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## Romania probes Israeli adoption agency link in organ trafficking

By: Haaretz on: 13.08.2009 [14:31 ] (116 reads)

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Romania probes Israeli adoption agency link in organ trafficking  
Haaretz 12 agosto 2009

Romanian authorities are looking into possible links between Israeli adoption agencies and an illegal global conspiracy to sell organs for transplants.

The Romanian Embassy in Israel has asked for, and received from the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry, a list of all children born in Romania who have been brought to Israel for adoption in recent years. The Romanian officials are trying to ascertain if all such children arrived in Israel with all organs in their bodies.

In its request to the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry, the Romanians did not offer evidence in support of suspicions of a link between adoption and organ trafficking. The inquiry is part of a broader investigation involving Romanian children sent to Italy and the United States.

As Ha'aretz has reported in the past, some Israeli physicians were involved in illegal kidney transplants and the sale of human eggs in Turkey, Romania, and other countries in East Europe.

In parallel with the organ investigation, officials from Romania's central adoption agency and from Israel's Labor and Social Affairs Ministry and police, are also examining possible criminal activity of two groups dealing with the adoption of Romanian children by Israeli parents.

Among other suspicions, officials are checking whether one Romanian group, headed by an Israeli, has forged adoption papers, and whether children have been offered to Israeli parents without proper, legal process.

Responding to complaints and rumors, Romanian authorities have taken the highly unusual step in the past year of withholding authorization for the adoption of 16 Romanian babies destined for Israeli parents. This delay has been enforced although the Israeli couples have paid \$20,000 each to adopt the infants, and have already become acquainted with the babies in the foster homes and institutions where they are being held. Romanian authorities insist they will not give the go ahead for the adoptions until inquiries about possible wrong-doing are completed.

To help finalize the adoptions, the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry turned to President Moshe Katsav and asked him to raise the issue with Prime Minister Adrian Nastase when he visited Israel last July. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres also raised it with Romanian officials during his recent visit there.

Parents affiliated with the "Future of the Children" group, based in Rehovot, have also appealed to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to help finalize the adoptions of the Romanian children

By Ran Reznick

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