

Israeli earthquake rescue team returns 'exported' scrolls to Turkey

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March 8, 2023



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The goodwill Israel earned when it sent a team of nearly 700 emergency medical responders to Turkey following the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that devastated Hatay province on February 6 evaporated after the revelation that the search and rescue team secretly exported two 200-year-old Scrolls of Esther from Antakya at the end of its six-day mission there.

After an outcry in Turkish media and reports that Ankara's Anti-Smuggling Department had begun an investigation, Haim Otmazgin, the head of ZAKA—Israel's community emergency response team most of whose members are Orthodox

Jews—handed over the Hebrew manuscripts on February 19 to Chief Rabbi Ishak Haleva in Istanbul.

The historical scrolls will likely be put on display at the [Jewish Museum of Turkey](#). The museum, inaugurated in 2001, is housed in the former Zülfaris Synagogue built in 1671 in the Galata District opposite the Golden Horn.

Read the full story [here](#).