

Israel Agrees to Return Stolen Organs of Dead Palestinians

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In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Palestinians carry the body of Jihad Aslan during his funeral at Qalandiya Refugee Camp near the West Bank city of Ramallah Aug. 26, 2013. (Reuters)

Israel has agreed to return organs of dead Palestinians harvested by its forensic pathologists during autopsies, Palestinian Civil Affairs Minister Hussein al-Sheikh told Ma'an news agency on Wednesday.

Head of Israel's Abu Kabir forensic institute, Jehuda Hiss, had admitted harvesting organs from dead bodies without the permission of their families.

"We started to harvest corneas ... Whatever was done was highly informal. No permission was asked from the family," Hiss said in an interview with an American academic in 2000. The interview was released in 2010 and part of it was aired by Israel's Channel 2 TV.

The Channel 2 report said forensic experts harvested bones, corneas, heart valves and skin from dead Israeli soldiers, citizens, Palestinians and even foreign workers.

The Israeli army admitted to organ harvesting but said the practice was no longer performed. "This activity ended a decade ago and does not happen any longer," the military told Channel 2.

In the interview, Hiss described how his doctors would mask the removal of corneas from bodies. "We'd glue the eyelid shut," he said. "We wouldn't take corneas from families we knew would open the eyelids," Associated Press reported.

The Palestinian official said Israel will "soon be returning some of the organs," Ma'an reported.

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