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Suspicion: Israelis harvested organs from the needy

Police suspect organ-harvesting network operated mainly in Kosovo, Azerbaijan; probe was launched after Turkish man told authorities in Kosovo he was 'thrown out to the street' following operation

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Following a month-long investigation, Israel Police's National Fraud Unit arrested 10 people on Tuesday, including a physician, on suspicion that they were part of an organ-harvesting network.



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According to the investigation, the victims were destitute people who were persuaded to sell their organs.

The secret investigation was launched after the European Union's police and justice mission operating in Kosovo informed Israel Police that a Turkish national who was arrested in Kosovo told investigators that he had a kidney removed. He claimed to have been "thrown out to the street" by organ harvesters following the operation.

According to suspicions, the members of the organ-harvesting network sought out destitute people and offered them money in exchange for vital organs, which were meant to be used in transplant operations abroad. The donors received sums ranging from thousands to tens of thousands of shekels.

Police believe the network operated mainly in Kosovo and Azerbaijan. According to investigators, the recipients paid more than \$100,000 for the organs. The organ harvesters, police said, did not provide the donors with the necessary medical care and kept them in the dark regarding the risks involved

The suspects will be arraigned on Wednesday at the Rishon Lezion Magistrate's Court.

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