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Iraqi TV Shows First Video of Kidnapped Israeli-Russian Academic

By AFP

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Elizabeth Tsurkov. **Screenshot Al Rabiaa TV**

An Iraqi television network on Monday broadcast a video showing a captive Israeli-Russian academic, the first sign of life from her since she was abducted in Baghdad nearly nine months ago.

Israeli authorities revealed in July that Elizabeth Tsurkov had been kidnapped, blaming pro-Iranian militants after she had gone missing in Iraq in late March.

Al Rabiaa TV aired a video of Tsurkov, which was also shared on the Telegram channels of pro-Iranian armed groups in Iraq, showing her wearing a black shirt and speaking to the camera in Hebrew for a little more than four minutes.

The video could not be independently verified, and it was impossible to determine when and where it was taken.

Neither Tsurkov's family nor Israeli authorities have commented on the video.

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In the video, Tsurkov mentions the war between Israel and Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip.

She also says she has been detained for more than seven months, without identifying her captors or the location where she is being held.

A doctoral student at Princeton University and fellow at the New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy, Tsurkov says in the video she had worked for Israeli and U.S. intelligence agencies in Syria and Iraq.

She also says there were no efforts being taken to free her.

The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in July accused Iraq's powerful Kataeb Hezbollah of holding her, but the armed faction has said it was not involved in her disappearance.

Tsurkov, who likely entered Iraq on her Russian passport, had traveled to the country as part of her doctoral studies.

Later in July, the Iraqi government said it had launched an investigation into her disappearance but has not announced any findings since.

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