



Israel recalls 'naked ambassador'

Israel has recalled its ambassador to El Salvador after he was found drunk and naked apart from bondage gear.

Reports say he was able to identify himself to police only after a rubber ball had been removed from his mouth.



Israel's leadership has been shaken by a string of scandals

A foreign ministry official described Ambassador Tzuriel Refael's behaviour as an unprecedented embarrassment.

The incident, which happened two weeks ago, has renewed calls for a radical overhaul of the way Israel appoints and promotes its diplomats.

San Salvador was Mr Refael's first post as ambassador. He was promoted in 2006 from a technical position in the ministry which had involved several foreign postings.

He was being recalled, although he had not broken any laws, foreign ministry spokeswoman Zehavit Ben-Hillel told reporters.

“ We're talking about behaviour that is unbecoming of a diplomat ”

Foreign ministry spokeswoman

She confirmed that lurid reports of the incident in the Israeli press were accurate.

"We're talking about behaviour that is unbecoming of a diplomat," she said.

Israel has been rocked by a recent series of misconduct and corruption scandals, shaking public confidence in the political leadership.

Haaretz website reports that police found Mr Refael in the Israeli embassy compound where he had been found bound, gagged and naked apart from sado-masochistic sex accessories.

In 2006, Israel's diplomatic service was criticised by the public watchdog for its appointments system.

The state comptroller's report singled out the foreign ministry appointments committee for its inadequate examination of candidates and lack of transparency.

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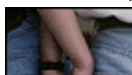
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