Hostage Diplomacy

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The return of Coercion in International Relations

Timeframe: 04/11/1979 – 10/05/2026

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Key Insights

- Why are foreign nationals increasingly detained not as criminals, but as leverage? Hostage diplomacy endures because it delivers strategic returns often enough to make repetition rational in a fragmented international system. What is taking shape is not simple disorder, but a harder political landscape in which human vulnerability itself becomes a currency of negotiation.

Definition

Judicialized Coercion: A form of State coercion in which legal proceedings and security charges are used to conceal politically motivated detention intended to generate diplomatic leverage.

> *If this trajectory continues, hostage diplomacy will not remain an aberration. It will become part of the operating logic of a more transactional and more coercive international order.*

Documents: Source Document

EPIS