

‘Israel treated its soldiers as guinea pigs’

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Israel has admitted to developing an anthrax vaccine through a secret research project involving tests on unaware army soldiers.

The Israeli Defense Ministry revealed on Wednesday that the vaccine was tested on 716 soldiers while they had not been fully informed about the study, Ynet reported.

The project, codenamed “Omer 2”, was held during the first part of the 1990s and the subjects were picked out of a pool of 4,000.

Some of the soldiers, who say that the experiment has had life-threatening side effects for them, are now filing a lawsuit against the Israeli Army, Haaretz reported.

So far, 11 soldiers have sought medical attention due to the side effects sustained as result of the tests.

Israeli Physicians for Human Rights have also filed a lawsuit against the army over the experiments.

The experiments were carried out in light of what was then defined as the “strategic threat of a surprise biological attack facing Israel,” the report said.

Meanwhile an official medical committee has published a report, raising doubt over motivations for advancing the experiment.

The report which was drafted by a special committee of doctors, a legal advisor, and a scientist from the Weizmann Institute of Science, was finally approved for publication on Wednesday.

The report revealed that even while the experiment was taking place, Israel had already had a stock of anthrax vaccines.

“An accelerated effort to produce large quantities of the vaccine was underway a year prior to the experiment, and by the time the experiments were launched, Israel had enough vaccines to cover the civilian concerns,” the report said.

The committee also criticized the “shroud of secrecy” which the experiments’ directors implemented.

“The committee was unconvinced that the need for a vaccine was duly considered by decision makers. Also, it is not clear who the decision makers were who determined the vaccine’s necessity,” read the report.

The only official document found by the committee about the experiment was written by the deputy Defense Minister.

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