

Israeli men cleared of raping British teenager in Cyprus should be prosecuted for sex video, say lawyers

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A British teenager is accused of lying to police about being raped, but lawyers say a video shared online was revenge porn KATIA CHRISTODOULOU/EPA

Twelve Israelis cleared of raping a British teenager should face prosecution for posting a sex video on the internet, legal experts have said.

The Israelis, aged 16 to 20, were released from custody last month in Ayia Napa, Cyprus, after their lawyers supplied video of the 19-year-old woman and three of the men having sex.

The authorities said the evidence disproved her allegations that she had been pinned down, raped by all 12 and also slapped. She is in custody facing a charge of public mischief and could be jailed for up to a year if found guilty.

The 34-second video was leaked to the website Pornhub and featured prominently on its homepage this month, which criminal lawyers spoken to by *The Times* say was an act of so-called revenge porn, which under European Union law was an invasion of her privacy that subjected her to humiliation.

“These were supposed to be private . . . and now the whole world has seen them,” Andreas Pittadjis, the woman’s former lawyer, said. “The circulation of this video is much more serious than the charges the girl faces and yet nobody is doing anything about it.”

Beyond the explicit sex scenes in the video, the authorities and local media said that the men also made derogatory comments about the woman in Hebrew as they engaged in sex.

One source said: “You can hear one of the boys saying in Hebrew, ‘You’re my whore, say you are my whore.’ She doesn’t understand and asks what they are saying and one replies in English, ‘We are saying you’re sexy’. It is not very nice. It’s not how men should act.”

The campaign group Justice Abroad, which is advising the woman and her family, say police botched the investigation and failed due diligence to protect the victim. The group said that the woman withdrew her statement under duress and questioned her confession, in which she said she wanted to punish one of the former suspects for “belittling and humiliating” her.

“The confession was obtained under oppression,” Michael Polak, a lawyer for Justice Abroad, said. “She was not cautioned and was not given access to a lawyer as was her right under the European Convention on Human Rights. Further, the teenager was not told she could leave the police station. It is also understood that unfortunately none of the proceedings at the Cypriot police station were recorded.”

Only a handful EU members, including Britain, France and Germany, have revised their criminal codes to protect victims of revenge porn, although Israel outlawed it in 2014. A legal expert said: “Privacy laws are applicable across Europe and the 12 Israelis should find themselves legally accountable for breaching those codes while in Cyprus, an EU member state.”

The 12 Israelis received a big welcome on their arrival home at Ben Gurion airport. Champagne was opened to cries of *Am Yisrael Chai* (the people of Israel lives) along with “the Brit is a whore”, *The Times of Israel* reported.

Not everybody has welcomed their exoneration. Hen Artzi-Sror, a columnist for *Yedioth Ahronoth*, said scathingly: “So what we have here is a group of teenage boys, who it turns out are not rapists, just the type of boys who would engage in group sex with a drunk girl, film it without her permission and then send it around to their friends. There’s no doubt, they are obviously good boys.”

The woman is due in court on August 19 to face the public mischief charge and is subject to a defamation lawsuit, due to be filed by the Israelis’ lawyers.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/israeli-men-cleared-of-raping-british-teenager-in-cyprus-should-be-prosecuted-for-sex-video-say-lawyers-9rjrstc8q>