

Jerusalem – Supreme Court Rejects Appeal By Rabbi Elior Chen

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Jerusalem – The Supreme Court on Thursday rejected the appeal of self-acclaimed “Rabbi” and convicted serial child-abuser **Elior Chen**.

Chen was convicted in November 2010 of being the “spiritual mentor” of a cult which committed a series of horrific acts of child abuse.

He was sentenced to 24 years in prison and many of his followers were sentenced for even longer prison terms.

Another aspect of the drama in Chen’s case was that he successfully fled the country, initially escaping arrest by police.

Chen originally flew from Israel to Canada, then immediately continued to Brazil where he apparently sought refuge with members of a vehemently anti-Zionist haredi sect in Brazil.

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In an apparently successful attempt to attain information about his whereabouts, Chen's wife Ruth and their four children were sent to Belgium in 2008, and Chen was eventually arrested and extradited from Brazil back to Israel.

Chen had appealed his conviction on several grounds. But a key issue before the Supreme Court was that his original defense lawyer, Ariel Atari, had had a conflict of interest when he represented Chen. Chen had hoped to convince the court that Atari's representation of him was sufficiently negligent to justify either an acquittal or a retrial.

Chen's current lawyer, Dror Arad-Ayalon, said that Atari had a pending indictment against him when he was supposed to be defending Chen.

This indictment in and of itself required Atari to disqualify himself, said Arad-Ayalon.

Further, Arad-Ayalon said that the indictment against himself plus the insufficient time given by the trial court for preparing the case, meant that Atari failed to put up a fight, repeatedly failing to question witnesses and challenge arguments against Chen.

The court had previously appeared disturbed by the allegations, but had also sounded skepticism about overturning the conviction and echoed earlier comments by Atari that Chen knew about all of the issues and decided on his own not to fire Atari.

Atari has also reportedly claimed that the Israel Bar Association approved his continued representation of Chen.

Chen and his followers were convicted of abusing young children with hammers, knives and other implements for months, until one child lost consciousness in March 2008.

One child suffered permanent brain damage as a result of the abuse he was subjected to at the hands of his mother and her companions, all under Chen's orders.

He is expected to remain in a vegetative state for the rest of his life.

Chen gave his followers instructions on how to "fix" the children's behavior, and "cleanse" them of their satanic possession.



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