Danish Protests Greet Israeli Envoy

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Israel's new ambassador to Denmark flew into a storm of protest in Copenhagen yesterday about his former post as chief of the Israeli intelligence service, a job in which he admitted authorising the torture of Palestinian detainees.

Human rights groups want [Denmark](http://www.theguardian.com/world/denmark) to arrest Carmi Gillon for breaching the UN convention on torture, but Copenhagen says his diplomatic immunity takes precedence, and that he has been told that he will not be arrested.

Mr and Mrs Gillon were welcomed on their arrival at Kastrup airport by a Danish foreign ministry delegation and whisked away under tight security to the Israeli embassy. Mr Gillon said he was "very happy and proud" to be Israel's new ambassador to Denmark.

Both Amnesty and the Danish MP Soren Sondergaard called for Mr Gillon to be investigated, and prosecuted for torture if enough evidence could be gathered.

Protesters converged on the Israeli embassy in the Danish capital's Hellerup suburb. About 1,500 people, many of them Palestinians, massed outside in various protests, marshalled by 60 riot police officers with dogs.

The embassy has apparently hired 24-hour protection for Mr Gillon.

The appointment prompted controversy in Denmark after Mr Gillon told local media that he had authorised torture while head of the Shin Bet security service, from 1995 to 1996.

He also said that he advocated putting "moderate pressure" on captured Palestinian militants from the Islamic Jihad and Hamas groups, a view which went down badly in Denmark, which takes pride in its humanitarian values.

Human rights groups allege that Mr Gillon was responsible for the torture of hundreds of Palestinian detainees, including Abed Samed Khariza, who was tortured to death on his third day in Shin Bet's custody.

It claimed that detainees were subjected to sleep deprivation, prolonged shackling in painful positions, and violent shaking.

Souhal Ibrahim of the anti-discrimination group Idfad, who organised one of yesterday's protests, said that his members would not rest until Mr Gillon was arrested.

"We will follow him everywhere he goes on official duties," he told the Guardian. "We expect Denmark to respect international justice. It's a serious situation when someone confesses to torture."

But a senior Danish diplomat said Mr Gillon would be treated like any other ambassador and allowed to formally present his credentials to Queen Margrethe, probably next month.

"We treat everyone alike, regardless of where they come from," the diplomat said.