

## Ultra-Orthodox pressure takes women off ads for Jerusalem organ donor campaign

**The advertising agency handling the bus ads asked ADI for permission to replace the ads on buses in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak with ones showing men only.**

By Dan Even

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The recent removal of images of women from bus ads in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak encouraging Israelis to sign organ donor cards has sparked protest, with some people threatening to revoke their agreement to donate organs after their death.

Last week, ADI, the National Transplant Center, launched a campaign urging Israelis who do not have organ donor cards to take advantage of a provision in the Organ Transplant Law of 2008 that affords priority on the transplant waiting list to candidates who sign up by December 31, 2011.

Last week, Canaan Pirsum Bitnuah, the advertising agency handling the bus ads, which feature the faces of men and women, asked ADI for permission to replace the ads on buses in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak with ones showing men only.

"The photos showed only the women's faces; there were no exposed shoulders or anything at all provocative. But we were warned that if we didn't change the images, the buses might be burned," ADI spokeswoman Dvora Sherer said.

She explained that when a 2007 campaign had featured the image of an organ donor with her infant son, Jerusalem billboards with the ad had been vandalized and one bus had been set on fire.

A number of organ donors posted angry messages on ADI's Facebook page protesting the organization's compliance. ADI officials issued an apology, stressing that the decision was based on a desire to convey the details of the campaign's message to all Israelis.

Canaan spokesman Ohad Gibli defended the removal of images of women from the ads in the two cities, noting the "enormous financial cost" to the agency from the damage to the Egged bus in 2007, and emphasizing that Canaan does not seek to discriminate against women.

"The main consideration in replacing the pictures was to facilitate a campaign that would serve its purpose," Gibli said, adding, "The public that feels itself the object of discrimination should realize, before coming out with statements, that the transplant center is staffed by professionals whose main interest is increasing the number of people signing ADI donor cards and saving as many lives as possible."

To accommodate the ultra-Orthodox community, ADI issues special cards allowing their carriers to specify the clergy member they want their family to consult, in the event of their death, before allowing their organs to be harvested for donation. Of the nearly 650,000 Israelis above age 17 with ADI cards, 70,000 have signed cards with this provision.