

VRIJLATING VANUNU

Groene Amsterdammer

Profiel: Mordechai Vanunu

door Anne Pek – 20 augustus 1997

De internationale vredesbeweging heeft hem inmiddels tot martelaar verheven, maar in Israel geldt hij nog steeds als een gevaarlijke gek. Deze maand is het tien jaar geleden dat het proces tegen 'atoomspion' Mordechai Vanunu begon.

Zijn rechtszaak begon tegelijk met die tegen John Demjanjuk, de man die ervan werd verdacht tijdens de oorlog als 'Iwan de Verschrikkelijke' in Treblinka huisgehouden te hebben. Ze deelden zelfs een rechter. Maar Demjanjuk mocht in 1993 naar huis, al bleef het Israelische Hooggerechtshof ervan overtuigd dat er liters joods bloed aan zijn handen kleefden, en Mordechai Vanunu zit tien jaar na dato nog steeds in zijn dag en nacht verlichte cel. Bezoek wordt slechts mondjesmaat toegelaten, contact met medegevangenen is verboden. Om hem ook op de luchtplaats van andere gedetineerden gescheiden te houden, wordt hij daar door een scherm aan het oog onttrokken. Hij is continu door bewakers omgeven; in 1995 hield hij een hongerstaking omdat zij hem onophoudelijk treiterden en uit de slaap hielden.

Vanunu heeft nog acht jaar isoleercel voor de boeg. De Israelische autoriteiten hebben meermalen te kennen gegeven dat hij geen vervroegde invrijheidstelling heeft te verwachten. Een milder regime zit er evenmin in voor deze 'spion en verrader'.

Al tijdens het proces, dat op 30 augustus 1987 begon, bleek dat de Israelische autoriteiten lak hadden aan de rechten van de man die uit gewetenswroeging openbaar had gemaakt dat de kerncentrale in de Negev, waar hij negen jaar als nachtwaker had gewerkt, in haar hele bestaan nog geen microwatt elektriciteit had opgewekt en slechts als dekmantel diende voor een ondergrondse kernwapenfabriek. De rechtszaak vond plaats achter gesloten deuren; waarnemers van Amnesty International en The International Association of Democratic Lawyers werden niet toegelaten. Zijn familie werd eveneens geweerd.

Ook in de maanden voorafgaand aan het proces hadden zich rond Vanunu taferelen afgespeeld die een rechtsstaat misstaan. Eind september 1986 was hij spoorloos verdwenen uit Londen, waar hij de Sunday Times met foto's en documenten van het bestaan van de ondergrondse fabriek had weten te overtuigen. Alles wees erop dat hij was ontvoerd door de Mossad. Maar waarheen? Pas op 9 november verklaarde de Israelische regering dat Vanunu in Israel gevangen zat. Hij was, vervolgde ze, 'niet uit Groot-Brittannië ontvoerd noch op andere wijze illegaal in hechtenis genomen en naar Israel gebracht'. Inderdaad, uit Groot-Brittannië was hij niet ontvoerd. De Mossad had hem, zo werd later duidelijk, op 30 september in Rome overmeesterd. Een verleidelijke agente had de labiele Vanunu, die al vermoedde door de Mossad gevolgd te worden, ertoe overgehaald daar met haar 'onder te duiken'. Kennelijk had de Israelische geheime dienst opdracht gekregen de goede betrekkingen met Engeland niet op het spel te zetten.

Vanunu mocht Engeland dan uit vrije wil hebben verlaten, zijn tocht naar Israel - vermoedelijk in een container op een vrachtschip - kan moeilijk vrijwillig worden genoemd. Aanvankelijk moet hij gemeend hebben dat dit reden zou zijn om hem vrij te laten en deed hij pogingen om details over zijn ontvoering aan de pers door te spelen. De Israelische autoriteiten op hun beurt deden alles om dat te voorkomen. Dat leverde scènes op van een verdachte die in een geblindeerd busje vervoerd, achter een laken naar de rechtszaal gejaagd, daar met een helm op voorgeleid en vervolgens onder sirenebegeleiding weer terug naar het busje gedreven werd.

Tien jaar na dato is nog steeds niet geheel duidelijk wat de Israelische autoriteiten ertoe drijft Vanunu zo te bejegenen. Een medewerker van het Londense Vanunu-comité merkte vorig jaar op dat zelfs Rabins moordenaar, Yigal Amir, beter behandeld werd. Zou Vanunu Israel werkelijk ernstiger schade hebben toegebracht dan Amir?

Dat is onwaarschijnlijk. De informatie die Vanunu in de zomer van 1986 aan journalist Peter Hounam van de Sunday Times overhandigde, was niet zozeer sensationeel omdat eruit bleek dat Israel over een nucleair arsenaal beschikte, als wel omdat eruit bleek hoe omvangrijk en geavanceerd dat arsenaal was. De Verenigde Staten, die al sinds 1959 van Israels atoomprogramma wisten maar al die tijd

welwillend hadden weggekeken, dichtten Israel begin jaren tachtig dertig kernkoppen toe. Het bleken er meer dan tweehonderd te zijn. Wat moest het land met zo'n enorme voorraad? En waarom draaide de produktie nog steeds op volle toeren? Werden er soms kernkoppen verkocht? Aan Zuid-Afrika wellicht, het land waarmee Israel - ook dat was de Verenigde Staten niet ontgaan - in 1979 kernproeven had gehouden?

Het waren dus verontrustende feiten die Vanunu openbaarde, maar wezenlijk nieuw waren ze niet. Waarom reageerden de Israelische autoriteiten dan zo fel? Al snel werd geopperd dat die reactie deel uitmaakte van het spel dat Israel speelde. Het land zou wereldkundig hebben willen maken dat het bij aanvallen werkelijk van zich af kon slaan, maar tegelijkertijd de mogelijkheid hebben willen openhouden de nucleaire potentie officieel te ontkennen om zo aan internationale bemoeienis te ontkomen. De ietwat overspannen ogende Vanunu was in dat scenario de ideale marionet.

Volgens de Amerikaanse journalist Seymour Hersh was de Israelische regering echter oprecht gealarmeerd toen ze lucht kreeg van Vanunu's contacten met de pers. Een paniek die naar zijn overtuiging onder andere te maken had met haar (onterechte) angst dat Vanunu ook wist dat er begin jaren tachtig nucleaire landmijnen waren geplaatst langs de Golan.

In zijn boek *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (1991) reconstrueert Hersh het theater dat in de zomer van 1986 rond de gewezen nachtwaker plaatsvond. Vanunu, eind 1985 in een bezuinigingsronde ontslagen, was juni 1986 tijdens een zoek-jezelf-wereldreis in Australië beland, had zich daar tot het christendom bekeerd en was er in contact gekomen met een Columbiaanse journalist, Oscar Guerrero. Hij vertelde hem hoe hij de afgelopen jaren had ontdekt dat zijn in naam kernwapenvrije land de zesde nucleaire macht ter wereld was en liet hem foto's zien die hij vlak voor zijn ontslag stiekem had gemaakt. Guerrero bezwoer Vanunu dat hij zijn materiaal aan de pers moest verkopen: hij kon er minstens een miljoen dollar voor vragen.

Maar Vanunu dacht niet aan geld. Hem spookten nucleaire rampscenario's door het hoofd. Niet ten onrechte. Er zijn aanwijzingen dat Israel driemaal de inzet van kernwapens overwoog: vlak voor de Zesdaagse Oorlog, in de eerste dagen van de Oktoberoorlog en tijdens de Golfoorlog. Zoals de Filistijnen samen met Samson ten onder gingen in de tempel, zo zouden de Arabieren met Israel ten onder gaan. De shoah is hier niet vreemd aan; kernwapens zijn voor Israel een manier om 'nooit meer' te zeggen.

In de overtuiging dat zijn verhaal in Israel zou leiden tot een debat over de wenselijkheid van deze politiek, besloot Vanunu zijn materiaal gratis aan te bieden aan de eerste journalist die erover wilde schrijven. Dat werd Peter Hounam van de Sunday Times. Hij nam Vanunu mee naar Londen en liet hem daar uithoren door een aantal kerngeleerden. Tegen de tijd dat zij tot de conclusie waren gekomen dat Vanunu's verhaal klopte, was de geldbeluste Guerrero echter al naar de concurrent van de Sunday Times gestapt, de Sunday Mirror.

Het noodlot wilde dat daar een redacteur zat die weleens klusjes opknapte voor de Mossad. Nog voor de Sunday Times Hounams artikel kon plaatsen, vernam de Israelische regering via deze man van Vanunu's actie. Dat niet alleen: doordat de uitgever van de Mirror niemand minder was dan Robert Maxwell, een dikke vriend van de Israelische top, kreeg de Israelische regering ook gedaan dat de Sunday Mirror op 28 september 1986 alles wat Vanunu in de Sunday Times zou openbaren, bij voorbaat als baarljke nonsens afschilderde.

Omdat Hounams krant zich niet op een dergelijke manier liet manipuleren, riep premier Peres diezelfde week nog de hoofdredacteuren van de Israelische kranten bijeen om ze te verzoeken niet te citeren uit 'een te verwachten artikel in de Sunday Times'.

En zo sloeg het Sunday-Timesartikel, dat op 5 oktober 1986 verscheen, overal in als een bom, behalve in Israel. Ook toen de Israelische media wel over de affaire begonnen te berichten, bleef het publiek opvallend kalm. Dat wil zeggen, over de boodschap. Want over de boodschapper wond men zich wel degelijk op. Vanunu was - en is - volgens de meeste Israeli's een gevaarlijke gek. Niet verwonderlijk in een land waar zelfs de vredesbeweging de 'Samson-optie' nauwelijks ter discussie stelt. Israel plaatst de nationale veiligheid nog steeds boven openbaarheid van informatie. En zolang dat het geval is, zal Mordechai Vanunu voor zijn 'verraad' boeten.

[US Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu](#)

The Vanunu Story

Mordechai Vanunu, a former Israeli nuclear technician, is now serving the last year of an 18-year sentence in an Israeli prison for blowing the whistle on his government's secret nuclear weapons program. Captured by Israeli agents on September 30, 1986, he spent more than 11 1/2 years in solitary confinement.

One of 11 children of Moroccan Jewish parents who emigrated to Israel in 1963, when he was 9 years old, Vanunu served in the Israeli army and then went to work as a young man in the Dimona nuclear "research center" in the Negev Desert near his home at Beersheba. The facility harbored an underground plutonium separation plant operated in strictest secrecy. As the years went by he grew increasingly troubled as he realized his work was part of Israel's nuclear bomb program. In 1985, before leaving Dimona, he took extensive photographs inside the factory in order to document the truth for his fellow citizens and the entire world.

Traveling through Asia with the film in his backpack, Vanunu made his way to Sydney, Australia, where he found companionship in an Anglican church social justice community with whom he shared the story of his nuclear background. In Sydney he also converted to Christianity and was baptized in July, 1986. A British newspaper, the London Sunday Times, learned of his story and sent a reporter to Sydney to check it out. The newspaper then flew Vanunu to England, where his photos and facts were further checked by British scientists familiar with nuclear weapons. Vanunu's story, published October 5, 1986, gave the world its first authoritative confirmation that tiny Israel had become a major nuclear weapons power, with material for as many as 200 nuclear warheads of advanced design.

Israeli agents got early wind of Vanunu's intentions. Even before publication of the story they had lured him from Britain, abducted him in Italy, and dumped his drugged body onto an Israeli cargo vessel bound for Israel. In the following months he was charged with espionage and treason and convicted at a closed-door trial. All legal appeals have since been exhausted, and he has been denied parole or probation.

For the first 11 1/2 years of his imprisonment Vanunu was held in solitary confinement, denied human contact except with his guards, a lawyer, a priest, and the occasional visits of his siblings. This treatment was condemned by Amnesty International as "cruel, inhuman, and degrading."

On March 12, 1998, he was released into the prison population but is still subject to many restrictions - no contact with Palestinian prisoners, no phone use and his mail is censored. In recent years, he has also been able to have occasional visits with Nicholas and Mary Eoloff, the St. Paul, Minnesota couple who adopted him in the fall of 1997.

Yet despite years of isolation, Vanunu remains steadfast in his belief that what he did was necessary and right. His release date is April 22, 2004. He is very much looking forward to his freedom and the end of his long ordeal.

Ha'aretz

Vanunu tells brothers: I have no more nuclear secrets

by Yossi Melman – 22 February 2004

Mordechai Vanunu denies that he knows additional secrets about Israel's nuclear capability. Vanunu, in conversations with his brothers Meir and Asher at Ashkelon's Shikma Prison, denied that he has the ability, or intention, to disclose additional nuclear secrets. He is serving an 18-year sentence for divulging information.

Vanunu's denial represent his first response to reports that security officials and prosecutors have been discussing the possibility of placing restrictions on him when he finishes his jail term in two months. Vanunu told his brothers he has been cut off from his former place of work at the Dimona nuclear reactor for 20 years, and that he does not have any information beyond what was published in the British Sunday Times.

Vanunu denied a report published last week in the newspaper Yedioth Aharonoth suggesting that he intends to divulge additional nuclear secrets. In this report, a former Shikma inmate said that he heard Vanunu express intentions to disclose classified information as soon as he is released; the former

inmate also said that he heard Vanunu express satisfaction following Palestinian terror attacks against Israelis.

Responding to this report, Vanunu told his brothers: "It's all fabricated."

Meir Vanunu, who traveled here recently from his home in Australia, told Haaretz that he suspects security officials are behind a systematic effort to circulate reports to denigrate his brother, and to prepare the Israeli public for the possibility that post-prison restrictions will be slapped on him.

Vanunu told his brothers that after his release, he will leave Israel immediately and try to settle in the U.S. and study at university. Other options include moving to Norway, where a university conferred on him a few years ago an honorary doctorate, or to Australia, where he lived for a few months and converted to Christianity, before he was kidnapped by Mossad agents in Rome in 1986 and returned to Israel.

Last week, British journalist Peter Hounam, who worked on the original Sunday Times Vanunu disclosure, verifying details in London and Australia, visited Israel. His piece on reports against Vanunu in Israel's media is slated for publication in the Sunday Times today.

Last night, Hounam told Haaretz that when he worked on the original disclosure, "Mordechai always refused to divulge the names of people with whom he worked in the Dimona reactor, and he refrained from revealing details about security arrangements there. He claimed that such details weren't needed for our report, and that such disclosure could put those people at risk."

Hounam added: "Vanunu was motivated by reasons of principle: he was concerned that Israel's nuclear program was, in his view, out of control, that there wasn't Knesset supervision of the program, or public monitoring of any sort. Financial reward was not his motive. The fact is that he did not receive money from us for our report."

The Sunday Times and an American source relayed funds to support Vanunu's legal expenses.

BBC News

Vanunu 'is still security risk'

9 March 2004

The Israeli authorities say convicted nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu could still threaten national security when he is released from jail next month.

Mr Vanunu was sentenced to 18 years for treason and espionage for leaking details of Israel's nuclear programme to Britain's Sunday Times newspaper.

His trial came after he was abducted in Europe by Israeli agents in 1986.

Attorney General Mordechai Mazuz said restrictions should be placed on him to stop him revealing further information.

However, he ruled out keeping Mr Vanunu in custody after he had completed his prison term.

Mr Mazuz told the law committee of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, that despite the danger of further disclosures, he opposed putting Mr Vanunu under administrative detention.

Correspondents say one possibility under discussion is withholding Mr Vanunu's passport to prevent him leaving Israel.

Secret trial

In 1986, Mr Vanunu, who had worked as a technician at the Dimona complex, gave the Sunday Times detailed information about Israel's nuclear programme that led observers to declare Israel the world's sixth-largest nuclear power.

Before he could reveal more, Mr Vanunu was lured out of hiding in London by a female Israeli secret agent who persuaded him that she wanted to meet him in Rome.

Once there, he was drugged by other Israeli agents and brought home.

Later that year, he was jailed after a trial for treason that was held in secret.

Viewed as a traitor and a spy by most Israelis, Mr Vanunu has spent most of his sentence in solitary confinement.

Guardian

The Guardian profile: Mordechai Vanunu

by Duncan Campbell – 16 April 2004

An imprisoned hero, a Nobel prize nominee, a victim, or a traitor: Israel's nuclear whistleblower represents many things to many people. How will he and his country react when the day of his release from jail dawns next week?

Nearly 18 years ago, a young Israeli nuclear technician went to London to reveal the secrets of his country's atomic weapons programme to the world. Then, lured to Italy by an Israeli secret service agent, he was drugged, gagged, bound and returned to Israel, where he was convicted of treason and espionage and sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment.

Next week, after serving most of that sentence in solitary confinement, he will finally be released.

Mordechai Vanunu is 49 and has become a symbol for the international peace movement. He has been nominated for a Nobel peace prize, and a long-running campaign has sought his release.

When he finally walks out of the gates of Shekma prison next Wednesday, to be met by scores of his supporters from a dozen different countries around the world, he will not be allowed to leave the country for at least six months, or communicate with any foreigner.

Born in 1954 in Marrakesh, Morocco, into a large and deeply religious Jewish family which emigrated to Israel in 1963, Vanunu served for three years in the sappers' unit of the Israeli Defence Force after he left school. He held the rank of sergeant and was given an honourable discharge. He then became a technician at the nuclear reactor centre in Dimona. He worked there from 1976 to 1985, when he was made redundant.

At the same time, he was studying philosophy at Ben Gurion university and already beginning to feel uncomfortable about a number of his government's policies.

He was also beginning to come to the attention of the authorities, not least because, along with four other Jewish students and five Arab students, he had formed a radical group, called Campus. He was also an admirer of his professor, Evron Pollakov, a radical who had refused to serve with the Israeli army in Lebanon and had been jailed as a result.

The security services noted Vanunu's increasing radicalism, his professed sympathy for the Palestinians, and the fact that he had links with an organisation called the Movement for the Advancement of Peace.

By now he was starting to suffer what he later described as a crisis of conscience while working at the Dimona plant, which was clandestinely producing nuclear weapons.

He started to take photos of the plant, without having made a decision to do anything with them. As he later explained: "It crossed my mind, of course, but I just wanted to think over my future and make plans to see more of the world."

Made redundant in 1985, he used his \$7,500 payoff to travel round the world, visiting Nepal, Burma and Thailand before arriving in Australia, where he booked into a hostel in the Kings Cross district and found himself odd jobs as a hotel dishwasher and later a taxi driver. "The people are friendly," he wrote to a former girlfriend. "They drink a lot of beer."

At around this time, he introduced himself to the local church, St John's, where he was made welcome by the Rev John McKnight, who was well known in the area for his work with homeless people and drug addicts. He gradually decided to convert to Christianity, being baptised as an Anglican in 1986 - a move that was to alienate him from his parents and most of his 11 brothers and sisters.

At the church, during a discussion on peace and nuclear proliferation, Vanunu divulged some of the knowledge that he had gained at Dimona. By chance, a freelance Colombian journalist called Oscar Guerrero was working at the church. He heard about Vanunu and encouraged him to tell all.

Guerrero contacted the Australian press, but without success. He headed for Europe and approached the Sunday Times, which assigned the investigative journalist Peter Hounam and the Insight team to the story. In the summer of 1986, Hounam flew to Sydney to assess the strength of the allegation that Israel, despite its denials, was secretly developing a nuclear arsenal.

"I liked him straight away," said Hounam this week as he prepared to set off to Israel for Vanunu's release. "We spent 12 days together and he answered all my questions in a very straightforward way. He spoke about his disillusionment about what was going on in Israel."

It was agreed that Vanunu should come to London, where he could talk to nuclear scientists in the peace movement and be debriefed. Hounam continued to interview him, and the paper prepared to publish the revelations.

However, before the story had even appeared in the Sunday Times, Vanunu disappeared. He had grown frustrated with a delay in publication, and was upset by a piece in the Sunday Mirror which wrongly accused him of being a hoaxer. Crucially, he had also met a woman, "Cindy", who he believed was an American tourist. She seemed to be attracted to him, and was critical of the Israeli government.

Hounam told him: "Morde, this woman might be lying, she might be a Mossad plant," but Vanunu thought she was genuine.

"Cindy" paid for air tickets to Rome, said that her sister had a flat on the outskirts of the city, and suggested that they could have a holiday there. Vanunu believed her until the moment he entered the flat and was overpowered by two men. He was injected with a drug, smuggled on to a ship and taken back to Israel. At Mossad's headquarters, he was shown a copy of the Sunday Times story which had appeared on October 5 and told: "See the damage you have done."

Convicted of treason and espionage at a closed trial, Vanunu was jailed for 18 years. The first eleven and a half were spent in solitary confinement. There was fear for his mental health as he grew increasingly despairing. For the first part of his sentence, the light in his cell was kept on all the time.

Since being allowed to mix with other prisoners, his health has apparently improved considerably. He has read voraciously, for many years studying Kant, Sartre, Camus and Nietzsche, but more recently reading historical works, and in particular the history of the US. He listens to opera on a cassette player and hopes to travel eventually, possibly settling in Minnesota with Nick and Mary Eoloff, a couple from the peace movement who have gone through an adoption process to name him as their son.

His natural parents are still alive, but it has mainly been his two brothers, Meir, a photographer in Israel, and Asher, the deputy head of a high school there, who have supported him during his long incarceration.

"It's a terrible tragedy," said Hounam. "I've been waiting since 1986 for this moment. I want him to be able to resume his life, maybe get married and have kids. It's been a scandal what has happened to him."

Although denounced as a traitor by his government and the subject of frequent allegations about his motives in some of the Israeli press, his actions have won him international support.

Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon papers in an attempt to end the war in Vietnam in the 70s, has described Vanunu as "heroic" and often refers to him as such in his public speeches.

Sabby Sagall, one of the founding members of the London-based Campaign to Free Vanunu and for a Nuclear Free Middle East, said: "He is one of the bravest and most inspirational people of our time. If Bush and Blair want to find weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, Vanunu has told them where to go."

Professor Joseph Rotblat, a Nobel peace prize winner, has also been outspoken in his support.

Among those flying to Israel this weekend are Bruce Kent, vice-president of CND, and the actor Susannah York.

Ernest Rodker, the secretary of the campaign, said: "He is in some physical danger if he remains in Israel. A talkshow host called for him to be wiped out recently."

Rodker said that Vanunu had a wide range of correspondents who had kept in touch with him over the years. He hoped that, if Vanunu wanted to come to Britain, he would be allowed to do so - Britain had a responsibility towards him because he was in effect lured away while on British soil. It was believed at the time that Vanunu was not seized in Britain because the Israeli government did not want to embarrass Mrs Thatcher.

Over the years, pleas for his release or for a less harsh jail regime met with little response. The Israeli government position was made clear in 1997 when President Ezer Weizman said at a press conference in London: "He was a spy who gave away secrets, and the fact that he did so for conviction rather than for money makes no difference. He was a traitor to his country."

In one of the hundreds of letters that Vanunu wrote in prison, he said he saw himself as a free man.

"I'll stay free, to prove that I was right to reveal the madness of the Israeli nuclear secrets. I am not a spy, but a man who helped all the world to end the madness of the nuclear race."

Life in short

Born: October 13 1954, Morocco

Life

1963: family emigrates to Israel 1971-74: military service in army 1976-1985: technician at Dimona nuclear reactor centre.

Travels in far east before arriving in London to talk to Sunday Times

September 1986: disappears.

October 1986: Sunday Times publishes his story.

November 1986: Israel admits it has him in custody.

March 1988: convicted of treason and sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment.

Vanunu on impending release

"I'll be free, I won. The gates and the locks will be opened. They didn't succeed in breaking me or driving me crazy."

Vanunu on future

"I have no interest in fighting the state. I want to live a normal life, a simple life, as a free man outside of Israel"

Israel Insider

Vanunu speaks: No need for Jewish state

19 April 2004

Two days ahead of his release from prison after serving an 18-year sentence for revealing Israel's nuclear secrets, an interview with Mordechai Vanunu was released to the Israeli media. Vanunu has appealed against the restrictions imposed on him by the state, including a ban on traveling abroad, speaking to foreigners and approaching embassies. Anti-nuclear activists plan to stage a Vanunu release party.

"We don't need a Jewish State," Vanunu, 49, told a senior defense establishment official and a Shin Bet representative when they interviewed him in his cell in Ashkelon's Shikma Prison last month. "There should be a Palestinian State. Jews can, and have lived anywhere, so a Jewish State is not necessary," Vanunu said.

The recording of the interview was turned over to Channel Ten television, which will broadcast its highlights tonight. The television channel gave copies of the tape to Yediot Aharonot and Maariv, which gave extensive coverage to Vanunu in their daily editions today.

Vanunu told his interviewers that what he had done did not constitute treason or espionage. "I am not a traitor, nor a spy like [Soviet spy Marcus] Klingberg. Although I was sworn to secrecy, I wanted to inform the world what was happening. Your big mistake was in providing me with secret information. You gave it to the wrong person. The task of GSS and Mossad psychologists is to locate those with the potential to be secret agents."

Despite past claims that Vanunu's motivation in revealing Israel's nuclear secrets was financial rather than ideological, he continues to speak out against Israel's nuclear program. "Despite all that has been published, nothing has changed. Nobody has made any demands on Israel. I want the nuclear reactor [in Dimona] to be destroyed, as was the one in Iraq."

Vanunu, who converted to Christianity during the years of his imprisonment, said he had no attachment at all to Judaism. "Both Islam and Judaism are backward religions," he said. "Christianity is progressive, and it is the religion that is developing in the world today, rather than Islam or Judaism. It's the Europeans and democracy, and that says something."

Vanunu, a former nuclear technician, denied that he was writing a book. "I write letters, I write my political opinions. Is that wrong?" Vanunu claimed that the information he has on the Dimona reactor is no longer relevant. "I've been inside for 20 years, everything has changed ... science and technology have progressed in huge leaps, so what I saw seems to me to be very old. I don't think that the Americans or Europeans need this information. They do not need Vanunu to tell them. If they want

information, they will get it ... As for myself, I just want to repeat the things I already said and that were published."

Relating to the restriction on correspondence abroad, Vanunu said that Israel cannot impose any restrictions on what he discusses in his letters in the age of computers and the Internet.

Vanunu release party planned

Vanunu's supporters plan to stage a release party in front of the Shikma Prison. "We plan to shout 'Hooray!' and shower him with flowers when he is released," Gideon Spiro, spokesman for the fringe group The Israeli Committee for Mordechai Vanunu and for a Middle East Free of Atomic, Biological, and Chemical Weapons told the Jerusalem Post.

Haaretz reported that peace activists and anti-nuclear campaigners from the United States, Britain, Japan, Ireland, Poland, Hungary and other countries have been arriving in Israel since last week. Among the supporters expected to show up for Vanunu's release are Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mired Maguire, actress Susannah York, Jeremy Corbyn, a British Labor MP and chairman of the parliament committee on human rights, and Reverend Bruce Kent, the president of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

"In Israel, Vanunu is considered a traitor because of the manipulation of the Holocaust," Spiro told the Jerusalem Post. "They say 'never again' and we do it again and again. The Israeli nuclear weapons are potential for another holocaust. Israel is a sanctuary for Holocaust survivors but it is also a nuclear Garden of Eden for weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Netwerk

Israëlische klokkenluider mogelijk vrij

19 april 2004

[...]

Interviewer: How would you describe Mordechai Vanunu?

D. Seaman (woordvoerder Israëlische regering): I have nothing much to say about him. He is a person who committed treason against his country and who served a sentence.

[...]

Voice-over: Dit is Danny Seaman, woordvoerder van premier Sharon. Hij somt de voorwaarden voor ons op.

Seaman: The first one from our perspective is that he will not be given a passport and therefore will not be allowed to leave the country. In addition to that he will not be allowed to get near 500 metres of any one of the exit ports from Israel, whether it is a landport or an airport or a seaport.

Our concern that he may seek political asylum among the foreign embassies in Israel has made very clear that he will not be allowed within a 100 metres of any extritorial places in Israel. That could mean foreign embassies, residences of embassies and vehicles of foreign embassies. And additional limitations are that he will not be allowed to leave. If he decides to live in Tel Aviv, for example, he will not be able, be allowed to leave Tel Aviv or change his residence without getting prior agreement with the local police station.

If he wants to be in contact with foreign citizens he's going to have to get the permission of the Israel police at least 24 hours in advance.

So these are the limitations. And the obvious limitation is that he will not be allowed to speak to anybody about his previous employment, the circumstances of his being brought to Israel and anything that could reveal state secrets.

Interviewer: How do you gonna check all this?

Seaman: There are ways of doing it.

Interviewer: Like how?

Seaman: I think you can use your imagination.

Interviewer: Would that mean that you put 24 hour surveillance on him?

Seaman: Whatever is necessary.

[...]

BBC News

Israel confirms Vanunu restraints

20 April 2004

Israel has set out the range of restrictions on former nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu when he is released from jail on Wednesday.

Vanunu has spent nearly 18 years in prison for revealing details of Israel's nuclear arms programme.

He had hoped to move abroad, but has been told he must not go near airports or ports or talk to foreigners without permission after his release.

Israel insists he still poses a threat to national security.

"Mordechai Vanunu has revealed state secrets about the Dimona nuclear plant. He still possesses state secrets including some which he has not revealed," the government said in a statement justifying the restrictions.

'Hostile campaign'

Israelis heard Vanunu's voice for the first time on Monday in a tape recording of a recent interrogation in which he defended his actions.

VANUNU CURBS

No passport

May not leave Israel for a year

Contact with foreigners only by permission

Barred from foreign embassies

Media interviews not permitted

Banned from discussing nuclear secrets

The prisoner was combative and defiant, saying there was nothing more for him to add about Israel's nuclear secrets and querying the need for a Jewish state.

In a BBC interview, Vanunu's brother Meir called into question the veracity of the tape and said the UK government had a duty to ensure his protection amid what he described as a "very hostile" media campaign against him.

"The [UK] government was quiet and maybe collaborated with this situation of letting him be kidnapped from Britain, and he has paid an incredible price," Mr Vanunu said.

Israel's Prisons Authority has announced that Vanunu will be freed from Ashkelon's Shikma prison at 1100 (0800 GMT) on Wednesday.

Anti-nuclear protesters have been gathering in Israel to be at the prison gates for his release.

Fresh warnings

Israel said it could have imposed much tougher post-release restrictions on Vanunu - and the length of time the current regime will remain in place depends on his behaviour.

Israeli press reports also speak of some curbs in the Vanunu case being lifted - for example the ban on the media discussing his kidnapping in Rome by Israeli agents in 1986.

A reported ban on his going near embassies in Tel Aviv has also been eased - but he cannot enter one.

On the other hand he has been warned not to tell the media about his work at Dimona and to report to the police if anyone asks for an interview.

He also may not reveal any classified information, even information that he had previously given to the Sunday Times and was published by the UK paper before his abduction 18 years ago.

Maariv International

Knesset committee to discuss Vanunu restrictions

MKs to seek answers from senior defense official regarding checks to be imposed on soon-to-be-released nuclear spy

20 April 2004

Are the State of Israel and the defense establishment seeking to exact their revenge on nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu for exposing the country's best-kept secret? That is the question MKs are set to discuss in a meeting of the Knesset's Judicial Committee scheduled for Tuesday. The committee is slated to convene following a request by MK Zehava Galon (Meretz), who asked to examine the conditions of Vanunu's release when he ends an 18-year prison term on the 21st of April.

The meeting will be attended by the Director of Security at the Ministry of Defense, Yehiel Horev, and Vanunu's brother, Meir. Representatives from the State Prosecutor's office, the Prime Minister's office, the Committee for the Release of Mordechai Vanunu and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel are also expected to take part.

The committee members will ask officials to explain why the state intends to impose restrictions on Vanunu and what are the chances of his continuing to disclose secrets that could endanger security..

MK Galon said, "I think members of the Committee are entitled to ask defense officials why they wish to restrict Vanunu after he has completed his sentence. I certainly think what he did was wrong, but it seems to me that restricting him is simply vengeance. After all, Vanunu has no more relevant information, so why does the state want to continue harassing him?"

The authorities are planning to impose a number of restrictions on Vanunu such as impounding his passport – a move that would prevent him from traveling abroad. In addition, he would be kept under constant surveillance and his phones would be tapped.

Meanwhile, President Moshe Katzav refused to take a stand on the matter. Before a scheduled meeting with Attorney-General Meni Mazuz, Katzav said: "I would rather the issue be decided by the court and not by administrative officials." In response to the President's stance, Mazuz said, "The Prime Minister reached a principled decision on the matter that was based on my opinion, which represents the Justice Ministry".

Katzav also addressed the problematics of restricting a person who has served out his sentence. "Two elements are combined here. On the one hand, we are obligated to maintain the security of the state, while on the other, we are obligated to uphold the law", he said.

ANP

Israël vreest voor nieuwe onthullingen door Vanunu

20 april 2004

JERUZALEM (ANP) - Mordechai Vanunu, de man die Israël's nucleaire geheimen naar buiten bracht en woensdag wordt vrijgelaten, beschikt over geheime informatie die hij nog niet heeft onthuld. Dat heeft het Israëlische ministerie van Defensie laten weten.

Het ministerie stelde dinsdag dat als Vanunu opnieuw uit de school klapt, dit schadelijk is voor de staatsveiligheid van Israël. Daarom zijn Vanunu een reeks restricties opgelegd. Zo mag hij een jaar lang Israël niet verlaten en niet over zijn werk praten.

Andere beperkingen zijn ingetrokken omdat ze juridisch niet deugden. Zo mag hij toch spreken over zijn ontvoering in Rome in 1986 door de Israëlische geheime dienst. Ook het verbod om in de buurt van ambassades te komen is opgeheven; hij mag ze echter niet betreden.

De 49-jarige Vanunu deed in 1986 voor de Britse krant The Sunday Times uit de doeken hoe de nucleaire centrale in Dimona in de Negevwoestijn functioneerde. Hij moest zijn indiscretie over de nucleaire activiteiten van Israël bekopen met achttien jaar celstraf.