



## Intensive Care



Baby Lizan and her mother Photo: Ofer Amram



## Iraqi children arrive at Wolfson for surgery

**Ahmad, Iman and Lizan, three Iraqi children who suffer from heart defects, arrive at Wolfson Medical Center for surgery as part of humanitarian project; 'We're not afraid', says Ahmad's mother**

Meital Yasur-Beit Or

Excited and exhausted from the long journey from Iraq to [Israel](#), three Kurdish children suffering from heart defects arrived at the Wolfson Medical Center in Holon Thursday.

Ahmad, 13, Iman, 6, and one-year-old Lizan will be operated on by cardiologists in Israel as part of the humanitarian project 'Save a Child's Heart.' Since the association was founded 12 years ago, more than 1,600 children from 26 different countries, including the Palestinian Authority, have undergone surgery in Israel.

On top of the excitement surrounding the surgery and treatments, the families are also faced with the unusual situation of being in a state defined as an enemy country.



**Iman with his mother (Photo: Ofer Amram)**

Dr. Eli Gilad, head of the Children's Intensive Care Unit at the hospital, said that right now the hospital staff was focusing on making the children as comfortable as possible and would start with a small number of tests.

"Tomorrow they will undergo echography testing, after which heart surgeon Dr. Leon Sasson will recommend the best line of treatment. The operations will be sometime in the next week-and-a-half," Gilad said.

According to Dr. Akiva Tamir, a children's cardiologist at Wolfson, two of the children suffer from a hole between two heart chambers, which will be mended by surgery. The smallest child, Lizan, has a very severe defect, which often leads to sudden infant death, Tamir said.

Five children from Iraq have already been operated upon at the Wolfson Medical Center, and Ahmad, Iman and Lizan's families have heard plenty about the treatments the other children received in Israel.

"We've heard good things about Israel," Ahmad's mother told Ynet. "Thank you for inviting us to come." The treatment the children required was not available in Iraq and

Kurdistan, she said.

The children and their mothers spent a nerve-racking month-and-a-half in Jordan, waiting to receive permits to enter Israel. An escort of the group said the children bonded with each other and took care of each other like siblings.

"We're not afraid. I dream that after the surgery, we'll have a normal life," Ahmad's mother said hopefully.