

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
JERUSALEM


DIRECTOR GENERAL

ג' בכסלו תשמ"ב
29 בנובמבר 1981

משרד החוץ
ירושלים

המנהל הכללי

סודי ביותר

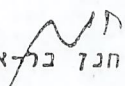
ליו"ר - 

אל : שר החוץ

הנדרון : הפלאשים

אמש בנמל התעופה מסר לי בראון מהשגרירות האמריקנית את
הרצ"ב אותו הגדיר כ- ORAL MESSAGE, בתשובה
למסר ששלח רה"מ לפני מספר ימים בנושא.

ב ב ר כ ה ,


חנן בראון
מ"מ המנכ"ל

- I have been asked to convey orally to you our best information about Falasha refugees in Sudan, in response to Prime Minister Begin's letter to the President of November 18.

- As you know, we are deeply committed to assisting Jewish refugee communities everywhere in the world. Our efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewish emigration are a top priority. We also do what we can to ease the situation of the Jewish community in Syria. Our concern for the Falashas is just as deep.

- We wish to do whatever we can to assist the movement of the Falasha, but after carefully considering the Prime Minister's request, we decided that it would not be wise to raise this subject with Numeiri, and that it could in fact turn out to be counter-productive.

- At present, the Sudanese are facilitating the departure of Falasha refugees at a steady rate. Some 800 Falasha have departed Sudan in the past two years. This number may not seem large in absolute terms, but a higher proportion of Falasha is being resettled than is the case with non-Falasha Ethiopian refugees in Sudan. Our information is that there are presently some 1500-2000 Falasha in Sudan, compared to between 300,000 and 350,000 non-Falasha Ethiopian refugees.

- Knowledge of Sudanese facilitation of Falasha resettlement in Israel is closely held within the Sudanese Government. We do not know the extent of President Numeiri's personal awareness of the assistance that Sudanese refugee authorities have been giving the Falashas. Nor do we know who among Numeiri's close advisers are aware of the situation or what their attitude would be were they to learn.

- Continued departure of the Falashas from Sudan depends, in our view, on the process continuing without publicity. We do not perceive the present Sudanese procedures as an obstacle to Falasha departures, in the context of the large Ethiopian refugee problem in Sudan. We would be interested in any information regarding actual impediments to the movement of the Falasha and would welcome a continuing exchange of information on this subject with the Government of Israel.

- We therefore concluded that it was best not to raise the issue with Numeiri and risk disclosure of the present effective arrangements to Sudanese authorities who are not already aware of the situation.