

Men in Holding Pattern on Dubai

The worldwide anger of the tennis world continues against the United Arab Emirates, which denied WTA player Shahar Pe'er a visa to play there this week because she's an Israeli citizen, and within days ATP officials may be joining the condemnation.

There are three Israeli men of significance on tour -- one of them seeking to play singles in Dubai when the \$2.3 million men's tournament begins there on Monday. That would be Andy Ram. Compatriots Jonathan Erlich and Dudi Sela aren't at issue. Erlich is injured and Sela is playing in the United States.

"We are at present awaiting official decision from the UAE in regards to Andy Ram's request for a visa," an ATP spokesman said Wednesday. "Clearly, this is an opportunity for thye UAE to make the right decision. We will comment further once that decision has been made."

The spin doctoring has begun in Dubai, where officials there now are posturing that Pe'er's visa was denied because her security was at risk. Dubai has for years been a kind of economic and social mecca in the Middle East. There had not been a ban on Jewish travel there until the UAE severed relations with Israel over the recent Gaza conflict.

Charles Bricker can be reached at tennis@primesportsnetwork.com