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Briefs

Hynes Now Seeks Mondrowitz Extradition

A change in the extradition treaty between Israel and the United States has led to a request for custody of a Brooklyn rabbi accused of sexually abusing former students, according to the Brooklyn District Attorney's office.

Rabbi Avrohom Mondrowitz has remained in Jerusalem for 23 years since leaving the country amid allegations that the former counselor and yeshiva principal molested four boys.

A spokesman for DA Charles J. Hynes on Wednesday said a request for the return for Rabbi Mondrowitz came in February, shortly after the State Department and Israel's Ministry of Justice agreed to broaden the spectrum of crimes under which extradition from Israel will be allowed.

"As soon as the treaty was changed allowing extradition on the charges he faces, we moved to have him extradited," said the spokesman, Jerry Schmetterer.

The request was first reported last week in the New York Daily News.

The exact charges on which Rabbi Mon-

drowitz is suspected are contained in a sealed indictment, Schmetterer said.

Hynes has been under consistent pressure from victims' advocates who speculated that he was afraid of losing support among Orthodox voters if he put Rabbi Mondrowitz on trial. But Schmetterer said, "We have always said over the years that we never lost sight of the case, but the treaty didn't allow for extradition." He said Israel's Ministry of Justice was now "working hard" to fulfill the request.

An advocate for victims of abuse who has been closely monitoring the Mondrowitz case, Amy Neustein, said she felt "exhilarated" by the prospect of an extradition. "I hope this will be the beginning of healing for the Jewish community, and after 20 years of political agitation from advocates and victims, justice will finally prevail," she said.

When reached by a Daily News reporter in Jerusalem, Rabbi Mondrowitz had no comment.

Staff Report