

## I passed out in fear, says Cyprus gang rape accuser

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The 19-year-old British woman covers her face at a previous court appearance in Cyprus KATIA CHRISTODOULOU/EPA

A British teenager accused of falsifying gang rape allegations in Cyprus recounted harrowing details of the alleged assault in court, describing how she wailed for help while being pinned down by a group of Israeli men before she lost consciousness.

The account by the 19-year-old is her first public testimony since she alleged that a group of 12 Israeli tourists she met in the party resort of Ayia Napa last July had raped her.

After she subsequently retracted the allegations and the Israelis were freed, she was charged with creating a “public mischief”, an offence that carries a prison sentence of up to a year. Her testimony yesterday follows a decision by the court last week to dismiss allegations by her legal team that police coerced her into retracting the rape claim.

However, in an attempt to persuade the court of her account she described how a mid-summer friendship she struck up with a 21-year-old Israeli quickly descended into an assault at a budget hotel. “I have never been so scared in my life,” the alleged victim told the court, fighting back tears. “I was screaming and shouting and hysterical. I was so scared that I passed out twice.”

She admitted having consensual sex with the 21-year-old Israeli man she identified as Sam in Ayia Napa on July 16. However, she claims that in the early hours of the following day some of his friends burst into their hotel room intent on having an orgy.

“I said I am not doing that and told them all to go,” she said. “They left for a few seconds and Sam told me to lie on the bed and he got on his knees and put them on my shoulders. They were all

shouting in Hebrew and his friends came in. I could not breathe and he was throwing my head around. His friends were coming in. They were all shouting and jeering.” She said she could not remember how many men raped her.

She recalled, however, managing to wriggle free from the control of one assailant as he reached for a condom. “I got away and put my shorts back on. There was a lot of shouting. I ran away and they were all running around me.”

The woman said she locked herself in a bathroom, where she passed out twice while waiting for police to arrive.

The Israeli tourists denied raping the woman and produced video footage that was taken during the encounter to try to disprove claims in her account.

The young woman, who missed taking up a place at university due to the incident, was remanded in custody for nearly two months after she was accused of misleading police. The prosecution argues that she had acted out of spite, humiliated by the Israelis and the video they had taken and shared without her consent.

Her legal team says she is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder — a condition, her lawyers say, that may explain why she retracted the initial rape complaint.

A verdict is expected by the end of the week.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/i-was-so-scared-i-passed-out-says-gang-rape-accuser-bkx77055g>

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