

Saturday, 9 March 2013

Israel's Lieberman to stand trial on charges of fraud



Israel's hard-line former foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman will stand trial Sunday on charges of fraud and breach of trust.

Lieberman is accused of trying to advance the career of a former diplomat who relayed information to him about a criminal investigation into his business dealings.

In December 2009, Lieberman suggested Israel's former ambassador to Belarus, Ze'ev Ben Aryeh, to a post in another country, despite knowing that the latter passed secret information, "including details of a police enquiry against Lieberman," reported Israel's National News website.

Testimony given by Danny Ayalon, Lieberman's former deputy minister, showed that Lieberman "worked and pushed" for the former ambassador's appointment to be approved by the Foreign Ministry's Appointments Committee, reported the website.

Following years of investigations, charges were filed in January and Lieberman stepped down from his post a short time later. He denies any wrongdoing.

Lieberman was re-elected to parliament on a joint ticket with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but has indicated that he would quit politics if convicted in the case. That would shake up Israeli political platform given Lieberman and his Yisrael Beitenu faction are powerful players.