

Pedophile gets 25-year jail sentence

Andalusian Orchestra vocalist raped female relative for years. A 44-year-old man from central Israel was sentenced on Thursday to 25 years in prison for raping a female relative - beginning when she was ten years old, then continuing on a regular basis for several years – and committing lewd acts against the girl's sister.

The man, Ephraim Yegudayev - a vocalist who performs with the Israeli Andalusian Orchestra, a well-known classical-traditional Ashdod-based ensemble specializing in Sephardic and Andalusian tunes - was sentenced for rape, sodomy and sexual assault. He was also ordered to pay the woman he had raped repeatedly as a girl a sum of NIS 100,000 in compensation.

According to the verdict, Yegudayev first assaulted his relative when she was ten years old, exploiting every opportunity to get her alone in order to rape her or sexually assault her – even when she was babysitting his own children. The judges also described the severe emotional distress caused to the girl whose "childhood was robbed and life ruined." Both the defendant and the other relative whom Yegudayev assaulted, threatened and terrorized – also under 14 at the time of her assault – grew up in haredi families.

'The accused did not exercise mercy or compassion'

One lawyer who spoke to Israel Radio about the case further elaborated on the girl's anguished childhood, saying that she had grown up in the shadow of Yegudayev's crimes and had grown so accustomed to them that they did not seem questionable to her.

She became suspicious, the lawyer said, only when she attended a premarital instruction course in her haredi community. She is married, but finds it difficult to overcome her ordeal.

“The accused acted on his sick, insatiable sexual desire and did not exercise any measure of mercy or compassion,” the judges wrote. “Such a behavior pattern is not unfamiliar to the defendant.”

Yegudayev had previously been indicted for several counts of pedophilia and sexual assault of minors. The accused, wrote the judges, committed the crimes while “exploiting his position and authority ... only to unleash his twisted inclinations.”

5-year-old: Bus driver raped me on the way home from kindergarten

In other news, a 56-year-old school bus driver from northern Israel was arrested overnight Wednesday after a five-year-old girl told her mother he had raped her several times when she was riding the bus by herself.

The girl complained that the driver had touched her in a sexual manner on her way home from kindergarten. The mother immediately filed a complaint to Taibe police.

During questioning, the girl said that the driver had assaulted and raped her on several different occasions when she had been alone on the bus.

Police launched an investigation.

