

Ready for takeoff



Jules Glogovcsan makes final adjustments before takeoff. Glogovcsan learned to fly as a U.S. Marine, but he had not flown in 15 years until he completed a refresher course.

Five convicted in bridge collapse

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — A court convicted five Israelis of causing death and injury by negligence in a footbridge collapse that killed four Australian athletes and injured scores of others during the opening ceremony of the 1997 Maccabiah Games.

Micha Bar-Ilan, the engineer who constructed the bridge, held his head in his hands as Tel Aviv Magistrate Edna Beckenstein read the decision of the three-judge panel.

The defendants face up to four years in prison.

In addition to Bar-Ilan, the defendants included contractors Baruch Karagula and Yehoshua Ben-Ezra; Adam Mishorin, director of the Irgunit company that stages public events; and

Yoram Eyal, the chairman of the Maccabiah organizing committee.

The bridge collapsed on July 14, 1997, during the opening of the Maccabiah Games, a sporting event for Jewish athletes from around the world.

Maccabiah organizers had built a temporary footbridge across the Yarkon River into the Ramat Gan stadium near Tel Aviv. When the first athletes walked across the bridge, it buckled and about 100 people plunged into the polluted river.

Two athletes, Greg Small and Yetty Bennett, drowned. Two others, Elizabeth Sawicki and Warren Zines, died later from what were believed to be the effects of swallowing polluted river water.

Sixty-four people were injured, including Australian Sasha Elterman,

who even after several operations was not recovered.

Elterman and relatives of other Australian victims have filed suit against the World Maccabiah Authority, the state of Israel and the city of Ramat Gan, the Yarkon Authority, the state of Israel and the organization, Tom Danos, said.

The president of Australia's Maccabiah organization, Tom Danos, asked Israeli lawmakers to help the replenishment of an aid of \$500,000 that Israel had set up for the victims pay medical and legal bills.

The criminal trial began two days ago before the Tel Aviv Magistrate Court and a special three-judge court heard more than 80 witnesses over 50 sessions.



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