**UK-Australian jailed by Iran as spy for Israel describes ‘psychological torture’**

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CANBERRA, Australia — A British-Australian academic imprisoned by Iran on false charges of spying for Israel said in a television interview broadcast Tuesday that she endured “psychological torture” during her more than two years behind bars.

Kylie Moore-Gilbert, 33, who is married to a dual Russian-Israeli national, returned to Australia in December after serving 804 days of a 10-year sentence. She was freed in exchange for the release of three Iranians who were held in Thailand.

“It’s an extreme solitary confinement room designed to break you. It’s psychological torture. You go completely insane. It is so damaging. I would say I felt physical pain from the psychological trauma I had in that room. It’s a 2-meter by 2-meter box,” Moore-Gilbert told Sky News.

“There were a few times in that early period that I felt broken. I felt if I had to endure another day of this, you know, if I could I’d just kill myself. But of course, I never tried and I never took that step,” she added.

The discovery that Kylie Moore-Gilbert, a Melbourne University lecturer on Middle Eastern studies, had an Israeli husband led to Iranian authorities stopping her at Tehran’s airport as she prepared to leave the country in 2018 after attending an academic conference. Authorities sentenced her to 10 years in prison for espionage for Israel and sent her to Tehran’s notorious Evin prison. She vehemently denied the charges and maintained her innocence.

Iran attempted to lure her husband to Tehran, the Australian Herald Sun reported in February.

In a letter from Moore-Gilbert to the Australian prime minister, smuggled out of Evin prison in Iran in late 2019, the imprisoned academic revealed how Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guard Corps then attempted to set a trap for her Russian-Israeli husband Ruslan Hodorov.

“The Revolutionary Guard have imprisoned me in these terrible conditions for over nine months in order to extort me both personally and my government,” Moore-Gilbert wrote to Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

“They have also attempted to use me as a hostage in a diabolical plot to lure my husband, an Australian permanent resident into joining me in an Iranian prison,” she wrote.

At the time of her arrest, Iranian media variously reported that Moore-Gilbert’s father was Jewish, that she had converted to Judaism in the UK in 2007, and that she had visited Israel many times since, Channel 12 news has reported.

The Iranian reports claimed, without evidence, that she learned Hebrew and connected with an employee of the Shin Bet internal security service while in Israel. The Iranian reports were not corroborated.

Moore-Gilbert married Hodorov in a Jewish ceremony in 2017, though, since her return to Australia, she is seeking divorce over his alleged affair with a close colleague of hers, the Herald Sun reported.