

Human-trafficking suspect: Free me from Turkish jail

By Aviad Glickman

YNET - May 17, 2012

Israeli linked to massive prostitution ring fears Arab inmates will cause him harm. Attorney: His mental, physical state deteriorating

Guy Hassid, an Israeli imprisoned in Turkey in connection with a human trafficking ring, has asked the State to lift an extradition order against him and work toward releasing him from prison, Ynet reported.

Hassid, who is suspected of belonging to a massive prostitution ring that was headed by Rami Saban, was arrested in Cyprus last July after Israel had issued an extradition warrant against him. The Tel Aviv District court recently convicted Saban of trafficking hundreds of women into Israel for prostitution.

Following his arrest, Hassid was transferred to the custody of Turkey, where he has been held despite the fact that a Turkish court approved his extradition in August.

On Thursday Hassid's attorneys filed an appeal with the Israeli High Court of Justice against the international department at the State Prosecutor's Office. One of the attorneys, Ness Ben-Nathan, said it remains unclear when his client will be extradited to Israel. He said the deteriorating relations between Jerusalem and Ankara may have contributed to the delay in the implementation of the extradition order.

In the appeal, Hassid said he feared his fellow prisoners, who are either Turkish citizens or Arabs, would harm him because he is Israeli. He further claimed that his medical condition was deteriorating and that he was not being given proper medical attention.

Attorney Ben-Nathan said the decision by the Prosecutor's Office not to withdraw the extradition order and work towards putting Hassid on trial in Israel was unreasonable. "His prolonged imprisonment (in Turkey) is irregular and does not coincide with the State's interest to put him on trial in Israel," he claimed.

The attorney said the extradition order must be withdrawn because Hassid has yet to be indicted. He called on the State to work towards releasing his client from the Turkish prison.

"Hassid's mental and physical condition is constantly deteriorating and he is not receiving proper care in prison," Ben-Nathan said.

The State Prosecutor's Office said, "Hassid has been held in Turkey in accordance with an extradition order issued by the State of Israel in July 2011. In November a Turkish court ruled that Hassid can be extradited, but the extradition process in Turkey - as in many other countries, including Israel - requires the final approval of the political echelon. This approval has not been given as of yet."