

Moscow Unaware of Missing Israeli Academic's Russian Citizenship

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Elizabeth Tsurkov in Istanbul in 2017. **Ahmad Mohamad / AFP**

Moscow is unaware of the missing Israeli-Russian academic Elizabeth Tsurkov's Russian citizenship and has not been approached by her relatives, the country's ambassador in Iraq [said](#) Monday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office [said](#) Wednesday that Tsurkov — an Israeli-Russian dual citizen — was being held by a pro-Iranian Shiite militia in Iraq, where she had gone missing "several months" before.

Russia's Ambassador in Baghdad Elbrus Kutrashev told the state-run news agency RIA Novosti that he had not received any appeals from Tsurkov's family or friends.

"I don't know whether she is really a Russian citizen or not, where she came from and whether she entered Iraq or not," Kutrashev said.

He added that the embassy has not contacted the Iraqi government on Tsurkov's

disappearance.

Related article: [Missing Israeli-Russian Academic Held in Iraq – Israeli PM's Office](#)

The Kremlin [vowed](#) last week to inquire with Russia's Foreign Ministry on taking steps to protect Tsurkov's "interests."

Russia's Foreign Ministry has not commented on Tsurkov's disappearance.

An anonymous Russian source [quoted](#) by the Kommersant business daily characterized the Israeli government's assertion that Tsurkov had arrived in Iraq on her Russian passport for research as a "provocation."

"She has been living in Israel since 1990, associated herself with that very country, her relatives did not turn to Russia's Foreign Ministry for help," Kommersant quoted the source as saying.

"They chose which country to live in, and this is the answer to all questions," the source added.

The Iraqi government [said](#) last week it had opened an investigation into Tsurkov's kidnapping in March.

Russia's Foreign Ministry [told](#) AFP in late April that the Russian embassies in Iraq and Iran did not have any information about Tsurkov's Russian citizenship or whereabouts.

AFP contributed to this reporting.

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