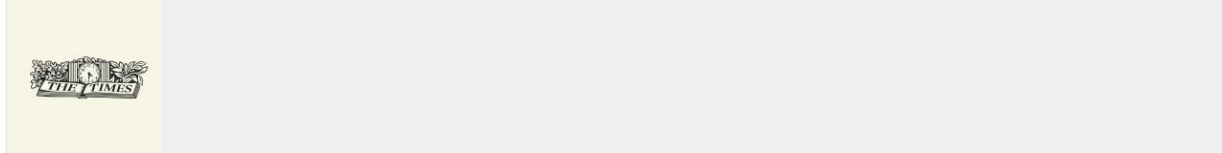


LEADING ARTICLE

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The Times view on Cyprus rape case: Rough Justice

The conviction of a British woman for lying about rape is disturbing



A young British woman was found by a court in Cyprus on Monday to have lied about being gang-raped on the island. Her case raises many issues of concern. Dominic Raab, the foreign secretary, says he is seriously concerned about the ruling and that he will raise the issue with the Cypriot authorities. Mr Raab is right to make his reservations known, publicly and promptly. The disturbing aspects of the case are legion.

The woman, now aged 19, claimed that she had been sexually abused by 12 Israeli men and teenagers aged between 15 and 22 in a hotel in the resort of Ayia Napa in July last year. Since making her complaint she has spent a period of weeks in prison and been unable to return to Britain. She has now been found guilty of “public mischief”, a crime that is punishable by a prison sentence of up to a year and by a fine equivalent to £1,500.

It is a serious step to raise questions about the probity of another country’s legal code, but the woman’s complaints demand a thorough accounting. On her account, she was having consensual sex with one of the men when the others entered the room and held her down. None of these 12 males was called to give evidence. A forensic pathologist who was a witness for the defence testified that the woman had injuries consistent with being raped and that he had identified the DNA of four people in the swabs taken from her.

The guilty verdict against the woman relied not on this expert testimony but on a retracted statement made by her when she had been held for several hours without the benefit of consulting a lawyer. The verdict is reminiscent of a long history of judicial proceedings in western societies when women who complained of rape were routinely not only disbelieved but blamed for wantonness. This young woman needs more than sympathy. She needs representation and justice.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-cyprus-rape-case-rough-justice-s9kbwcp6z>

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