

EZ – אקטואליה

Panel: Benny Sela's escape was 'significant failure' by police

By Eli Ashkenazi, Roni Singer-Heruti, Jonathan Lis and Gideon Alon, Haaretz Correspondent

After reconstructing the events of serial rapist Benny Sela's escape last week from police custody, the committee charged with examining the details of the case Thursday called the affair "a significant failure" on the part of the police.

Sela, sentenced in 1999 to 35 years in jail for the rape of 14 women, escaped from two police officers at Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court last Friday. There has been no definite lead on Sela's whereabouts since, despite hundreds of reported sightings.

Committee members visited the site of the escape Thursday in order to evaluate the veracity of the escorting officers' claim that Sela was handcuffed when he scaled a high fence to make his escape. During the simulation, the two escorting officers were instructed to demonstrate how easily one could climb over the gate adjacent to the wall Sela had scaled, wearing handcuffs.

It also emerged during the simulation that after the officers had brought Sela and the second prisoner to the court, Sela said he had forgotten his binder in the patrol car. One of the officers, Haim Tiron, returned the vehicle with Sela behind him, but did not maintain eye contact with his charge. He then heard a labor inmate at the site shout out, "he's escaping."

The same prisoner described to committee members how Sela escaped, and testified that the accompanying officers had not maintained eye contact with the fugitive.

Public Security Minister Avi Dichter hinted Wednesday that senior police and Prisons Service officials could pay the price for Sela's escape. "The Israel Police and the Prisons Service will undergo the necessary revolutions to make them worthy of the people of Israel. That is my mission as the minister responsible, that is the mandate placed in my hands by the people and the prime minister."

Dichter termed Sela's escape "a serious operational blunder, a miserable embarrassment in terms of the result." He described in detail the workings of the examining committee that he set up, headed by Yaron, noted that he had ordered the police to submit all needed material to the committee and instructed the committee to submit its report by December 7.

The two police officers who were escorting Sela when he escaped testified before the committee on Wednesday, as did several senior police and Prisons Service officers. "I can promise that this affair will not end with these two small policemen," attorney Or Tamir, who represents both police escorts, said Wednesday. "The story is not as simple as it appears, and everyone is making a serious mistake if they think it will stop with the escorting officers. This affair will go very high up. The people of Israel should be disturbed by this police [force], and not because of the two escort officers."

Tamir rejected the notion that his representation of both officers could create a conflict of interest. As counsel for both men, he was permitted to sit in on the Yaron committee hearings during the testimony of both. He declined to give his clients' version of events, "because I don't want to obstruct the work of the committee." The escort officers are believed to have told the committee their version of the circumstances leading to Sela's escape and to have answered questions from committee members.

VOCABULARY

reconstructing - לשחזר, לבנות מחדש

serial rapist - אנס סדרתי

escape - בריחה, הימלטות

custody - משמורת, השגחה

committee - ועדה

examining the details - בחינת הפרטים

affair - פרשה (בהקשר אחר רומן)

significant - משמעותי, חשוב

failure - כשל, כישלון, מחדל

Magistrate's Court - בית משפט השלום

definite - מוגדר, מוחלט

whereabouts - מקום המצאות

sightings - פעולת ראיה, איתור

evaluate - הערכה

veracity - אמיתות, מהימנות

escorting - מלווים (מישהו)

claim - טענה

handcuffed - אזוק, כבול באזיקים

scale - לטפס (בהקשר אחר לשנות גודל, לאמוד)

simulation - הדמיה, סימולציה (בהקשר זה שיחזור)

demonstrate - להדגים

climb - לטפס

adjacent - סמוך, קרוב

emerged - הופיע, התגלה

court - בית משפט (בהקשר אחר חצר, ארמון מלך)

binder - כורכך, תיקייה

vehicle - רכב, מכונית

maintain - לקיים, להתמיד ב

eye contact - קשר עין

charge - אחריות (בהקשר אחר טעינה, מטען, עלות)

labor - עבודה, עמל, מלאכה

inmate - אסיר

described - תיאר

testified - העיד, מסר עדות

confident - בטוח בעצמו

accompanying - מלווים, מצורפים

fugitive - נמלט

hinted - רמז

officials - בכירים, נושאי משרה ציבורית

undergo - להתנסות, לחוות

revolutions - מהפכות

worthy - ראוי

responsible - אחראי

mandate - הרשאה, ייפוי כוח, מנדט

termed - קרא, כינה

operational blunder - כשל מערכתי

miserable - אומלל, עלוב

embarrassment - מבוכה

headed - עומד בראש, מוביל, בראשות

submit - להשלים

attorney - פרקליט

represents - מייצג

disturbed - מודאג, מוטרד

rejected - דחה, פסל

notion - מושג, דיעה, רעיון

a conflict of interest - ניגוד אינטרסים

counsel - פרקליט

permitted - הורשה

declined - לסרב, לדחות

obstruct - לחסום, להפריע, לחבל

circumstances - נסיבות