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## London - Frustration after Beth Din Stalls Organ Donation Drive

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Photo by: Judah S. Harris

London - The founder of a campaign to encourage Orthodox Jews to carry organ donor cards has voiced frustration at the time taken by the Chief Rabbi to issue new guidelines on the subject.

Lord Sacks's office said its views on organ donation would be available before Rosh Hashanah.

But Robert Berman, who runs the Halachic Organ Donor Society ([Hods](#)), said he had been led to believe that the policy was due out last August.

Mr Berman, who lives in Jerusalem, said that after meeting the Chief Rabbi in March 2009, he had agreed not to lecture on organ donation in the UK until the Chief Rabbi and the London Beth Din decided their position in the summer.

He said: "I'm puzzled as to why it would take 16 months and counting for the Chief Rabbinate of England to review the halachic and medical issues surrounding organ donation."

Arguing there had been no major new developments on organ donation in medicine or Jewish law over the past decade, he declared: "I hope this review will not drag on for years, as I fear it will. This issue is of an urgent life-saving nature and should be given

priority."

Two hundred rabbis from Israel, the USA and elsewhere support the carrying of the Hods card.

While some rabbis still insist on the traditional principle that death takes place only when the heart stops beating, increasingly more rabbinic authorities, including Israel's Chief Rabbinate, have begun to accept brain-stem death as legitimate.

A spokesman for the Office of the Chief Rabbi said for the past 12 months, the London Beth Din had been engaged "in careful consideration" of organ donations and living wills.

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