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**COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**  
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CYBERSECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anthony J. Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

September 5, 2023

Dear Secretary Blinken,

As you are aware, Elizabeth Tsurkov was abducted in Baghdad, Iraq in March of this year. Elizabeth is a lawful resident of the United States with dual citizenship in Israel and Russia. She is a Princeton University PhD candidate and Fellow at the US-based New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy. Her family resides in my District in the East Bay of California.

According to the Israeli Prime Minister's office, Elizabeth was kidnapped by the Iraqi Shia militant group, Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH) while conducting research in Iraq. KH is a designated foreign terrorist organization, chiefly sponsored by Iran. Given Elizabeth's lawful residency and her family's residence in my district, I ask the Department of State to update my office on diplomatic efforts to engage with the Iraqi government to secure her release.

Earlier this month, the Iraqi government opened an investigation into Elizabeth's kidnapping, more than three months after she disappeared. The slow response and limited assurances of her safety are deeply concerning. To that end, I urge the Department to diligently work with the Iraqi government in coordination with our Israeli allies to ensure that Elizabeth is released and returned home as soon as possible. Additionally, I ask that you provide my office with responses to the following questions regarding Elizabeth's safety:

1. What is the Department's understanding of Elizabeth's current well-being?
2. What actions has the State Department taken to advocate for Elizabeth's safe release and return home?
3. How has the Department used its considerable diplomatic leverage to ensure the Iraqi government is aggressively pursuing Elizabeth's safe release and prosecuting those who abducted her?

Please send prompt responses to my staff with attention to Benjamin Burnett at [Benjamin.burnett@mail.house.gov](mailto:Benjamin.burnett@mail.house.gov). Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

