

VIDEO

## Cyprus rape case teenager flies home vowing to clear her name

Anthee Carassava | [Ben Ellery](#)

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The British teenager convicted in Cyprus of making false gang rape claims returned home yesterday after she was spared a jail sentence.

The 19-year-old from Derbyshire wept and hugged her family in court following the judge's decision to give her a four-month suspended sentence. After the verdict she said: "My fight goes on," adding that "I can't wait to get home."

Last night she bumped into supporters at Larnaca airport, where her [tearful mother](#) told them: "We are glad the ordeal is over and just want to say thank you for your support. We are so grateful because it has made such a difference.



Protesters outside the courthouse in ParalimniYIANNIS KOURTOGLOU/REUTERS

The teenager said she was looking forward to England's cold weather, tucking into a "cheeky Nando's" and taking her pet dog for a walk, *The Sun* reported. She added: "I really thought it would be a custodial sentence when I arrived at the court. When the translator said four months, I thought I was going to jail. It was only when she said suspended that I realised I was finally going home."

The woman is now set to take up an unconditional offer at university studying criminology and policing.

The judge, who provoked an international outcry last week when he convicted her of falsely accusing a group of Israelis of raping her, told her yesterday that she "deserved a second chance".

About 60 supporters who had flown from Israel to protest against the conviction chanted outside the courthouse.

The judge, Michalis Papathanasiou, told Famagusta district court, in Paralimni: “I admit that I have been troubled over this. This is also a serious offence but the fact that she has missed her academic studies and her youthfulness, in prison for a month, away from her home and family have led to me deciding for the sentence to be suspended.”



Shimon Yusuf, said he hoped the teenager had “learnt her lesson”

Speaking about the judge, the woman described him as aggressive and vindictive. She said: “He was misogynistic towards me and my female defence team. They were barely allowed to ask questions and yet the prosecutor had me on the stand for six hours.”

Her lawyer said that she would request an expedited appeal against the conviction. Before the sentence the teenager’s mother told *The Times* that her [daughter would appeal](#) so that she could follow her dream of becoming a counterterrorism police officer.

Yesterday’s flight home was the first time the teenager had been allowed to leave Cyprus since making the [claim of rape](#) on July 17. She had been on the island for a week when she said that a group of 12 Israelis, one of whom she had been dating, gang raped her at a hotel in Ayia Napa.

The men and boys, aged 15 to 22, were arrested but five were released without charge when no DNA was found to link them to the incident. Others claimed that the encounter had been consensual. Yesterday a lawyer for Shimon Yusuf, 19, a Israeli semi-pro footballer with whom the teenager was initially involved, said: "She was found guilty by the court of lying and I hope with this sentence she has learnt her lesson."

During the trial the judge refused to accept evidence from a linguist that suggested her [retraction statement](#) had been dictated by police. He also did not accept a pathologist's claim that photographs of 35 bruises on her body were evidence that she had been raped. She spent a month in jail in a cell with eight other women.

The Foreign Office criticised her conviction last week. This week Dominic Raab, the foreign secretary, urged Cyprus to "do the right thing".



Yuval Newman and his son joined in the protests at the trial

### **Israelis protest in support**

- Yuval Newman, 48, and his son joined about 60 women who had flown from Israel to protest at the trial. Mr Newman said he felt sickened by the images of the Israeli men popping champagne after their return home and felt compelled to be at the court with his son, Guy, to show him "this behaviour is unacceptable". He said: "When I heard the verdict I was shocked and asked Guy if he would like to come to the sentencing. We need to have conversations with our teenagers about sexual relationships."

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/cyprus-rape-case-teenager-flies-home-vowing-to-clear-her-name-nlhv7jslh?region=global>

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