

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington D.C. 20520

Dear President Biden and Secretary Blinken,

We are writing to you today to express our alarm over the continuing detention of Elizabeth Tsurkov, a PhD candidate at Princeton University who was kidnapped in Baghdad by Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH), the Iranian backed Shi'a militia, in March 2023. We appreciate the efforts that the administration has already made to free her, and we urge you 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.

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia'a Al-Sudani of Iraq's April 15 visit to the White House provides an expedient opportunity to receive an update on Ms. Tsurkov's case from the Prime Minister. This will not be the U.S. government's first instance of direct communication on Ms. Tsurkov's kidnapping with the Prime Minister, given Secretary Blinken's conversation with him regarding this case at the U.N. General Assembly last September.

Ms. Tsurkov has now spent a year in captivity. Contrary to the categorically false and coerced statements that KH released in a proof of life video of Ms. Tsurkov last November, she is not a CIA agent but a journalist and political science doctoral candidate at Princeton who traveled to Iraq to conduct fieldwork for her study of strategies to reduce sectarian-based conflict in the Middle East. Contrary to KH's assertion, she was certainly not in Iraq to create tension and inflame sectarian fighting between Shi'a groups, nor to work with Iraqi opposition groups to normalize ties with Israel. Ms. Tsurkov is vocal and passionate about finding ways to foster peace in the Middle East, a region that she has studied and has written about in numerous

publications. Despite the instability in the region, she bravely pursued her calling based on her conviction that there are concrete pathways to peace and security for the region.

In a recent meeting with Ms. Tsurkov's loving sister in the United States, Emma Tsurkov, she expressed anguish at her sister's continued imprisonment at the hands of terrorists. She continues to liaise with members of your staff concerning her sister's case.

As champions of academic freedom, prisoners of conscience and hostages all over the world seeking release from captivity, we are sending this letter in the hopes that the Department can continue to take advantage of all opportunities to resolve her case expeditiously and safely return Ms. Tsurkov to her family and friends.

Sincerely,



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



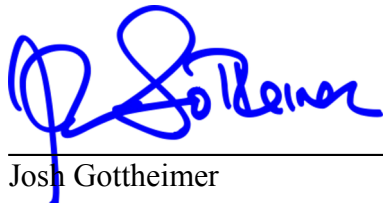
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Emanuel Cleaver, II". The signature is stylized with a large, circular initial "E" and a long, sweeping underline.

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress