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ISRAEL LOOKS FOR WAYS TO SAY 'YES' TO EXTRADITION REQUESTS

Justice Ministry International Law Division Director Yuval Kaplinsky defended Israel's liberal extradition policy in a rare public appearance.

BY YONAH JEREMY BOB / MAY 31, 2018 07:05

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Israeli mob boss Itzhak Abengli appears at an extradition hearing. (photo credit: ISRAELI POLICE)

Kaplinsky replied: "We look for a way to say 'yes.' That is what we want to project to the world and I think we are succeeding."

He added that if someone surveyed the relevant US and European officials, he thought they would compliment Israel for being cooperative, noting that Israel was cooperative "not because we simply always want to say 'yes,' but because in the international arena, we live in a world of reciprocity."

In other words, he knows that Israel will be asking many countries to extradite Israeli criminals who fled the country to escape justice, and he wants to ensure that Israel's extradition requests get granted by granting others' requests where possible.

In addition, he pointed out that Israel has signed international conventions that place obligations on it in the area of extradition, and that "we do not want to be in violation of our obligations."

He also clarified that "we do say 'no,' but it happens when we have tried everything to say 'yes,' so the other country understands we are not a state who does not want to cooperate... Usually there is also a telephone call or meeting," to smooth over any diplomatic hiccups.

On the same panel, another extradition defense lawyer, Mark Werksman of Werksman, Jackson, Hathway & Quinn in the US, discussed the issue from the perspective of those facing extradition.

He emphasized that lawyers with clients involved in risky transactions that could get them caught up with the law need to plan in advance for bond hearings, including having US property ready to put up for bond.

Werksman said that getting clients out on bail was a crucial moment for the relationship with the client and also for the rest of the proceedings.

Further, he said that if defense lawyers were more prepared for extradition situations and the quicker they figured out an angle where they could cooperate with prosecutors, the better their end result was likely to be, whether with reduced prison time or better.

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