AN ACT

To provide assistance for United States nationals taken hostage or unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act”.

SEC. 2. ASSISTANCE FOR UNITED STATES NATIONALS UNLAWFULLY OR WRONGFULLY DETAINED ABROAD.

(a) REVIEW.—The Secretary of State shall review the cases of United States nationals detained abroad to determine if there is credible information that they are being detained unlawfully or wrongfully, based on criteria which may include whether—

(1) United States officials receive or possess credible information indicating innocence of the detained individual;

(2) the individual is being detained solely or substantially because he or she is a United States national;

(3) the individual is being detained solely or substantially to influence United States Government policy or to secure economic or political concessions from the United States Government;

(4) the detention appears to be because the individual sought to obtain, exercise, defend, or promote freedom of the press, freedom of religion, or the right to peacefully assemble;
(5) the individual is being detained in violation of the laws of the detaining country;

(6) independent nongovernmental organizations or journalists have raised legitimate questions about the innocence of the detained individual;

(7) the United States mission in the country where the individual is being detained has received credible reports that the detention is a pretext for an illegitimate purpose;

(8) the individual is detained in a country where the Department of State has determined in its annual human rights reports that the judicial system is not independent or impartial, is susceptible to corruption, or is incapable of rendering just verdicts;

(9) the individual is being detained in inhumane conditions;

(10) due process of law has been sufficiently impaired so as to render the detention arbitrary; and

(11) United States diplomatic engagement is likely necessary to secure the release of the detained individual.

(b) REFERRALS TO THE SPECIAL ENVOY.—Upon a determination by the Secretary of State, based on the totality of the circumstances, that there is credible information that the detention of a United States national abroad
is unlawful or wrongful, and regardless of whether the deten-
tion is by a foreign government or a nongovernmental actor, the Secretary shall transfer responsibility for such case from the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the Department of State to the Special Envoy for Hostage Affairs created pursuant to section 3.

(c) Report.—

(1) Annual report.—

(A) In general.—The Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an annual report with respect to United States nationals for whom the Secretary determines there is credible information of unlawful or wrongful detention abroad.

(B) Form.—The report required under this paragraph shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex if necessary.

(2) Composition.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include current estimates of the number of individuals so detained, as well as relevant information about particular cases, such as—

(A) the name of the individual, unless the provision of such information is inconsistent with section 552a of title 5, United States Code
(commonly known as the “Privacy Act of 1974”);

(B) basic facts about the case;

(C) a summary of the information that such individual may be detained unlawfully or wrongfully;

(D) a description of specific efforts, legal and diplomatic, taken on behalf of the individual since the last reporting period, including a description of accomplishments and setbacks; and

(E) a description of intended next steps.

(d) RESOURCE GUIDANCE.—

(1) Establishment.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and after consulting with relevant organizations that advocate on behalf of United States nationals detained abroad and the Family Engagement Coordinator established pursuant to section 4(c)(2), the Secretary of State shall provide resource guidance in writing for government officials and families of unjustly or wrongfully detained individuals.

(2) Content.—The resource guidance required under paragraph (1) should include—
(A) information to help families understand United States policy concerning the release of United States nationals unlawfully or wrongfully held abroad;

(B) contact information for officials in the Department of State or other government agencies suited to answer family questions;

(C) relevant information about options available to help families obtain the release of unjustly or wrongfully detained individuals, such as guidance on how families may engage with United States diplomatic and consular channels to ensure prompt and regular access for the detained individual to legal counsel, family members, humane treatment, and other services;

(D) guidance on submitting public or private letters from members of Congress or other individuals who may be influential in securing the release of an individual; and

(E) appropriate points of contacts, such as legal resources and counseling services, who have a record of assisting victims’ families.
SEC. 3. SPECIAL ENVOY FOR HOSTAGE AFFAIRS.

(a) Establishment.—There shall be a Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, appointed by the President, who shall report to the Secretary of State.

(b) Rank.—The Special Envoy shall have the rank and status of ambassador.

(c) Responsibilities.—The Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs shall—

(1) lead diplomatic engagement on United States hostage policy;

(2) coordinate all diplomatic engagements and strategy in support of hostage recovery efforts, in coordination with the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell and consistent with policy guidance communicated through the Hostage Response Group;

(3) in coordination with the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell as appropriate, coordinate diplomatic engagements regarding cases in which a foreign government has detained a United States national and the United States Government regards such detention as unlawful or wrongful;

(4) provide senior representation from the Special Envoy’s office to the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell established under section 4 and the Hostage Response Group established under section 5; and
(5) ensure that families of United States nationals unlawfully or wrongly detained abroad receive updated information about developments in cases and government policy.

SEC. 4. HOSTAGE RECOVERY FUSION CELL.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The President shall establish an interagency Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell.

(b) PARTICIPATION.—The President shall direct the heads of each of the following executive departments, agencies, and offices to make available personnel to participate in the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell:

(1) The Department of State.

(2) The Department of the Treasury.

(3) The Department of Defense.

(4) The Department of Justice.

(5) The Office of the Director of National Intelligence.


(7) The Central Intelligence Agency.

(8) Other agencies as the President, from time to time, may designate.

(c) PERSONNEL.—The Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell shall include—
(1) a Director, who shall be a full-time senior officer or employee of the United States Government;

(2) a Family Engagement Coordinator who shall—

(A) work to ensure that all interactions by executive branch officials with a hostage’s family occur in a coordinated fashion and that the family receives consistent and accurate information from the United States Government; and

(B) if directed, perform the same function as set out in subparagraph (A) with regard to the family of a United States national who is unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad; and

(3) other officers and employees as deemed appropriate by the President.

(d) DUTIES.—The Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell shall—

(1) coordinate efforts by participating agencies to ensure that all relevant information, expertise, and resources are brought to bear to secure the safe recovery of United States nationals held hostage abroad;

(2) if directed, coordinate the United States Government’s response to other hostage-takings oc-
curring abroad in which the United States has a na-
tional interest;

(3) if directed, coordinate or assist the United States Government’s response to help secure the re-
lease of United States nationals unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad; and

(4) pursuant to policy guidance coordinated through the National Security Council—

(A) identify and recommend hostage recov-	ery options and strategies to the President through the National Security Council or the Deputies Committee of the National Security Council;

(B) coordinate efforts by participating agencies to ensure that information regarding hostage events, including potential recovery op-
tions and engagements with families and exter-
nal actors (including foreign governments), is appropriately shared within the United States Government to facilitate a coordinated response to a hostage-taking;

(C) assess and track all hostage-takings of United States nationals abroad and provide reg-
ular reports to the President and Congress on
the status of such cases and any measures
being taken toward the hostages’ safe recovery;

(D) provide a forum for intelligence shar-
ing and, with the support of the Director of Na-
tional Intelligence, coordinate the declassification
of relevant information;

(E) coordinate efforts by participating
agencies to provide appropriate support and as-
sistance to hostages and their families in a co-
ordinated and consistent manner and to provide
families with timely information regarding sig-
nificant events in their cases;

(F) make recommendations to agencies in
order to reduce the likelihood of United States
nationals’ being taken hostage abroad and en-
hance United States Government preparation to
maximize the probability of a favorable outcome
following a hostage-taking; and

(G) coordinate with agencies regarding
congressional, media, and other public inquiries
pertaining to hostage events.

(e) ADMINISTRATION.—The Hostage Recovery Fu-
sion Cell shall be located within the Federal Bureau of
Investigation for administrative purposes.
SEC. 5. HOSTAGE RESPONSE GROUP.

(a) Establishment.—The President shall establish a Hostage Response Group, chaired by a designated member of the National Security Council or the Deputies Committee of the National Security Council, to be convened on a regular basis, to further the safe recovery of United States nationals held hostage abroad or unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad, and to be tasked with coordinating the United States Government response to other hostage-takings occurring abroad in which the United States has a national interest.

(b) Membership.—The regular members of the Hostage Response Group shall include the Director of the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell, the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell’s Family Engagement Coordinator, the Special Envoy appointed pursuant to section 3, and representatives from the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency, and other agencies as the President, from time to time, may designate.

(c) Duties.—The Hostage Recovery Group shall—

(1) identify and recommend hostage recovery options and strategies to the President through the National Security Council;
(2) coordinate the development and implementation of United States hostage recovery policies, strategies, and procedures;

(3) receive regular updates from the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell and the Special Envoy for Hostage Affairs on the status of United States nationals being held hostage or unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad and measures being taken to effect safe recoveries;

(4) coordinate the provision of policy guidance to the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell, including reviewing recovery options proposed by the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell and working to resolve disputes within the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell;

(5) as appropriate, direct the use of resources at the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell to coordinate or assist in the safe recovery of United States nationals unlawfully or wrongfully detained abroad; and

(6) as appropriate, direct the use of resources at the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell to coordinate the United States Government response to other hostage-takings occurring abroad in which the United States has a national interest.
(d) MEETINGS.—The Hostage Response Group shall meet regularly.

(e) REPORTING.—The Hostage Response Group shall regularly provide recommendations on hostage recovery options and strategies to the National Security Council.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President may impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to any foreign person the President determines, based on credible evidence—

(1) is responsible for or is complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the hostage-taking of a United States national abroad or the unlawful or wrongful detention of a United States national abroad; or

(2) knowingly provides financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, an activity described in paragraph (1).

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(1) INELIGIBILITY FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(A) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien described in subsection (a) may be—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;
(ii) ineligible to receive a visa or other
documentation to enter the United States;
and

(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted
or paroled into the United States or to re-
cieve any other benefit under the Immigra-
tion and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et
seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—An alien described
in subsection (a) may be subject to revoca-
tion of any visa or other entry documenta-
tion regardless of when the visa or other
entry documentation is or was issued.

(ii) IMMEDIATE EFFECT.—A revoca-
tion under clause (i) may—

(I) take effect immediately; and

(II) cancel any other valid visa or
entry documentation that is in the
alien’s possession.

(2) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The President may ex-
ercise all of the powers granted to the President
under the International Emergency Economic
Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), to the ex-
tent necessary to block and prohibit all trans-
actions in property and interests in property of
a foreign person described in subsection (a) if
such property and interests in property are in
the United States, come within the United
States, or are or come within the possession or
control of a United States person.

(B) INAPPLICABILITY OF NATIONAL EMER-
GENCY REQUIREMENT.—The requirements of
section 202 of the International Emergency
Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701) shall
not apply for purposes of this section.

(c) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE ACTIVI-
ties.—Sanctions under this section shall not apply
to any activity subject to the reporting requirements
under title V of the National Security Act of 1947
(50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.) or any authorized intel-
ligence activities of the United States.

(2) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH INTER-
ATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND FOR LAW ENFORCE-
MENT ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under subsection
(b)(1) shall not apply with respect to an alien if ad-
mitting or paroling the alien into the United States
is necessary—
(A) to permit the United States to comply
with the Agreement regarding the Head-
quarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake
Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force
November 21, 1947, between the United Na-
tions and the United States, or other applicable
international obligations; or

(B) to carry out or assist law enforcement
activity in the United States.

(3) Exception relating to importation of
goods.—

(A) in general.—The authorities and re-
quirements to impose sanctions authorized
under subsection (b)(2) shall not include the
authority or a requirement to impose sanctions
on the importation of goods.

(B) Good defined.—In this paragraph,
the term "good" means any article, natural or
manmade substance, material, supply or manu-
factured product, including inspection and test
equipment, and excluding technical data.

(d) Penalties.—A person that violates, attempts to
violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of sub-
section (b)(2) or any regulation, license, or order issued
to carry out that subsection shall be subject to the pen-
alties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

(e) TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.—The President may terminate the application of sanctions under this section with respect to a person if the President determines that—

(1) information exists that the person did not engage in the activity for which sanctions were imposed;

(2) the person has been prosecuted appropriately for the activity for which sanctions were imposed;

(3) the person has credibly demonstrated a significant change in behavior, has paid an appropriate consequence for the activity for which sanctions were imposed, and has credibly committed to not engage in an activity described in subsection (a) in the future; or

(4) the termination of the sanctions is in the national security interests of the United States.

(f) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—If the President terminates sanctions pursuant to subsection (d), the President shall report to the appropriate congressional commit-
tees a written justification for such termination within 15
days.

(g) Implementation of Regulatory Authority.—The President may exercise all authorities provided
to carry out this section.

(h) Definitions.—In this section:

(1) Foreign Person.—The term “foreign person” means—

(A) any citizen or national of a foreign
country (including any such individual who is
also a citizen or national of the United States);
or

(B) any entity not organized solely under
the laws of the United States or existing solely
in the United States.

(2) United States Person.—The term
“United States person” means—

(A) an individual who is a United States
citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for perma-
nent residence to the United States;

(B) an entity organized under the laws of
the United States or any jurisdiction within the
United States, including a foreign branch of such an entity; or

(C) any person in the United States.

SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) Appropriate congressional committees.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives.

(2) United States national.—The term “United States national” means—

(A) a United States national as defined in section 101(a)(22) or section 308 of the Immi-
gration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), 8 U.S.C. 1408); and

(B) a lawful permanent resident alien with significant ties to the United States.

SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize a private right of action.


Attest:

Secretary.
AN ACT

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