

Adoption agency turns to High Court for recognition

By **ESTHER HECHT**

Aleh, an Israel-based, nonprofit adoption agency, has asked the High Court of Justice to order the Justice and Social Affairs ministries to recognize it in accordance with a new law governing intercountry adoptions.

The law, which provides for the licensing of professional, nonprofit agencies to handle such adoptions, was to have come into effect more than three weeks ago. The agencies must be recognized by the two ministers to be licensed. However, the law cannot be implemented because the Justice and Social Affairs ministries have not finished formulating the necessary regulations.

Aleh – established by Na'amat, the working women's organization – also asked the court to order the ministries to produce the regulations as quickly as possible. Moreover, it asked the court to

order the ministers to recognize the agency's agreement with Romania regarding intercountry adoptions.

According to Dan Shalem, one of the attorneys representing the agency, the petition also asks that if the ministers do not recognize Aleh and do not provide the necessary regulations, that they take upon themselves the handling of the proceedings of the 25 intercountry adoptions that Aleh began and are at an advanced stage.

In May 1996 Aleh began its cooperation with the Romanian Adoption Committee and on June 2, 1996, presented its request for recognition to the ministers. On March 7, 1997, Ofra Friedman, who is chairman both of Na'amat and Aleh, wrote to the ministers again seeking their recognition.

According to the last letter, the agency already has 300 listings of prospective adoptive parents.

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