

Kosovo organ donor ring: the Israeli connection

Most international trafficking rings have involved wealthy Israeli patients on 'transplant tours'

Paul Lewis

guardian.co.uk, Friday 17 December 2010 19.50 GMT



The Israeli market for donor livers has been well-documented. Photograph: Ben Edwards/Getty

It is fitting that the man described as the "fixer" in Kosovo's alleged organ ring was an Israeli of Turkish descent. Moshe Harel, a fugitive wanted by Interpol in connection with the case, is accused of matching potential donors recruited in Turkey with recipients, many if not all of whom had connections with Israel.

The Israeli market for donor livers has been well-documented, and most international

trafficking rings have involved wealthy Israeli patients on so-called "transplant tours". Organ donation in Israel is low due to concerns in the Orthodox community about the body after death.

Until recently, experts said, Israeli citizens were able to claim partial subsidies from health providers when receiving transplants abroad. The loophole is said to have been recently closed after international pressure.

Only 10% of Israeli adults hold donor cards, compared with more than 30% in most western countries. Israel has launched a scheme in an attempt to increase donor rates, meaning card carriers have the right to priority treatment should they require a transplant.

Last month the recipients of organs illegally transplanted in a private hospital in South Africa were described as Israelis. The donors – said to have included children – were Brazilians and Romanians paid \$6,000 (£3,869) for a kidney. Netcare of South Africa, which also runs hospitals in Britain, admitted in court to receiving R3.8m (£342,000) from an illegal organ trafficking syndicate. **Paul Lewis**

Ads by Google

DonateLife

Everything You Need to Know About How and Whether to Donate.

www.donatelife.gov.au

Had A Kidney Transplant?

Find other transplant recipients like you. Learn from others. Free!

www.patientslikeme.com

Middle East in Prophecy

What does the Bible say about how this eventually will be resolved?

www.ucg.org.au