they experienced with ruined credit scores.¹³ These challenges appear to be long-standing, as one returnee

Table 2

“CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT ANY CHALLENGES YOU’VE EXPERIENCED SINCE YOU WERE RELEASED?”

Responses	% (n)
Mental health	40% (8)
Financial stability	35% (7)
Physical health	30% (6)
Reconnecting with family or friends	30% (6)
Returning to work	30% (6)
Technology or other societal changes	30% (6)
Operating a motor vehicle	15% (3)

Note: 20 returnees responded to this question; categories above are not mutually exclusive.

shared, “still today I don’t have the same status or certain credit scores that I had before I was taken...”¹⁴

A few returnees also shared challenges driving a vehicle again after their return.¹⁵ These challenges included operating a vehicle after having not done so for a long time, as well as logistical obstacles related

to obtaining a new driver's license from the relevant state agency.¹⁶ One returnee noted that these agencies do not make accommodations for unjust captives and their inflexible policies prolong the time it takes to issue a new license (e.g., requiring a new driver's test, instead of allowing for license renewal).¹⁷ Another returnee put the experience into a more emotional framework: "...if you're someone who's been told [by your captor] that they don't have an

identity, you don't exist for...years, having a document that says "yes I am" is super important, and being denied that, that does not help."¹⁸

These common challenges reported by returnees indicate areas where the U.S. and state governments and civil society can focus services and support. As noted above, these challenges are often complicated and interconnected.

FINDING 3

Returnees defined success since return in many different ways, but the most common response was returning to work.

There was more heterogeneity in responses when returnees were asked what successes they had since their return (see Table 3). Just under half of returnees who were asked cited returning to work as a success since their return. Even this answer had nuance to it, with two returnees commenting they had a career change (i.e., "my entire professional trajectory is different today"), as a result of their unjust captivity.¹⁹

Another common response was reporting shifts in perspective. One returnee reported, "Since my release, I measure success differently, with the most important being the renewed value I place on family."²⁰ Another returnee stated, "...I'm alive, and that's because of a reason, and I am going to use that experience to build my new life and reinvent myself."²¹ This shift in perspective came up again in interviews, when asked about how the wrongful detention affected their lives (see Finding 6).

Table 3

"CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT ANY SUCCESSES YOU'VE EXPERIENCED SINCE YOU WERE RELEASED?"

Responses	% (n)
Returning to work	45% (9)
Perspective shift	35% (7)
Reconnecting with family	25% (5)
Sharing their story	20% (4)
Writing	20% (4)

Note: 20 returnees responded to this question; categories above are not mutually exclusive.

Returnees also shared that being able to share their story, either through public speaking or writing, was significant. One returnee stated that being able to speak publicly about their experience was "very meaningful," and another described it as "therapeutic."²² That same returnee went on to say, they view sharing their story as a way of "spreading out the burden" and engaging the public

in the traumatic experiences they experienced as part of captivity.²³ Other returnees spoke about the role writing played in their healing.²⁴ One returnee stated that they wrote about their unjust captivity as a way to bring in additional income for their family, because of the ongoing financial difficulties their family was experiencing as a result of the returnee's unjust captivity.²⁵

Finally, one returnee stated they have not had any success since their

return.²⁶ When asked to elaborate more on this perspective, this returnee shared “you have to compare what you were before and what you were after. It’s not about what you are now...all the successes that I [have now are] about overcoming the challenges that I faced since I was released.”²⁷ This insight illustrates the diversity of views on success post-release, as well as the ongoing challenges returnees experience as part of their reintegration.

FINDING 4

Several returnees discussed the ongoing impact of the “reputational damage” they suffered stemming from their unjust captivity.

Reputational damage is commonly used in the private sector to describe a deleterious status following an undesirable event.²⁸ Reputational damage is understood to encompass financial damage, and can extend to individuals affiliated with the affected organizations.²⁹ In the course of interviewing returnees regarding their reintegration experiences, several shared stories related to the impact of the false allegations leveled against them, with one returnee specifically using the term “reputational damage” to describe their experience.³⁰ As that returnee phrased it, “there’s a spectacle around being held in a foreign country,” and upon coming home they had to manage “gossip and publicity,” related to the false charges made against them.³¹ Such stress is taxing on mental health.³²

This reputational harm extends beyond managing the strain of salacious rumors. As discussed by two returnees, it affects their future

“

I still face those challenges today... that...reputational damage...”

— Returnee

ability to travel freely through the world.³³ Because captor countries use the veneer of a legal system, criminal charges against an individual, even if false, can linger in official systems, such as those used by Interpol or other international law enforcement agencies.³⁴ If those charges are not expunged from law enforcement systems, they can prevent future travel, contributing to a continued sense of uncertainty.³⁵ Furthermore,

as noted by a returnee, these false allegations have a social cost.³⁶ This returnee stated, “...people removed me from Facebook, unfriended me, especially overseas because they think

I’m a spy.”³⁷ Together, these accounts illustrate the reputational harm some returnees experience during reintegration.

FINDING 5

Reintegration starts before the person comes home, and it starts with caring for their family.

In a presentation at the 2026 Oslo Freedom Forum, Dr. Young Hoang of the U.S. Department of State’s Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs (SPEHA) noted that one of the most common concerns returnees express during captivity is worry for their families.³⁸ This insight aligns with the findings of this research. As one returnee explained, “the worst part of being detained is... the pain and suffering to your family.”³⁹

Returnees also reported that families and close friends formed the bedrock of their social support system upon returning home. Quantitative analysis indicated that returnees’ perceived social support had a strong positive relationship with physical health and a moderate positive relationship with quality of life (see Appendix B, Table 11).

These findings suggest that supporting families throughout a captivity event is important not only for securing a loved one’s release, but also for establishing the foundation for recovery and reintegration upon return. The Foley Foundation has previously documented the financial costs unjust captivity can impose on families.⁴⁰ In that research, we noted

“

I think that for families...they have to receive sustained support from day one.” — Returnee

that the Israeli government developed a system of family support that includes direct financial stipends for hostage families.⁴¹ The experiences shared by participants in this study further underscore the importance of examining approaches that provide sustained support to families during periods of captivity.

Several returnees referenced the support provided to Israeli hostage families and reflected on what similar assistance would have meant for their own families. One returnee shared that “for...somebody like me, my family wouldn’t have the financial hardship of my lost income.”⁴² A family member described the absence of financial support during a captivity

event as “inhuman” and argued that financial strain can “neutralize” a family’s ability to advocate effectively for their loved one.⁴³

The experiences shared by returnees and family members point to a broader reality: families are not only affected by unjust captivity but are also central to a returnee’s eventual recovery and reintegration.

Participants highlighted the importance of sustained support throughout captivity and after release, including financial assistance to offset lost income and extraordinary expenses and continuity of support as families transition from securing a loved one’s release to helping them rebuild their lives at home.

FINDING 6

More than half of returnees reported positive changes in perspective despite the harms and challenges associated with captivity.

Just over half of returnees (52.9%, n=9) who were asked how the unjust captivity affected their lives discussed experiencing a perspective shift.^c These shifts varied, with themes centering on changes in values, connection with family and friends, their relationship with time, and even how returnees viewed the U.S. and their identities as Americans. One returnee shared “the gratitude,” they have experienced, and “the sense that...so many of the things that I stress about in life are just not that important.”⁴⁴ Another returnee observed, “it struck me...after I was kept in a captivity and I spent so many dark days over there...I had a chance to...really appreciate the freedom of the world.”⁴⁵ A couple of returnees shared how their perspective of the U.S., and their identities as Americans changed following their release from unjust captivity.⁴⁶ One returnee stated, “It [release after captivity] has given me

“

**...changed my
perspective
in everything...”**

— Returnee

a first-hand understanding of how extraordinary the U.S. is,” and another returnee stated, “I love this country.”⁴⁷

All returnees were clear that their unjust captivity had a negative impact on them and their families in many ways. However, as one returnee noted, their unjust captivity was, “not something I would ever want to go through again or would wish on anybody,” but went on to share that it provided a focusing framework for

^c This question was answered by 17 returnees in this sample.

their life.⁴⁸ Furthermore, as another returnee shared after release, “you learn that that healing is possible. You can’t ever undo what happened to you, but it’s...[possible] that...you’ll be able to return to a productive and sort of whole life.”⁴⁹ These views may be examined through the lens of posttraumatic growth, a psychological concept that posits that positive

change is possible after a traumatic event.⁵⁰

Although many returnees discussed healing and personal growth following captivity, they also consistently emphasized that recovery does not occur in isolation and depends heavily on the support of family and close social networks.

FINDING 7

Returnees and their families reported a need for a dedicated social worker or advocate to help them coordinate government and nonprofit services during captivity and throughout reintegration.

Responsibility for navigating post-return care often falls largely on returnees and their families.⁵¹ Several family members described a need for more personalized support, both during captivity and after a loved one’s return.⁵² A family member stated, “I do my best to try to help [RETURNEE] as much as I can, but it’s just hard.”⁵³ This family member elaborated, stating it would be helpful if there was someone “...like a caseworker that can just kind of guide [RETURNEE] and say, ‘OK, here we go, you know, we’re going to do this first and do that and this is what you need.’ And there’s no like, OK, so who do we call or who can help them or what do we do now...”⁵⁴ Similarly, one returnee stated that “every single thing is so heavy on the shoulder of a hostage” and emphasized the need for the U.S. government and civil society to help “get things off the shoulder of this pool of hostage returnees.”⁵⁵

Interview data suggest that most family members and returnees are

“

“...there needs to be more of a glide path back into real life...”

— Family Member

unfamiliar with the federal and state services available after a returnee is released.⁵⁶ Families may still be coping with the trauma of captivity and may therefore be poorly positioned to navigate complex post-return care systems.⁵⁷ One family member spoke about their struggle to convince individuals outside of the U.S. hostage enterprise of what their family experienced, and what the returnee’s needs are.⁵⁸ “It is very difficult to tell people...this is real. This happens to people.”⁵⁹ This

family member noted that, although resources may exist, the absence of “hostage” or “wrongful detainee” as standard categories on many federal and state forms can complicate access to services and support.⁶⁰

There are nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that help fill this gap. Organizations such as Hostage US help address some of these challenges and have successfully assisted returnees and families in working with private creditors. However, nongovernmental organizations have limited ability to facilitate solutions within government systems. In those cases, government-to-government communication may be most effective. Additionally, nonprofit organizations may not always have the capacity or resources to support every case.

A subject matter expert identified greater coordination between federal and state agencies as a significant challenge and emphasized the need for a “warmer handoff” between federal support systems and state-level services.⁶¹ Common challenges experienced by returnees at the state level included accessing Medicare, obtaining disability benefits, navigating a state’s victim compensation laws, and getting a state driver’s license reissued.⁶² One potential solution is the model implemented by the Israeli government for families whose loved ones were held hostage in Gaza. Under this model, families were assigned a dedicated government

point of contact who supported the family during captivity and continued assisting the returnee following reunification. This point of contact identified their needs and helped them navigate and access necessary services.⁶³

Several returnees also described a desire for more regular check-ins following their release, suggesting a need for ongoing engagement after the initial return period.⁶⁴ One area where ongoing engagement may be particularly valuable is identifying unmet basic needs, including food insecurity.⁶⁵ One returnee shared, “.... if somebody from the [U.S. government] called...I could have been honest to them...I didn’t eat last night because I gave the food to my kid. It’s not something that I’m not going to tell the church, but I have the confidence to tell you guys because you saved my life.”⁶⁶

Taken together, these interviews suggest that navigating recovery after unjust captivity is often complex, fragmented, and burdensome for both returnees and their families. Participants repeatedly described challenges understanding available services, accessing benefits, coordinating support across government systems, and advocating for their needs while coping with the effects of captivity. These findings indicate that a more personalized and coordinated approach to service delivery may help reduce barriers to recovery and improve long-term reintegration outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings presented in this report indicate that successful reintegration requires a coordinated approach that begins during captivity and continues well after a returnee comes home. The following recommendations are intended to address the most common challenges identified by returnees, family members, and subject matter experts.

1. Reauthorize and preserve federal reintegration support

Returnees and family members consistently described ongoing needs that extend years beyond release, particularly in the areas of health care, financial stability, and reintegration support. Reauthorizing existing authorities will help ensure that support remains available throughout the recovery process.

Congress should reauthorize the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act provisions that provide support to eligible returnees and their families before those provisions expire on December 31, 2027. Policymakers should also preserve funding for Post-Isolation Support Activities and consider whether eligibility should be expanded.

2. Begin sustained family support during captivity

Returnees repeatedly identified concern for their families during captivity, while family members emerged as the foundation of support upon release. The findings suggest that strengthening families during captivity strengthens the conditions for successful reintegration afterward.

Support should begin while an American remains captive and continue after release. Assistance should include direct financial support to offset lost income and extraordinary expenses, sustained communication, and a dedicated government point of contact for each family. Congress should direct a study of adaptable practices from the Israeli victim-support model, including financial stipends and continuity of case support.

3. Assign a dedicated support-services specialist

Returnees and family members described significant challenges navigating federal, state, and nongovernmental services while simultaneously coping with the effects of captivity. Participants also highlighted gaps in coordination, particularly when transitioning from federal assistance to state-level benefits and services.

The U.S. government should assign each family a specialist who remains engaged through captivity and the returnee's transition home. The specialist should coordinate federal, state, and nongovernmental services; provide regular check-ins; and help resolve barriers involving health care, benefits, identification documents, employment, financial recovery, and reputational harm.

4. Strengthen specialized health, family, and reintegration support

Reintegration challenges reported by returnees extended beyond physical and mental health to include family relationships, social reconnection, and rebuilding a sense of normalcy. Recovery following unjust captivity is both an individual and a family process that requires sustained, multidisciplinary support.

Returnees need timely access to medical, dental, and mental-health professionals who understand the effects of unjust captivity. Policymakers should simplify access to health coverage, disability benefits, Medicare, and state services, and ensure sustained screening and follow-up for sleep disruption, PTSD symptoms, suicidal ideation, self-harm, and other evolving needs. Support should also include services that promote family reunification, relationship counseling, and community reintegration, recognizing that recovery following unjust captivity is both an individual and a family process.

5. Support financial recovery, workforce re-entry, and access to services

Financial instability and employment disruptions were among the most commonly reported challenges in this study, with some returnees continuing to experience the effects years after release. Participants also described barriers related to damaged credit, housing instability, complicated government systems, and reputational harms stemming from false allegations associated with their captivity.

Federal agencies should connect returnees and their families with immediate financial assistance, credit-repair and debt-resolution resources, employment counseling, and documentation explaining captivity-related gaps in employment. Agencies should also provide support to address reputational harms arising from false allegations associated with captivity, including assistance navigating international legal records, employment barriers, and related documentation issues. The U.S. government should also provide clear, written guidance on available federal, state, and nongovernmental support, including eligibility requirements, access instructions, service timeframes, and points of contact, and review that guidance with returnees and families at multiple touchpoints during the first year after release.

CONCLUSION



...[there is an] emotional oscillation basically between hope and fear... between gratitude and pain.” — Returnee

This study makes clear that bringing Americans home is not the end of the story. While the United States has made significant progress in securing the release of Americans held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad, returnees and their families continue to face challenges that often endure for years after release. The effects of captivity are interconnected, affecting health, finances, careers, relationships, and personal identity in ways that cannot be resolved simply by returning home.

The most important lesson from this research is that reintegration begins before release. Returnees consistently described concern for their families while in captivity, and families emerged as the foundation upon

which recovery and reintegration are built. Supporting returnees therefore requires supporting families, not only after release, but throughout the captivity itself.

The challenge before policymakers is no longer simply how to secure an American’s freedom. It is how to ensure that individuals and families have the resources, guidance, and sustained support necessary to rebuild their lives afterward. By adopting a more comprehensive approach to recovery, one that recognizes captivity as both an individual and family experience, the United States can help ensure that Americans who return home are not only welcomed back, but equipped to recover, rebuild, and thrive.

DETAILED FINDINGS ANALYSIS

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Most returnees in this sample rated their health as good, very good, or excellent (80.95%; see Table 4). However, 29% of returnees reported health challenges related to their captivity, and some conditions persisted for years after release (see Table 5). Although conditions of captivity were not a focus of this research, participants sometimes connected their experiences to current health conditions (e.g., being forced to sleep on the floor and later developing spinal problems).⁶⁷ Because of the extreme and often dehumanizing conditions in which returnees were held, they should be viewed as a population with distinct health needs. Outside of Brooks Army Medical Center, however, most medical professionals do not appear to understand the specialized care this population requires. As one family member observed about the care received at a hospital, “They’re doctors, but they’re not understanding how severe [LOVED ONE] was tortured emotionally, mentally, physically.”⁶⁸ This finding highlights a knowledge gap. Addressing physical-health problems is critical because the data indicated a moderately positive relationship between physical health and quality of life (see Appendix B, Table 11).

Table 4

“IN GENERAL, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH?”

Responses	% (n)
Excellent	9.5% (2)
Very Good	28.6% (6)
Good	42.9% (9)
Fair	9.5% (2)
Poor	9.5% (2)

Post-Isolation Support Activities (PISA)

Post-Isolation Support Activities (PISA) is a structured reintegration program originally developed for military prisoners of war and provided at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) at Fort Sam Houston.^{69,70} The program includes a comprehensive medical evaluation and psychological counseling for returnees and their families.⁷¹ In recent years, PISA has also supported civilians designated as wrongfully detained overseas.⁷² More than half this sample attended PISA at BAMC (57.1%), and most described it as a positive experience for themselves and their families.⁷³ PISA provides space for decompression after captivity, and some returnees and family members emphasized the importance of that time for

reflection and processing.⁷⁴ One returnee said treatment at PISA was delivered in “a very holistic way,” addressing physical, mental, and, when requested, spiritual needs, such as access to a pastor.⁷⁵ As one subject matter expert noted, “PISA is one of the most important resources available to returnees.”⁷⁶ Family members also appeared to benefit. One said that time at PISA allowed the family to “reconnect” after a prolonged separation.⁷⁷ Given the high regard in which returnees and their families hold PISA, the program warrants greater attention. This analysis found no significant differences in self-reported measures of post-captivity outcomes between returnees who attended PISA and those who did not. However, the sample of returnees who attended PISA had been back for a significantly shorter time compared to the sample who did not attend PISA. PISA returnees who had been freed for more than half the time of non-PISA returnees reported similar post-captivity outcomes. This preliminary finding warrants further examination with a larger sample over a longer period (see Appendix B, Table 12).

Access to Medical Insurance is Essential for Care

One barrier to care identified in this study was access to medical insurance. Several returnees listed access to health insurance as a challenge they experienced upon their release. While the majority of returnees interviewed reported having some form of health insurance (71.4%, n=15), at least one returnee did not



[PISA was] the best thing that happened to me.”

— Returnee

have any health insurance.^{78d} Over half of returnees with health insurance reported having the insurance through their employer or partner’s employer (53.3%, n=8), underscoring the importance of employment for this population.

Because access to health insurance has long been an issue for this population, Congress authorized funding for coverage as a part of the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act.⁷⁹ SPEHA began providing health insurance at the start of 2026 to returnees whom the Secretary of State designated as wrongfully detained. Before enrollment began, however, some returnees and family members reported having to forgo medical care.⁸⁰ One returnee described that period as a time of caution: “I try not to go anywhere, not to do anything...” because of the fear of injury or harm.⁸¹

Outside of the health insurance program provided through SPEHA, federal support for mental health care relies on a reimbursement model. This structure is established in federal law. Returnees who have

d There was not a specific question as to whether a returnee had health insurance; most returnees discussed health insurance when asked about physical health support; future researchers may want to consider including a question on health insurance to better understand access for this population.



I don't know what I would have done had I not had health insurance when I came back.” — Returnee

taken advantage of the program reported being satisfied with the support received, with one calling it “wonderful.”⁸² Individuals who used the program reported ease with the reimbursement process, noting it would take a few weeks to a month for the reimbursement.⁸³ However, the current reimbursement model is also a barrier for some returnees seeking help.⁸⁴ A few returnees or their family members reported not seeking help because they did not have the finances to cover the initial expenses.⁸⁵ One family member noted, “If you don’t have the financial means upfront, then you don’t. You can’t seek that help.”⁸⁶

Besides the financial barrier of accessing insurance, some returnees or their family members reported issues getting on disability and/or Medicare after their return.⁸⁷ One returnee remarked, “I think disability should have been an option from day one. When I came out, they should have asked me, do you want to go on disability even if it’s temporary.” Given how critical access to medical care is for this population, ensuring they have the financial means to access that care is essential.

Table 5

COMMON PHYSICAL HEALTH CHALLENGES REPORTED

Responses	% (n)
Arthritis/Joint Pain	33.3% (7)
Mobility Issues	19.1% (4)
Dental	19.1% (4)
Back/Spine Issues	14.3% (3)
Hearing	14.3% (3)
Vision	14.3% (3)

Note: Categories above are not mutually exclusive.

Dental Care

Finally, post-return dental care was also cited as a need.⁸⁸ This finding aligns with the experiences of other political prisoners, who likewise report needing dental care after release.⁸⁹ Returnees who participated in PISA received a dental examination as part of the medical evaluation; however, PISA focuses on immediate medical needs.⁹⁰ Dental care is now covered through the U.S. Department of State health-insurance plan available to returnees whom the Secretary of State has designated as wrongfully detained.⁹¹ Before this benefit was made available, one returnee reported relying on NGOs to locate a dentist.⁹²

Recommendations

Physical health is the foundation upon which rebuilding after unjust captivity starts.⁹³ Returnees need reliable access to medical care to address their specialized needs. The following recommendations aim to improve that access and care.

- Medical health support currently available to returnees designated as wrongfully detained in current law are scheduled to expire on December 31, 2027, and must be reauthorized in order to fulfill the government's promise to provide five years of support post-release.
- Given the highly positive reports from returnees and their family members about their experience in the PISA program, policymakers should ensure this program stays funded. Additionally, policymakers should consider the benefits of expanding who is eligible to attend PISA. Other countries may want to consider PISA, and the care it provides there for returnees and their families, as a model for care for their own citizens who have suffered unjust captivity.
- Policymakers should review the enrollment processes for disability and Medicare and identify where the process can be simplified for returnees. This is an area where a social worker could ease the transition from federal to state services.
- Ensure dental care is part of the medical benefits returnees have access to upon their release.



Saad Almadi and his son, Ibrahim, present a Bring Our Families Home Campaign thank you gift—a U.S. Hostage and Wrongful Detainee flag intended for President Trump—to White House Senior Director for Counterterrorism Dr. Sebastian Gorka. Mr. Almadi was wrongfully detained in Saudi Arabia for nearly four years before his release in November 2025. (Photo courtesy of the Almadi family)

Why Wrongful Detention Designation Matters for Returnees

The Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act grants the Secretary of State the authority to designate an American held by a foreign government as “wrongfully detained.” This designation does more

than ensure a robust response to secure an American’s release, it provides for reintegration services and resources upon return. A summary of how returnees are treated based on designation status appears in the table below.

Figure 1

BENEFITS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO AMERICANS DETAINED BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS POST-CAPTIVITY

Category	Designated as Wrongfully Detained	Not Designated
Return Travel to the U.S.	Yes.	No. Consular Affairs may issue the detained individual a loan if they cannot afford their own ticket, which must be repaid; individual is not typically escorted home by U.S. officials and must navigate travel independently.
Post Isolation Support Activities	Yes. Individuals receive a full physical and mental health evaluation upon return to the U.S. The individual and family gain important coping skills needed to adjust after a long, unjust detention overseas.	No.
Ongoing Physical and Mental Health Support	Yes. Reimbursement for care up to five years post-release.	No.
Letters of Wrongful Detention / Indemnity	Yes. Letter from the U.S. government recognizing the individual was wrongfully detained, which may help the individual rebuild their life as they seek employment and housing. These documents also help family members manage pre-release challenges such as paying bills and accessing financial accounts.	No.

MENTAL HEALTH

“ It took time to fully understand the impact [of my wrongful detention] on my mental health.” — Returnee

Most returnees interviewed reported their mental health has improved over time since their release.⁹⁴ However, about half the returnees interviewed still reported “often,” or “always,” being bothered by problems such as feeling anxious, depressed, hopeless, difficulty sleeping, or feeling irritable (47.62%, n=10 – see Table 6). This finding may be related to the prevalence of sleep disruptions reported in this sample.

Additionally, after coming home, there appears to be some common, emotional experiences returnees share that may be worthwhile to further explore. Specifically, two returnees described a period of “pure joy,” after returning lasting a few months.⁹⁵ However, after that initial “honeymoon period,” some returnees reported difficulties during the months that followed, including times of anger, and difficulty concentrating.⁹⁶ Better understanding of the returnee experience, especially during the first couple of years of homecoming, could be useful in timing interventions for when services and supports would be most effective.

Mental Health Support

Just under half of returnees reported engaging with some form of mental health treatment (47.6%, n=10 – see

Table 6

“IN THE PAST SEVEN DAYS, HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU BEEN BOTHERED BY PROBLEMS SUCH AS FEELING ANXIOUS, DEPRESSED, HOPELESS, DIFFICULTY SLEEPING, OR IRRITABLE?”

Responses	% (n)
Never	19.1% (4)
Rarely	5.8% (1)
Sometimes	28.6% (6)
Often	28.6% (6)
Always	19.1% (4)

Table 7). However, a few returnees observed that there are few mental health practitioners with experience treating former hostages or wrongfully detained individuals.⁹⁷ This finding aligns with the need for more specialized care for this population.

Family and friends were another common source of mental health support, with one returnee stating, “My biggest support is my family still and my [spouse].”⁹⁸ Additionally, several returnees cited the support from SPEHA’s Family Engagement Team as helpful (23.8%, n=5). One returnee remarked, “Whenever I experience anything, I contact [SPEHA Family Engagement Team Member] and [wherever] he’s at in the world, he gets back to me....”⁹⁹ A few returnees discussed the role

“Your best chance is if you commit to wanting to improve and recognizing that you aren’t where you need to be on day one or day two. No one comes out, you know, unscathed.”

— Returnee discussing how their mental health has changed over time following release

of pets or other animals played in their mental health support and reintegration. One returnee stated, “... [animal] therapy is the best thing for people,” and suggested exploring the use of animals more in the healing process for returnees.

However, a few returnees reported they have never sought any type of mental health support (19.1%, n=4). In at least one of those cases, the lack of support was because of difficulty accessing care. “I was advised that referrals should be coordinated through the U.S. government reintegration program, which created uncertainty and delayed my ability to begin treatment. Navigating the healthcare system also added complexity.”¹⁰⁰

The majority of returnees stated the mental health support they were receiving met their needs (57.1%, n=12). No one interviewed reported that the support they were receiving did not meet their needs.

Sleep Difficulty

Sleep difficulty was cited as a common challenge (42.9%, n=9). Even returnees who have been home for years report having vivid dreams of being back in captivity.¹⁰¹ One

Table 7

“WHAT KIND OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT, IF ANY, HAVE YOU RECEIVED SINCE YOUR RETURN?”

Responses	% (n)
Therapy	47.6% (10)
SPEHA	23.8% (5)
Family/friends	19.1% (4)
Animals	19.1% (4)
No therapy	19.1% (4)
Meditation	14.3% (3)
Religious leaders	9.5% (2)

Note: Categories above are not mutually exclusive.

“...one of the challenges that I have to mention as the top one is difficulty sleeping.”

— Returnee

returnee described the experience as “when I was sleeping, I was dreaming that I was back in prison....I don’t want

to go back to sleep if I'm going to have these types of dreams that I'm back in prison."¹⁰² Another returnee described a similar experience, stating "one of the difficulties that I continue to experience is probably once a week, twice a week, my dreams take me to a place that's a prison."¹⁰³ This finding underscores the prolonged nature of sleep difficulties returnees experience. More research, including the effectiveness of different sleep treatments, for this population, should be considered (see Future Research section for more discussion).

PTSD Symptoms

Several returnees explicitly cited a PTSD diagnosis or symptomology when discussing their mental health.¹⁰⁴ While not reaching the level for clinical diagnosis, other returnees cited challenges that align with PTSD symptomology, specifically symptoms that are associated with hyperarousal (e.g., hypervigilance, irritable behavior, issues concentrating).

A little over a third of returnees interviewed shared that since their unjust captivity, they have experienced a disruption in their personal sense of safety. One returnee described this experience as "I never once feared about having my freedom of movement taken from me, and now it's something that I'm very afraid of because I've experienced it, and it's a very difficult thing to...explain to somebody who hasn't been through it."¹⁰⁵ Another returnee echoed these sentiments, stating "my favorite, absolutely safest place for me is my home. When I close my door and lock it, and this is where I feel the best."¹⁰⁶ Similarly, a third returnee disclosed that in their current job search, they are prioritizing employment opportunities that would allow them



Karina Vargas and Jorge Marcelo Vargas reunite after he was freed from wrongful detention in Venezuela. (Photo courtesy of the Vargas family)

to work from home, stating "I don't know if it's about feeling safer, but I'd rather be at home than going out..."¹⁰⁷ When asked about that choice, the returnee shared that this preference reflected a change, and that before their unjust captivity they "would go out more."¹⁰⁸ This hypervigilance may be expected after an unjust detention and may be something health care providers should screen for during routine medical care.

Besides hypervigilance, a few returnees expressed increased irritability since coming home, and two returnees cited issues with focus and concentration they did not have before their unjust captivity.¹⁰⁹

Most individuals who experience a traumatic event do not develop PTSD, but some do.¹¹⁰ Screening for the presence of these symptoms, along with others (e.g., negative cognitions and mood) could help form a more complete picture of what returnees experience after they come home. A greater understanding of the presence and severity of PTSD symptomology among this population could inform better treatment options.



**After my release time, I had this
killing myself thought more than once.”**

— Returnee

Suicidal Ideations and Thoughts of Self-Harm

A few returnees disclosed, or their family members shared knowledge of, thoughts of suicide or self-harm, either while in captivity and/or since returning. While a minority of the sample, the presence of suicidal

ideation and thoughts of self-harm in this sample is troubling. Medical professionals should screen for the presence of suicidal ideation during treatment. In addition, materials on recognizing signs of suicidal ideation and resources for support should be provided to returnees and their family members, after return.

*If you, or a loved one, are having thoughts of suicide or self-harm,
please reach out for help. Help is available 24/7 by calling or texting 988.*

Recommendations

Despite their resilience, returnees still reported mental health challenges upon return, including sleep disruptions and PTSD symptoms. Ensuring this population has access to mental health resources must remain a priority.

- Mental health support currently available to returnees designated as wrongfully detained in current law are scheduled to expire on December 31, 2027, and must be reauthorized in order to fulfill the government’s promise to provide five years of support post-release.
- Clinicians should evaluate treatment options to address a returnee’s sleep disruptions. Researchers may want to consider this population for future studies focused on effective treatment options for this issue.
- Clinicians should regularly screen this population for PTSD symptomology. Future research with this population may want to use more standardized measures to assess how prevalent PTSD symptomology is among returnees.
- Clinicians should screen returnees for suicidal ideation and self-harm and provide them and their family members with relevant informational resources.

FINANCIAL STABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT



...you should not have to declare bankruptcy because you're being held as a political pawn in another country."

— Subject Matter Expert

Financial instability emerged as a recurring challenge for returnees during reintegration. Captivity by definition interrupts employment, and creates substantial legal, medical, and family expenses that deplete savings and often persist long after an individual's return.¹¹¹ One returnee described their experience as "...you come back and you find your finances screwed up and then you find difficulty [getting] back to work. It's a painful situation. It's a really painful situation."¹¹² Although release represents the end of captivity, it rarely marks the end of financial hardship.

Consistent with previous Foley Foundation research documenting the financial burdens experienced by families during captivity, this study indicated that many returnees continue to experience economic instability after release.^{113,114} While some returnees were able to resume employment within a year of return, others faced prolonged periods without income while managing physical recovery, mental health treatment, and complex administrative burdens.¹¹⁵

Housing

Housing insecurity emerged as an important indicator of post-release vulnerability. Five returnees (23.8%) reported having no permanent home to return to following release. They instead relied on family members or friends for temporary housing. One returnee stated, "after the hospital... we were homeless..." and shared how they had to stay with friends because the family lost their home during their unjust captivity.¹¹⁶ Although family support often provides an essential safety net, reliance upon informal housing arrangements may delay independence and increase financial stress during an already difficult period of adjustment. As one returnee described it, "For the first month or so, I think we had to move three times to different Airbnb [locations] because, you know, there was no place for us and we didn't know where we were going to [go]."¹¹⁷ Individuals living and working overseas may be at an additional risk for housing insecurity upon release, as they may not have a permanent residence in the United States.¹¹⁸

“ Really bouncing around and at a time when we needed somewhere to feel stable.” — Returnee

Additionally, returnees may return to different living arrangements. One returnee shared that during their unjust captivity, “I told my [spouse]... you need to sell the house and monetize that and look for a smaller place.” The returnee went on to say, “so when I came back, I came back to a new house, a house that I didn’t know.” As a subject matter expert who works with returnees noted, “people come home and they realize that while they were away, their family had to declare bankruptcy or had to foreclose on a home...”¹¹⁹

Damaged Financial History

Beyond housing, returnees described continued financial complications involving damaged credit histories, unresolved tax obligations, interruptions to Social Security, and other government benefits that accumulated during lengthy periods of detention abroad.¹²⁰ One respondent said, “Financially, [wrongful detention] bankrupted me. I’m in the process of recovering from that.”¹²¹ These secondary financial consequences frequently persisted well beyond release, creating obstacles to rebuilding stable lives.¹²²

The Israeli government’s comprehensive support model illustrates one possible framework for strengthening post-release assistance. While differences in national service obligations, healthcare infrastructure, and social welfare systems may limit direct replication, several

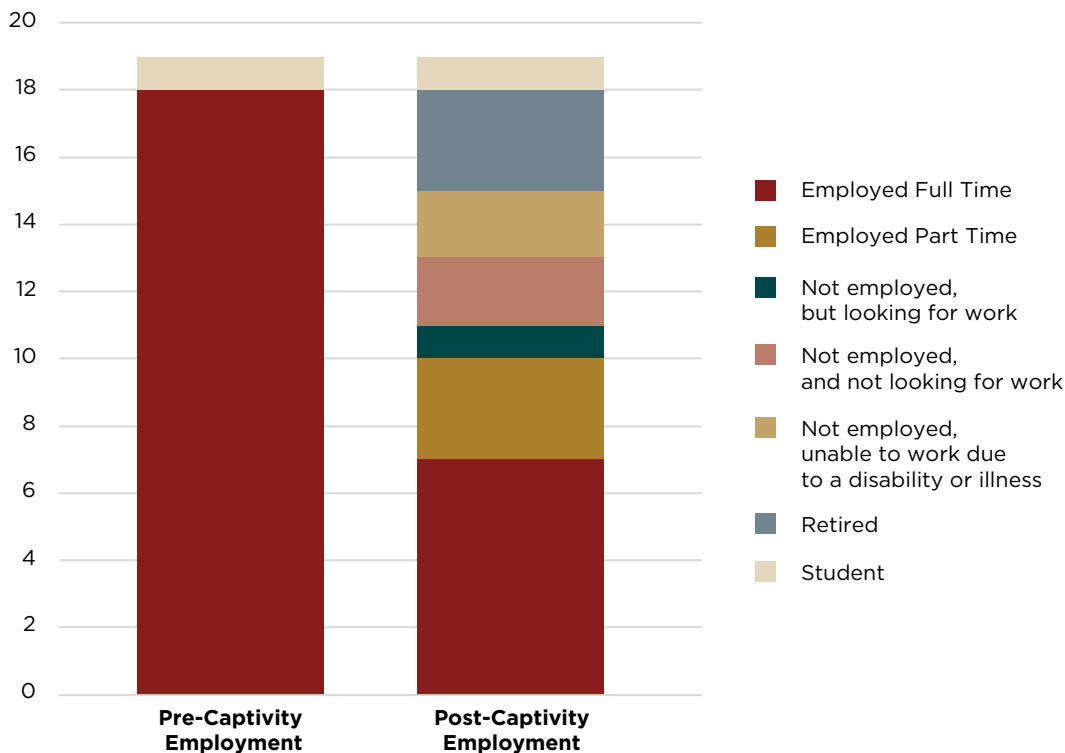
components, including temporary financial assistance, coordinated case management, and structured reintegration support, may be adaptable to the United States.¹²³ The 2025 *Bringing Americans Home* research similarly highlighted the Israeli model as an example worthy of further examination.¹²⁴

Employment

Returning from unjust captivity marks the beginning of another difficult transition: rebuilding a professional life. While freedom ends captivity, it does not immediately restore economic independence, career trajectories, or professional identities. Qualitative findings from this research suggest that employment remains a significant challenge for many returnees. Of the 18 returnees employed full-time before capture, 61.1% were no longer employed full-time post-release (see Figure 2).¹²⁵ Returnees reported long periods before returning to work, underemployment, uncertainty about how to explain prolonged absences from the workforce, and difficulty balancing employment with ongoing physical and psychological recovery.¹²⁶ These challenges may be compounded by lingering health concerns, lengthy rehabilitation, and disrupted professional networks. Employment emerged as one of the clearest indicators of self-reported successful reintegration. When asked open-ended questions about what success looked like following

Figure 2

PRE- AND POST-CAPTIVITY EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERIZATION



their release, six returnees (28.6%) specifically identified returning to work as one of their successes. For many returnees, employment represented more than financial stability; it symbolized the restoration of independence, routine, purpose, and identity following prolonged captivity. As one returnee reflected “being able to work again...reintegrate into life...regular routines and family and church,” established a sense of a “regular rhythm of life,” for them.¹²⁷

Workforce Re-entry Facilitators

Of the returnees who returned to work, most resumed working after seven months post-return.^e There

was a variety of views as to what helped returnees rejoin the workforce. A few returnees cited flexible work accommodations, including work from home policies.¹²⁸ Some found employment through their networks and by leaning on their connections. One returnee specifically mentioned the letter of indemnity provided by the State Department that explained the gap on their resume as useful.¹²⁹

Barriers to Workforce Re-Entry

Existing research suggests that returnees may face additional barriers as they seek to re-enter the workforce. Studies of exonerees and individuals perceived to have criminal justice involvement demonstrate

^e Ten returnees replied to this question; on average, returnees in this sample re-entered the workforce after 7.6 months of being home (median of 6 months); these responses ranged from one to 24 months; it should be understood that each returnee may have had their own meaning of what returning to work looked like (e.g., part-time employment, gig work) that may have been different from the work they did before captivity.



My employer didn't even send me a letter saying, 'welcome back'."

— Returnee

that employers frequently stigmatize applicants with unexplained absences, criminal accusations, or controversial public histories, even when those individuals are entirely innocent.¹³⁰ Although returnees are victims rather than offenders, they may nevertheless encounter similar forms of uncertainty or bias during hiring, particularly when hiring authorities misunderstand the circumstances surrounding their detention. One returnee explained, "A lot of people don't want to hire you because what's happened to you...lots of companies just can't be bothered to put up with that stigma attached to you. So, I think that's one of the reasons that some people just right off the bat ignore your inquiry."¹³¹

Additionally, some returnees pointed to the need for employers to have clear, written policies in place before an employee is taken hostage or wrongfully detained.¹³² These policies would specify the support and benefits that could be expected throughout an unjust captivity (e.g., salary, health insurance).¹³³ Furthermore, a few returnees said workshops on resume writing, job interviews, and networking would be helpful as they re-enter the workforce after unjust captivity.¹³⁴

Feelings of Institutional Betrayal by Employers

A few returnees expressed feeling

betrayed by their employer during their unjust captivity and upon their return.¹³⁵ These experiences may be understood through the framework of institutional betrayal. Institutional betrayal occurs when institutions that individuals depend on fail to prevent harm or provide adequate support following traumatic experiences.¹³⁶ Past research has examined experiences, such as sexual assault,¹³⁷ police brutality,¹³⁸ and more recently, the COVID-19 response,¹³⁹ through the lens of institutional betrayal.

In the context of hostage and wrongful detention cases, institutional betrayal may occur when an employer sends an individual into a country and exposes the individual to the risk of unjust captivity. In this study, three returnees (14.3%) reported feeling betrayed by their employer.¹⁴⁰ Returnees described disappointment with how employers treated their families while they remained in captivity, insufficient communication during captivity, or a lack of support following their return.¹⁴¹ As one returnee explained, "There's a lack of institutional willingness, both on the government's and on the employer's side, to acknowledge or provide help."¹⁴² Another returnee described being sent by their employer to the country where they were detained, and then being "abandoned," by their employer after they were unjustly taken captive.¹⁴³

Recommendations

Together, the findings in this section suggest that successful reintegration requires more than securing employment opportunities. Legislatures can put in place policies that aid in financial recovery, including restoring ruined credit scores and eliminate late tax penalties. Additionally, employers play an important role in supporting recovery through trauma-informed workplace practices, flexible accommodations, and greater public understanding of hostage and wrongful detention experiences.

- Create a federally administered low or no-interest reintegration loan program to assist returnees with immediate post-release expenses, including housing, transportation, healthcare, and employment-related costs.
- Study the Israeli reintegration model to identify components appropriate for adaptation within the U.S. system.
- Provide temporary housing assistance for returnees lacking stable housing options upon release.
- Expand federal post-release financial counseling and assistance in accessing benefits.
- Evaluate whether existing federal and state victim compensation and emergency assistance programs adequately meet the unique needs of returnees.
- Support passage of the following legislative bills, all of which would mitigate key challenges facing returnees related to taxation, credit reporting, access to Social Security, financial support, and other federal benefits:
 - › H.R. 9496 - End Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act
 - › S. 656 - Fair Credit for American Hostages Act of 2025
 - › S. 657 - Retirement Security for American Hostages Act of 2025
 - › H.R. 10464 - Paul Whelan Hostage Compensation and Reintegration Act of 2026
- Encourage employers to establish policies to address hostage taking and wrongful detention of their employees. This guidance is especially important for industries that require frequent travel including travel to countries where there is a high risk of unjust captivity.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

“ Social reintegration has taken longer than anything else.” – Returnee

Past research identified social support from families as a critical component for reintegration among individuals who experienced incarceration.¹⁴⁴ Similar to previous findings, social support was strongly related to physical health and moderately related to quality of life in this study.¹⁴⁵ These results build on the extant literature on social support after incarceration, highlighting the role family and friends play in reintegration. The majority of returnees, when asked, rated their social activities and relationships, as “good,” “very good,” or “excellent,” (70.0%, n=14 – See Table 8).

Family Support

Half of returnees (50%, n=9), when asked cited support from family and friends as what helped them with their reintegration.^f This finding aligns with research with similar populations that indicates families play a pivotal role in re-entry.¹⁴⁶

Other common responses included an element of community (e.g., church, social networking groups – see Table 9). One returnee specifically mentioned their local neighborhood, and another discussed going back to school. Both responses underscore the role community plays

Table 8

“IN GENERAL, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS?”

Responses	% (n)
Excellent	10.0% (2)
Very Good	40.0% (8)
Good	20.0% (4)
Fair	30.0% (6)
Poor	0.0% (0)

Note: 20 returnees responded to this question.



Marina Soltani, mother of Andre Khachatoorian, stands with a photo of her son. Khachatoorian has been wrongfully detained in Russia since December 2021. (Photo by Isaac Campbell)

^f 18 returnees responded to the section on social support

“ The biggest challenge was rebuilding relationships, reconnecting with the family.” — Returnee

in reintegration.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, while only one returnee specifically mentioned a family pet in response to this question, throughout the course of all interviews, several returnees discussed the role animals played in their healing.¹⁴⁸

In Whom Returnees Confide Following Return

Just over half of returnees (55.6%, n=10) asked, reported that they spoke with their family and friends about their unjust captivity. A third of returnees specifically mentioned their partner as someone with whom they disclose aspects of their imprisonment (see Table 10). Two returnees noted they engaged in public speaking and found meaning in sharing their experience with others.¹⁴⁹ Other common responses included speaking with a therapist, spiritual leader, social group, U.S. government personnel, or a medical doctor.¹⁵⁰

Rebuilding Social Connections

Even though family and friends are instrumental in reintegration, returnees also discussed the challenges of reconnecting with their loved ones. A third of returnees interviewed discussed struggling to reconnect with their partner after they were reunited. One returnee shared their partner was angry that they traveled to the captor country.¹⁵¹ Another discussed how marriage counseling helped rebuild the connection with their partner after they returned.¹⁵²

Table 9

“WHAT, IF ANYTHING, HAVE YOU FOUND HELPFUL WITH YOUR REINTEGRATION?”

Responses	% (n)
Family/friends	50.0% (9)
Church	33.3% (6)
Social networking groups	27.8% (5)
Opportunities to engage with other returnees	22.2% (4)
Non-governmental organizations	16.7% (3)

Note: 18 returnees responded to this question.

Table 10

“WHO, IF ANYONE, DO YOU MOST FREQUENTLY TALK TO ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE (E.G. FAMILY, FRIEND, THERAPIST, SPIRITUAL LEADER, RETURNEE SUPPORT GROUP)?”

Responses	% (n)
Family/friends	55.6% (10)
Partner	33.3% (6)
Other returnees	22.2% (4)
Does not talk about experience	16.7% (3)

Note: 18 returnees responded to this question.

“

It’s very difficult to get a former hostage talking about...their experience because of the trauma..”

— Returnee



I had to rebuild a relationship with my wife, my son, my daughter... develop a whole relationship with my granddaughters.” — Returnee

Beyond the impact on their partner, returnees discussed how their unjust captivity impacted their wider family, including their children.¹⁵³ Returnees with teenage children in particular noted the effect their absence had on their children, and a sense of missing time.¹⁵⁴ One returnee stated, “I was out of their lives basically for over a year, and so things changed, and that’s been a challenge.”¹⁵⁵ More attention should be given to the impact unjust captivity has on the children of survivors through early adulthood.¹⁵⁶

While recognizing the impact of unjust captivity on relationships, a few returnees said their relationships with family and friends were strengthened as a result of their ordeal.¹⁵⁷ “Now I understand the value of...being together, of friendships...”¹⁵⁸ Two returnees shared the perspective there was no impact to the relationships with their families and loved ones.¹⁵⁹ “I can’t think of a situation where [my unjust captivity] negatively impacted like personal relationships.”¹⁶⁰

Loss of Relationships

Several returnees shared they lost relationships because of their unjust captivity.¹⁶¹ Returnees shared different perspectives on why some individuals chose to drop their relationships upon their return: blaming the returnee for their unjust captivity, business interests in the captor country, and reputational damage from the false allegations with which they were charged.¹⁶² One returnee commented, “you basically lose somewhere around 20% of your old friends.”¹⁶³ Political prisoners have reported a similar experience of relationship loss after release.¹⁶⁴

Beyond losing social relationships, a few returnees mentioned an awkwardness with friends and acquaintances, treating the returnee different, after their return.¹⁶⁵ One returnee described the experience as “I feel sometimes like people want to treat me like a hero...trying to help people just relate to me as a normal person, as a friend, as someone that you know wants to be included in in things...that’s taken some time to get there.”¹⁶⁶



...after my release, my friendships, my social life is completely different from the one before...” — Returnee

“...bonding with the other Americans that were released...that sense of feeling, feeling like you are part of a community.” — Returnee

Connection to this Community

Some returnees reported the connection and support they receive from the returnee community helped with their reintegration.¹⁶⁷ One returnee stated “...connections with others who have experienced similar situations....helped me to feel less socially isolated...”¹⁶⁸ When asked specifically about recommendations the U.S. government or NGOs can take to improve reintegration experiences, four returnees discussed fostering connection and community within this space.¹⁶⁹ These returnees discussed an informal network

to support each other and share knowledge, as well as to “engage former hostages in social activities.”¹⁷⁰ In addition to social support, some returnees reported finding meaning in advocating for others still held in unjust captivity.¹⁷¹ These findings align with research conducted with exonerees and their families and indicate that peer networks are important sources of support.¹⁷² Civil society may want to consider some of the social events found within the innocence community, like retreats, or virtual support groups, as a model to adopt for returnees.¹⁷³

Recommendations

Strong social support is critical to reintegration, however, returnees reported difficulties reconnecting with loved ones. Furthermore, some returnees shared they lost relationships on account of their unjust captivity. These relationship losses are coming at a time when research suggests they may be most valuable to aiding in healing. Policymakers and civil society should seek ways to facilitate connections to promote healing for returnees.

- The U.S. government should invest in making services available that promote family reunification, relationship counseling, and community reintegration, recognizing that recovery following unjust captivity is both an individual and a family process.
- The children of returnees, especially those living at home during the unjust captivity, may be especially impacted by the prolonged separation from a parent. Policymakers should consider making services and resources available for this group through early adulthood.
- Civil society may want to consider hosting retreats or virtual support groups, similar to services available for other populations, such as exonerees or veterans.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND JUSTICE

For many returnees, release from captivity does not conclude their pursuit of justice. Rather, it marks the beginning of efforts to obtain accountability from those responsible for their unjust captivity and to prevent similar abuses from occurring in the future. Among returnees who responded to questions presented related to justice and accountability, 80% reported they are actively seeking to obtain some form of it following their release.⁹

Returnees described justice in multiple ways. For some, justice meant financial compensation for the years lost to unlawful captivity and its lasting consequences.¹⁷⁴ Others emphasized criminal accountability for governments or individuals responsible for hostage-taking and wrongful detention.¹⁷⁵ As one returnee stated, “Accountability should involve the full application of the law, ensuring that those responsible are investigated and held accountable.”¹⁷⁶ Some returnees framed accountability as an essential mechanism for deterrence, arguing that imposing meaningful legal, diplomatic, and economic consequences on perpetrators would reduce incentives for future hostage diplomacy and wrongful detention.¹⁷⁷ One returnee explained, “It’s [accountability] not out of vengeance. And then it’s about doing the right thing.”

A few returnees shared they are not pursuing accountability and justice following their unjust captivity.¹⁷⁸ Their



Journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, who was wrongfully detained in Russia, poses with a photo of Olga Jezler, another American woman who is still wrongfully detained in Russia. (Photo by Isaac Campbell)

decisions to not pursue accountability and justice in their individual cases appear to stem from several motivations, including not wanting to become involved in a legal case, not having the legal knowledge of how to seek accountability and justice, and not seeing those actions as personally beneficial to their recovery.¹⁷⁹ One returnee stated of the guards that held them, “they are pretty unhappy people already and that’s enough for me to know.”¹⁸⁰ Another returnee’s decision to not pursue any legal actions was, “a mixture of...not knowing....there’s any....pathway...to accountability or...justice in a personal sense, but also just, you know, having released the situation in my heart.”¹⁸¹ Finally, one returnee also cited the fear for family still in the captor country, and possible retaliation against them, should the returnee take any action to seek accountability.¹⁸²

⁹ 15 returnees responded to the question about whether they are pursuing any means of captor accountability or justice

“ For me, as...a regular person, it's very hard, you know, to...get these people [held] accountable...” — Returnee

Barriers to Justice and Accountability

Despite a desire for accountability, returnees seeking justice and accountability identified substantial barriers to pursuing legal remedies. A quarter of returnees pursuing justice cited the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act as a barrier for them.¹⁸³ Existing limitations within the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act often restrict civil litigation against foreign governments responsible for wrongful detention.¹⁸⁴

Returnees also reported difficulty identifying attorneys with expertise in international hostage and wrongful detention litigation, particularly those who accept cases on a pro bono basis.¹⁸⁵ A subject matter expert discussed the need for more pro bono legal services, stating, “...a big need for families...or for returning people to get that closure and to get that...confirmation of a crime that's occurred”. Even when legal representation is available, some returnees described uncertainty regarding where to begin, what legal options exist, and how international legal processes operate.¹⁸⁶ These challenges are compounded by the lengthy timelines associated with international litigation and accountability mechanisms, often requiring years before any meaningful resolution is achieved.¹⁸⁷

State Victim Compensation Laws

Returnees also noted that victim compensation opportunities vary considerably across U.S. states.¹⁸⁸ Existing state victim compensation statutes often do not explicitly recognize returned hostages and wrongful detainees, resulting in inconsistent access to assistance depending on where returnees reside.¹⁸⁹ Modernizing these statutes could provide greater consistency and ensure that returnees receive support comparable to other victims of serious crimes. States' attorneys general may want to review victim compensation laws, especially in states where there is a greater concentration of returnees (e.g., California, Texas, Florida, New York, Virginia).



Returnees: (left to right) Renzo Castillo, Wilbert Joseph Castañeda, Aidel Suarez Medina, and Fabian Buglione advocating at the U.S. Capitol during Hostage Week 2026. (Photo by Isaac Campbell)

Recommendations

The majority of returnees in this study reported they wanted to seek justice and accountability of their captors of the crimes committed against them. Furthermore, some returnees stated that their pursuit of justice was closely linked to deterrence of future hostage-taking. Policymakers should consider the following recommendations to ease the pathways for legal accountability.

- Create a federal compensation mechanism for Americans held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad, such as the Paul Whelan Hostage Compensation and Reintegration Act.
- Review limitations within the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act and the Antiterrorism Act that impede survivors' ability to pursue civil remedies against responsible foreign governments and private actors.
- Establish a national pro bono legal network of attorneys with expertise in international wrongful detention, sanctions, human rights litigation, and victim compensation that could support returnees' litigation.
- Develop educational materials explaining available legal pathways, including domestic civil remedies, international accountability mechanisms, and victim compensation programs.
- Encourage states to modernize victim compensation statutes to explicitly recognize returned hostages and wrongful detainees.
- Expand the role of the U.S. hostage enterprise to include post-release legal navigation and coordination with nonprofit organizations capable of connecting survivors with qualified legal counsel.
- Continue strengthening accountability measures, including sanctions, criminal investigations, diplomatic coordination, and financial penalties, to increase the costs of hostage-taking and wrongful detention and strengthen deterrence.



Family members of wrongfully detained U.S. nationals advocating for them at the U.S. Capitol. The event was organized by the Bring Our Families Home Campaign and the Foley Foundation. (Photo by Isaac Campbell)

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

LIMITATIONS

The primary limitations within the current research are the small sample size and descriptive nature of the study. First, as it applies to the small sample size, the overrepresentation of male participants who have been held in nation-states, although reflective of the affected population, eliminates the ability to produce results that most accurately reflect the potentially differentiated experience of women unjustly held by state and non-state actors. Second, due to the small sample size of participants, limited by the returnees with whom the Foley Foundation had prior contact, adequate comparisons of returnee wellbeing and patterns of

detention by captor countries could not be completed. Additionally, of the returnees whom Foley contacted, those who chose to participate in this study may have had more financial means compared to those who did not respond to the recruitment outreach. This limitation could create a skewed perspective on what recovery looks like while simultaneously excluding the perspectives of those most in need. One way to mitigate this limitation would be to offer small financial incentives in the future, which promotes mutual gain, i.e. contribution to the research and recognition of financial need.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This report meaningfully supplements our current understanding of the experiences and challenges facing returned hostages and wrongful detainees. Notably, this research offers valuable contributions to researchers studying similar populations such as political prisoners, prisoners of war, and Americans who have been wrongfully

convicted within the U.S. justice system.

Survey Research

Supplementing currently employed investigative tactics with an online survey could increase the rigor of the research and recruit more returnees to participate.¹⁹⁰ Other researchers have leveraged

online surveys to quarry similar populations on sensitive questions. This approach may serve as a benefit and subsequently draw more participants as returnees may prefer the anonymity of an online survey as opposed to an hour-long interview with a researcher.

Specifically, survey data which focuses on PTSD and depressive symptoms as well as unwanted sexual contact could expand our understanding of necessary social support and thus what facilitators should be implemented post-return. Currently, the prevalence of unwanted sexual contact for those who have experienced unjust captivity is unknown. Within the U.S. correctional system, about 4.1% of incarcerated adults reported unwanted sexual contact within the last year.¹⁹¹ It is not known how this statistic compares with U.S. adults imprisoned overseas, however, women held as political prisoners in Belarus have reported gendered comments and sexual threats.¹⁹² Additionally, there is substantial evidence that Hamas used sexual violence as a weapon against hostages.¹⁹³ Thus, in designing future studies, a measure for unwanted sexual contact should be included for all participants.

Gender-Responsive Care and Treatment

As discussed above, men are overrepresented in unjust captivity cases and within similar populations (e.g., political prisoners and exonerees).¹⁹⁴ As a result, the systems designed for reintegration are built with men in mind. However, since 2020, women represent 14.3% of returned U.S. nationals.¹⁹⁵ Relevant literature suggests women who

experience wrongful conviction face additional challenges that men do not, both during their unjust captivity and once they come home.¹⁹⁶

The experiences of women political prisoners within Belarus further highlight this problem. During their unjust captivity, women reported a lack of adequate medical care, including gynecological treatment and period products, resulting in grave consequences.¹⁹⁷ Hanna Kandratsenka was diagnosed with cervical cancer while held in prison and because of the prison's denial of proper care and an early release, she died within months of her release.¹⁹⁸

Additionally, a subject matter expert with extensive experience working with returnees observed that female returnees, in comparison to their male counterparts, more often suffer with the concept of lost time, particularly as it relates to family planning.¹⁹⁹ Lost time may manifest in returnees as “coming home and feeling the cultural push to sort of start a family.”²⁰⁰ More research on the unique experiences of women during their unjust captivity, and their experiences after coming home, are needed to ensure proper care and services are provided.

Clinical Treatments and Therapies

There is a paramount need to explore different mental health treatments and therapies for survivors of unjust captivity. Current treatment options include, “cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR)” as well as “individual counselling sessions or support groups with other survivors.”²⁰¹ Given the prevalence of sleep

disruption found in this study, research on potential treatment options is warranted. In a literature review on sleep treatments for incarcerated individuals, researchers identified this issue as a growing area of concern.²⁰² The use of CBT for insomnia in correctional settings as well as on veterans was found to reduce insomnia and decrease PTSD symptoms.²⁰³ Expanding these treatment options to returnees might prompt similar results.

Beyond exploring interventions for sleep disturbances, the benefits of the use of service animals for veterans as well as the positive reports from several returnees on the role animals played in their reintegration indicate that service animals may be highly beneficial to this population.²⁰⁴ A review of the literature found support for lower PTSD symptom severity as well as increases in feelings of social connection among veterans with service dogs.²⁰⁵ Furthermore, in the largest study of service dogs to date, a non-random control trial found evidence that including a service dog as part of PTSD treatment was associated with decreased symptom severity, as well as lower anxiety and depression.²⁰⁶

Mapping Out the Returnee Experiences

Returnees report a variety of experiences and emotions once they come home. While every returnee is different, the similar themes and needs identified in this study could inform the timing and delivery of

services and support. To better understand returnees' experiences, it would be beneficial to map out the emotions and experiences of returnees during at least their first two years post-return. While there is a focus on the first year back, a couple of returnees noted it took at least two years until they felt stable, especially with regards to employment and finances.²⁰⁷

Understanding Returnee Stigma and Bias

Finally, there is evidence that returnees experience stigma and bias because of their unjust captivity. In an article on hostage shaming, Hostage US documents the shame and the questions some returnees face after they come home (e.g., "What were you doing [in that country] in the first place?").²⁰⁸ Notably, this study has found that some returnees reported losing social relationships over their unjust captivity, with one returnee expressing the belief they had experienced a hiring bias amongst employers.²⁰⁹ Similarly, exonerees and political prisoners have reported experiencing stigma because of unjust imprisonments.²¹⁰ Exploring the role of stigma in the reintegration experiences of returnees is important as comparable research with exonerees indicates stigma impacts housing and hiring decisions.²¹¹ Furthermore, within mental health literature, there is evidence that negative self-beliefs (e.g., "I am weak") and self-blame (e.g., "It's my fault I was taken") are associated with PTSD symptoms.²¹²

APPENDIX A:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL CREATION

Past research by the Foley Foundation has included returnees, and their experiences.²¹³ However, the Foley Foundation had not conducted research specific to returnees and their unique experiences before. As such, a new interview protocol was developed for this project.

Starting in summer 2025, the Foley Foundation research team began a review of existing literature and measures. Because there is a paucity of research directly related to the experiences and outcomes of individuals held hostage or wrongfully detained, the research team also consulted the literature of related, but different, populations (e.g., exonerees, political prisoners). The research team settled on themes involving physical and mental health, employment, and justice and accountability.

Dr. Janani Umamaheswar (George Mason University) shared the interview protocol she used for interviewing exonerees.²¹⁴ Questions from that protocol were adapted for the study's returnee population (e.g., "Where did you stay as soon as you were released from prison?"), and included in the present research. Additionally, items from the PROMIS Global Health questionnaire were included at the start of the different sections of the interview guide (e.g., physical health, mental health, and social support), with response options ranging from 'excellent' or 'never' (5) to 'poor' and 'always' (1).²¹⁵ Employment characterization was based on consolidated response options from the American Psychological

Association's Work in America survey.^{h216} An introduction section was used at the start of the protocol to confirm facts of the case with each returnee (e.g., date of detention, date of release) and used to calculate additional variables related to detention length and time since release. An additional section was added for returnees designated as 'wrongfully detained' to seek feedback on how Congressionally-mandated benefits are understood by returnees, how those benefits are being implemented, and if they are being used.

After the research team created the initial draft protocol, it was shared with a select number of returnees and subject matter experts, including those thanked at the start of this report. Feedback was solicited on the topics, order of questions and flow of the interview, as well as overall tone. Based on the feedback received, revisions were made specifically to the mental health section. Not all feedback received fit within the scope of this study (e.g., including a measure of unwanted sexual contact). Recommendations that were not incorporated into this measure are reflected in the future research section of this report.

A small sample of returnees were invited to be interviewed in December 2025. This sample was encouraged to make additional inputs to the protocol. The final version of the protocol used for this fielding was finalized at the end of 2025, and the full recruitment of returnees began at the start of 2026.

h Employed full time and self-employed full time were consolidated to 'employed full time' in the current study. Similarly, employed part time and self-employed part time were condensed to 'employed part time' for the purposes of this research.

APPENDIX B:

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A Shapiro-Wilk assumption of normality testⁱ was performed on all quantitative data and indicated all quantitative variables were not normally distributed. A statistical significance threshold of $p < .05$ was applied to all tests.^j All statistical analyses were accomplished using JASP.

Correlation

Because the data were not normal, Spearman's rho correlations^k were used, alongside Pearson's r . Results of both tests agreed, and the Spearman's rho results are reported here.

Table 11

SPEARMAN'S RHO CORRELATION TABLE

■ $p < .05$ ■ $p < .01$ ■ $p < .001$

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variable Number				
			2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Days Detained	1,046.00	851.80	0.29	0.16	-0.12	0.24	0.05
2. Days Since Release	1,099.00	820.30		0.30	0.15	0.38	0.49
3. Physical Health	3.19	1.08			0.35	0.82	0.74
4. Mental Health	2.76	1.38				0.33	0.23
5. Social Support	3.30	1.03					0.59
6. Quality of Life	3.68	0.95					

ⁱ A statistical test to determine if the data conforms to a normal distribution (i.e., bell curve), or if the data is significantly skewed

^j A p -value of $<.05$ indicates the low probability (less than 5%) of the given results occurring if the null hypothesis were true (i.e., Spearman's rho: there is no relationship; independent t -tests; there is no difference between the groups)

^k Spearman's rho measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables; it is generally used when the data are not normally distributed

Comparison of PISA Attendance on Outcomes

Exploratory data analysis of PISA attendance on outcomes was performed as part of this report. In this study, 12 returnees attended PISA after their recovery, and eight returnees did not attend PISA. Because the data was not normal, the Mann-Whitney U test was used, alongside an independent *t*-test. Results of both tests agreed, and the independent *t*-test results are reported here, to allow for the comparison of means.

Table 12

COMPARISON OF MEANS FOR RETURNEES WHO ATTENDED PISA VS. THOSE WHO DID NOT

Outcome Measure	Attended PISA (Standard Deviation)	Did Not Attend PISA (Standard Deviation)	p - value
Days Detained	1,078.38 (897.26)	993.13 (829.20)	.913
Days Since Release	699.15 (405.04)	1,749.00 (928.19)	.015*
Physical Health	3.15 (1.21)	3.25 (0.89)	.878
Mental Health	2.69 (1.38)	2.88 (1.46)	.852
Social Support	3.46 (0.97)	3.00 (1.16) ^a	.337
Quality of Life	3.58 (1.00) ^b	3.86 (0.90) ^c	.658

*Statistically significant result.

a *n*=7

b *n*=12

c *n*=7

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