

# Israeli rabbis call for an end to the transport of live animals



# RABBIS FORBID LIVE ANIMAL EXPORT

**Israeli rabbis call for an end to the transport of live animals** Israeli rabbis are mobilizing to protest against the cruelty of sending sheep and cattle in export transports of live animals

Sixty rabbis in Israel mobilized and called for an end to the "evil" shipments of live animals for export.

Yehuda Deri, the chief rabbi of Beersheba, a town in southern Israel, said every rabbi should join the protest, and claimed that anyone who buys meat sent from abroad to Israel through exports of live animal loads is an accomplice to an activity "Criminal" that is against human morality and the Torah.

In a letter released last Thursday by animal rights activists, Yehuda Deri has openly asked all the rabbis in Israel to protest against the loads of sheep and oxen sent to Israel to be killed. He also said he planned to raise the issue at a forthcoming board meeting. "It is clear that whoever buys this meat is a partner and helps those who commit an evil crime," the rabbi wrote in the statement. "Every rabbi in Israel must participate in this protest until the issue is resolved."

The letter was issued along with a petition against the shipments of animals signed by 60 rabbinical leaders from across the religious spectrum, and came after exposure of cruel images of a sheep ship filmed by Animals Australia and broadcast on the Australian TV "60 Minutes". The videos denounced the terrible conditions in which the sheep were sent to the Middle East in a transport that killed 2,400 animals of heat.

The petition says that "it is not the way of the Torah nor human morality to allow such cruelty to animals," and among the signatories are members of the Council of the Chief Rabbinate, Rabbi of the Wailing Wall, a former chief rabbi of Jerusalem, a rabbi who specializes in kashrut and a veterinarian, another Bar-Ilan University expert in Jewish law, and many others. "We were shocked to discover the cruel facts about the great suffering of calves and sheep, creatures of God, sent by ships from Australia and Europe to be killed in Israel," the petition says, reflecting the greatest rabbinical mobilization to date shipments that, from Australia, may take three weeks or more to reach Israeli land. "The cause of such extreme suffering to animals solely to satisfy our desire for fresh flesh is not the way of the Torah, and it is not human morality to allow such severe cruelty to animals ... in addition, the meat produced from them costs more than meat fresh that is imported into Israel refrigerated," explained the petition, which is concluded saying shipments should be stopped.

## Context

Disturbing footage shot by a whistleblower on the ship Emanuel Exports and later broadcast on the Israeli news Hadashot showed overcrowding on board with animals so tight they could barely breathe or reach for food and water. "They literally cooked inside while still alive during the journey," veterinarian Yuval Samuel told Hadashot TV.

Recently a demonstration in the city of Tel Aviv has protested against continued exports of live animals to Israel. Animals Australia reports that about 3,000 people have come to protest against this cruelty.

# RABBIS FORBID LIVE ANIMAL EXPORT

The Times of Israel reported that the country imported almost 120,000 Australian sheep by 2016. Sara Netanyahu, wife of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said she was "shocked" by conditions on board live export vessels, after the images of reported ill-treatment have surfaced. "It really breaks my heart," Sara said in a statement on Facebook, commenting on the brutality of the images of the dying sheep. "I turned to my husband, who will do all he can to end this tremendous cruelty. I also spoke with the agriculture minister, Uri Ariel, and I have no doubt he will do everything he can. "

## Rabbis in protest

The rabbinical protest is being led by two professors from the Bar Ilan-Sperber University, Britain-born president of the Torah Studies Institute and a vegetarian, and Yael Shemesh from the Biblical department and the women's research center. Together with the rabbis, the animal rights organizations Anonymous for Animal Rights and Let Animals Live will work.

Sperber told The Times of Israel : "I have no doubt that anyone who sees these photos will find that this situation is completely forbidden [by Jewish law]. This is an indescribable animal suffering ... It is so horrible and certainly absolutely forbidden. "

Deri cited in a letter examples of Jewish law prohibiting cruelty to animals, determining that Jews should do everything they can to minimize the suffering of animals.