

Extradition Battle Continues

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Justice Minister Avraham Shamir contended in a written submission to the Supreme Court that William Nakash's life would be seriously endangered were he to be extradited to France to serve his sentence for the 1983 murder of an Arab in the town of Besancon, southeast of Paris.

Shamir maintained that this was the reason he ruled against compliance with the French request for extradition, a ruling challenged by legal circles in Israel. The Supreme Court will open a hearing in the matter in December. Sharir will be represented by a Justice Ministry attorney who will seek to show that his decision was reasonable and made in good faith.

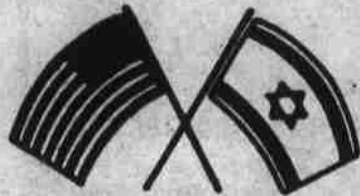
Nakash, 25, a Baal Tshuva Orthodox Jew,

has been supported in his fight against extradition by rightwing and religious circles. They uphold his claim that he murdered Abdelali Hakkar, an Algerian Arab on February 22, 1983, in an act of self-defense against anti-Semitic harassment. Nakash argued in a separate brief to the high court that the challenge to Sharir's ruling was by leftwing politicians who have no legal standing in the case.

The French court which sentenced Nakash in absentia to life imprisonment found that the murder stemmed from a quarrel between business partners and was without racial motivation. Both Nakash and his victim were allegedly associated with criminal elements.

Israel television

reported that the French Jewish community is overwhelmingly in favor of extradition. Theo Klein, head of CRIF, the central organization of French Jewry, said in an interview that failure to extradite Nakash could damage French-Israel relations. The Jewish community was depicted as being contemptuous of Nakash's claim that he was defending himself against Arab anti-Semitism.



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