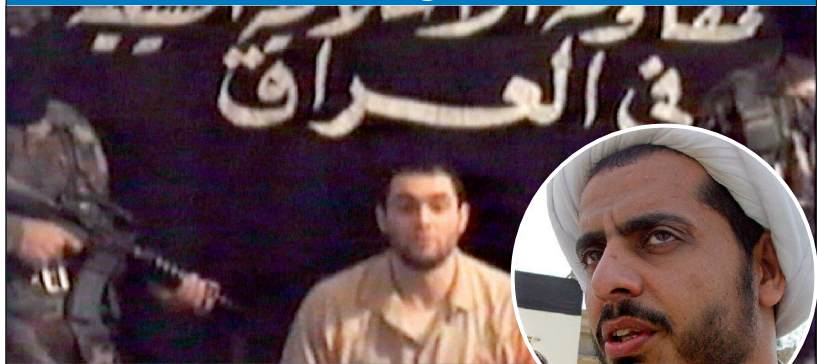


British hostages timeline



■ **May 29:** Five British men – four security guards and a computer expert – are seized from Baghdad's finance ministry building by about 40 gunmen disguised as police officers

■ **May 30:** Police raid sections of Baghdad's **Sadr City** slum area to search for hostages

■ **Jun:** Kidnapping linked to demand for release of **Qais al-Khazaali** (*inset*), former lieutenant of radical cleric **Moqtadr al-Sadr**, suggesting hostages are being held by splinter group of Shia Mahdi Army rather than Sunni-linked Al Qaeda.

■ **Al-Khazaali was captured by U.S. forces on March 21, accused of masterminding raid in which five American soldiers were killed**

■ **Jun 7:** **Dominic Asquith**, Britain's ambassador to Iraq, calls for release of hostages

■ **Sep:** Families of hostages urge their captors to end "torment" of holding "ordinary family men"

■ **Nov:** Families receive video CD from little-known **Islamic Shia Resistance in Iraq**. CD, dated November 18, demands release of al-Khazaali and warns that Britain has 10 days to withdraw from Iraq or a first hostage will be killed

■ **Dec 4:** CD broadcast on **al-Arabiya** television. Hostage says, "**I have been here now, held for 173 days, and I feel we have been forgotten**"