



Circus Harmony members stuck in Israel

Twelve St. Louisans are stuck in Israel because of a travel ban.

Art Holliday, KSDK 6:56 p.m. CDT July 23, 2014

ST. LOUIS – The travel ban to Israel is affecting the travel plans of 12 St. Louisans, members of Circus Harmony.

A local woman's son and niece are stuck in Israel with the acrobatics group, and are waiting to find out when they can return home.

Circus Harmony is a non-profit organization attempting to motivate social change. That's why Cheryl Maayan says she's proud of her teenaged son and niece for touring with Circus Harmony in Israel. She calls them a candle in a very, very dark time.

For the time being, photos and Skype are as close as Maayan can get to her son and niece.

"I would be very nervous if they were in an area where there was danger," she said.

The St. Louis teenagers remain in Israel, touring with other seven other elite members of Circus Harmony and their adult chaperones.

"They were supposed to arrive home tonight," said Maayan.

Reporter: "And that flight was cancelled?"

"Correct due to the FAA regulation," said Maayan.

There is uncertainty about when Circus Harmony will return to the United States, and there was apprehension for Maayan about sending him to Israel.

"Even the night before he was to go, I was on the phone with the circus director in Israel till 1:30 in the morning. Having him convince me that it would be okay, and that they wouldn't take the children to anyplace unsafe," said Maayan.

Maayan, who is head of the Saul Mirowitz Community School, returned from Israel last week.

"I experienced six sirens that sent me to a bomb shelter six times," she said.

She believes her son and niece are safe in northern Israel, and she's gratified by what the circus harmony tour represents.

"And I feel really proud that he's a part of it because it is a candle in this dark, dark time. They're helping to do something to light a little flame that hopefully will lead to a better situation in Israel," said Maayan.

There's a blog on the [Circus Harmony website](#). Wednesday's blog read, "We're all safe. We hope to fly back to St. Louis on Monday, That is the soonest we could get tickets. However, if you have a friend with a private jet who would like to bring us home, please do let us know."