

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 24, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

CC: The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

CC: The Honorable Steven Witkoff
Special Envoy to the Middle East
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear President Trump,

We write to express our grave concern over the continuing detention of Elizabeth Tsurkov, a PhD candidate at Princeton University, who was abducted in March 2023 by Kata'ib Hizballah (KH), an Iran-backed militia. We strongly urge your Administration to continue pursuing negotiations for her release with all relevant parties as part of the United States' longtime security partnership with the Government of Iraq.

Elizabeth, an Israeli-Russian dual citizen, who has spent much of her recent time in the United States as an academic and journalist in New Jersey, has committed her professional career to finding lasting pathways to peace and security in the Middle East. Her research and expertise are based on the large network of contacts – ordinary citizens, activists, combatants and communal, political and military leader – she has built across nearly fifteen years. Despite the instability we have seen in the region, Elizabeth has remained committed to bringing about a durable and lasting peace in the region.

While conducting research in Baghdad, Elizabeth was abducted by KH, which has been classified by the State Department as a Foreign Terrorist Organization since 2009. In November 2023, KH released a proof of life video where Elizabeth was coerced into making false statements alleging that she was working for the CIA and Mossad.

We appreciate the continued efforts of the Administration to prioritize Elizabeth's release. We respectfully request an update on these negotiations without delay. We will continue to track Elizabeth's case closely, and strongly encourage your Administration to continue to press the Iraqi government at all levels to resolve Elizabeth's case and ensure that she is safely returned to her family and friends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andy Kim", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andy Kim
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Corey Booker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Corey Booker
United States Senator