

Avigdor Lieberman's Murky Dealings in Belarus Unveiled



A loud scandal involving the foreign Minister of Israel and money laundering via Belarusian banks is unfolding. Ze'ev Ben-Aryeh, the former Ambassador of Israel to Belarus, provided Avigdor Lieberman, the Foreign Minister of Israel, classified information when they met in Belarus in 2008.

That information suggested that Lieberman had accepted bribes and evaded taxes using Belarusian banks. Israeli authorities were hoping to cooperate secretly with the Belarusian authorities, but their ambassador kept a copy of the confidential files for himself, and later shared it with his boss Liberman.

The Jerusalem Post reports:

According to the statement released by police, Israel's former ambassador to Belarus, Ze'ev Ben-Aryeh, allegedly showed Lieberman classified information regarding his investigation by police on allegations that he had accepted bribes and failed to report income to the tax authorities.

The documents had been sent to Ben-Aryeh by the Foreign Ministry to hand over to the Belarus government, whose help Israel required in tracing money transfers from a local bank.

According to the police statement, "the ambassador, who was supposed to pass the request on discretely and directly to the authorities in Belarus, kept one copy for himself. When

Lieberman arrived in Belarus on a visit (during October 2008), [Ben-Aryeh] copied classified information from the request, [and] handed it over to Lieberman illegally when they met. The investigation also deals with Lieberman's involvement in the advancement and job appointments of Ben-Aryeh in the Foreign Ministry in recent months."

It is interesting that a few years ago the Israeli Embassy in Belarus was closed down completely, but later re-opened. According to Israeli Haaretz newspaper, Avigdor Lieberman became excessively interested in relations between Israel and Belarus long before he was appointed Foreign Minister. As a minister in Ariel Sharon's government, Lieberman actively lobbied for Israel to reopen its Minsk embassy, closed following budget cuts in 2003.

Although this scandal is an internal matter of Israel, Belarus is becoming internationally infamous for its dealings with all kinds of murky "investors". The countries of origin vary from Syria and other Arab countries, Russia, Israel, Iraq, Libya and North Korea. It is often unclear what Belarus has to offer to such investors.

Take an example of [Emanuel Zeltser](#), a US lawyer involved in battle over the legacy of a Georgian-Russian businessman Badri Patarkatsishvili who died in London under mysterious circumstances in 2008. Zeltser spent more than a year in Belarusian KGB prison under bogus charges. It is still a mystery what the whole dispute has to do with Belarus.

Despite its ever changing pro-Russian or pro-Western rhetoric, the only aspiration of the Belarus regime is to remain in power for as long as possible. "Money does not smell" seems to be the prevailing ideology in Belarus today.

Read more about Lieberman's story in [Jerusalem Post](#).

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