

The indictment against former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert has riveted Israelis with its allegations that the ex-prime minister took envelopes of cash from supporters for his personal use. But another aspect of the August 30 indictment, one directly relevant to American Jews, has been all but lost amid the fallout:

The Israeli leader, prosecutors charge, bilked 17 prominent North American Jewish charities and pro-Israel advocacy groups for his own benefit.

American Jewish and pro-Israel organizations unwittingly ponied up tens of thousands of dollars in false travel expenses for Olmert that he then used as a personal travel fund for himself and for his friends and family, according to the indictment handed up in Israel.

In a three-year period, Olmert allegedly swindled American Jewish groups out of some \$50,000 that they paid, at the request of his travel coordinator, in double and sometimes triple travel expenses. Olmert and his family allegedly used the extra funds for private travel and vacations.

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