

Title: Israel/Australia: Media Report: New Israeli Consul
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The following is a translation of an article appearing on page 13 (centre spread) in Ma'ariv on 8 February. A caption on the front page of that edition also referred to the article.

"Please meet: our Consul in Australia."

Caption above headline:

The fresh appointment by the Israeli Foreign Ministry: former deputy Consul in Brazil who became embroiled in a sex scandal.

Which Israeli diplomat is suspected of sexual relations with and exploitation of female Brazilian minors? Who was photographed in embarrassing positions with friends at wild parties in his house? Who left quickly from Rio de Janeiro, before he was able to be investigated by the police? And who was rebuked and waited in Israel for 5 years before receiving a new appointment? For those who forgot his name: Arie Sher, former deputy Consul in Brazil, and soon to be: the new Israeli Consul in Australia

By Ilil Shachar

Just five years ago he quickly packed his things and left Brazil following a sex scandal that he became embroiled in. A series of nude photos of Brazilian minors (females) in his pool, in his house in Brazil, and photos of him, the Israeli deputy consul, in some embarrassing positions, created a big storm in Brazil, and he was recalled to Israel immediately. And now, he has received a new, prestigious appointment - Israeli Consul in Australia.

A short time after the former Israeli Consul in Australia was expelled by the local authorities under mysterious circumstances, the Appointments Committee of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, with the Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom at its head, decided to make the diplomat Arie Sher our new Consul there (in Australia). Even though only five years ago his name was linked to a problematic sex scandal in Brazil, during his term as a deputy consul there. When the incident exploded the Brazilian police raised strong suspicions about him, but Sher left the country even before the local police managed to arrive to investigate him.

The incident developed from one small picture of a smiling nude girl with bared breasts, found on the internet. The girl herself found the nude photo, and complained to the police

about who she claimed had photographed her – a Hebrew teacher in Rio, Giorgi Steinberg. When the police arrived at Steinberg's house they found hundreds of nude photographs of children, and also of an 11 year old boy. No one could explain what the photo of the 11 year old was doing in the apartment. The connection to the Israeli diplomat, according to the Brazilian police, was very clear. The police were convinced that there were very good, friendly relations between Sher and Steinberg, amongst other reasons because there was a photo of Sher and Steinberg together. "According to the evidence that we have, the teacher organised the girls for Israelis who arrived in the city and wanted to sleep with minors", said the investigator, Ikaro Silva, who was responsible for the investigation, in an interview after the incident exploded. One of these Israelis, according to the local police's version, was Arie Sher. "The parties were in the house of the deputy consul" added Roberto, the department investigator, "the girls were under the responsibility of the teacher. In the deputy consul's house there were orgies that the Israeli public paid for."

Nude female minors in diplomat's pool

The woman who complained to the police admitted that she received payment to bring more young girls and boys (minors) to the parties. According to police information, at one party photographs were taken of nude minors (girls) in the pool of the deputy consul, and in another photograph Sher and the teacher are seen in an erotic pose. "From the material that we gathered from Sher's residence before he left Brazil, we can say with certainty a few things. We have no problem with the sexual preferences of a person, this does not interest the police. What is of interest is if minors in nude photographs were involved. 90% of the photos were taken at the house of the deputy consul general. Steinberg taught children Hebrew, and paid the young girls with the deputy consul's money so that they would come to parties at Sher's house", said Roberto.

These are a friend's private photos

But the Brazilian investigation has not reached a conclusion. Sher did leave Brazil quickly – and returned to Israel. Here he gave his version; according to him, the photos "were private photos of a Brazilian friend (female)" and not pornographic photographs. In his words, the photos were found in the search of his house by the police, and were not distributed on the internet. The incident was then investigated by the Israeli Civil Service Commission, which decided that a light reprimand would suffice. They said that Sher's behaviour, although not appropriate for a diplomat, was not enough to reject him from service in the Foreign Ministry. The punishment Sher received was to be prohibited from being sent on an overseas diplomatic mission for five years, and now that the five years are nearing completion, Sher will travel to Australia. Meanwhile Sher, the famous diplomat, has managed to get married, and in the Foreign Ministry they came to the conclusion that he had paid his dues and is worthy of leaving for a second mission.

"The man is suited to undertake a position and there is no reason that he should not be nominated; he did not do anything wrong, they are simply doing him an injustice", said a senior official at the Foreign Ministry, "they publish old pictures of him, from his student past, and are ruining his image". The Foreign Ministry also mentioned that Sher is a very dedicated and popular diplomat in the Israeli foreign diplomatic team in Israel. "We are speaking about a diligent and authentic person who executes his job well and has received much praise", said a senior official. Yesterday in the Ministry, there were consultations as to whether to cancel the nomination, due to the publication of the incident and expected

criticism, but in the end it was decided that Sher was clear of all blame and that there was thus no reason to cancel his nomination.

After the scandal was published in Israel, Sher said: "In my house there were often social events in the framework of my task. No private events were funded by representative funds, and under no circumstances were there any orgies in my house". Yesterday he refused to comment about the new nomination.

Yesterday new details came to light about the expulsion of the former Israeli Consul approximately a month ago. In the investigation that was undertaken by the Foreign Ministry, it was clarified, finally, that the Israeli Consul was not expelled because of inappropriate personal conduct. This came after he undertook a polygraph test and was cleared of all suspicion. According to Foreign Ministry assessments, the reason for his expulsion was an action he carried out in the framework of his role. Australian sources hinted lately that his expulsion was connected to the incident of the two Israelis who were caught in New Zealand trying to buy fake passports (more on the incident of "Mossad agents" – in the article to the right of this one).

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Sent by: s 22(1)

**Prepared
by:**

Approved Tim George
by:

Topics: POLITICAL-ECONOMIC/International Political, PROTOCOL/General, SECURITY/Policy General

s 47E(d)

Title: Israel/Australia: Media Report: New Israeli Consul (Part II)
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Following is a translation of an article appearing on page 19 of Ma'ariv on 10 February.

TEXT BEGINS

"Foreign Ministry official Arie Sher will not be posted to Australia:
 The consul that got embroiled [in scandal] stays in Israel"

Following the exposure by Ma'ariv about the intention to send to Australia the diplomat whose name was connected to a sex scandal in Brazil, it was decided in the Foreign Ministry that the appointment of Arie Sher will be postponed until further notice.

By Ilil Shachar

Two days after the exposure in Ma'ariv of the expected appointment of Arie Sher to the role of Consul in Australia, the Foreign Ministry has decided to freeze the appointment.

After consultations yesterday between the parties it was decided to reconsider the appointment, however a final decision has still not been made in the matter, despite the fact that officials of the Foreign Ministry signed a petition expressing their full support for Sher. The incident has also aroused great interest in Australia. Many newspapers quoted the item published in Ma'ariv that Sher, who served approximately five years ago as the Israeli deputy consul in Brazil and was involved in a sex scandal, was to be appointed as the new Israeli consul in Australia, following the expulsion of the previous consul by the Australian authorities under mysterious circumstances.

Five years ago Sher's name came made the headlines after he became embroiled in a sex scandal that shook the country. According to the allegation he photographed Brazilian girls in the nude, and was at the head of a network that published pornographic pictures on the internet. When the incident was publicised and the police in Brazil suspected the diplomat, he was sneaked back to Israel before the local police managed to investigate him. An additional name that was connected to the same incident was George Steinberg, a Hebrew teacher in Rio de Janeiro who stood trial and was acquitted. Sher's legal matter is also close to conclusion in Rio de Janeiro.

When he returned to Israel he gave his version of events, and according to him, they were private photographs belonging to a female Brazilian friend, rather than pornographic photos.

According to him, the pictures were found during a police search at his house, and were not published on the internet. The incident was investigated by the State Civil Service Commission, which decided that a light reprimand was sufficient, and pointed out that Sher's behaviour was inappropriate for a diplomat, but that it was not sufficient to warrant dismissal from the Foreign Service.

TEXT ENDS

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