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Haredi Man Convicted of Sexually Assaulting Minors in Jerusalem

Hezkiyahu Kahalani,

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incest assault,
and was sent to
prison again for
three years in 2001
after he sexually
abused two minors.

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The Jerusalem District Court sentenced Hezkiyahu Kahalani, a convicted sex offender, to 10 years in prison Monday after he was found guilty of molesting three children between the ages of 10-12, two of them siblings.

In addition to the 10 years in prison, Kahalani was put on two additional years of probation and required to pay 30,000 NIS in damages to the children's families, 10 thousand NIS per family.



Haredi protesters in Jerusalem. Credit: Emil Salman

Kahalani, a member of the ultra-Orthodox Haredi community, allegedly molested the children over the course of two years between 2008 and 2009. Before molesting them, Kahalani

would allegedly
gain the
children's trust
by giving them
donkey rides and
letting them pet
kittens.

Once he was sure
the children felt
safe with him,
Kahalani would
lead them to an
abandoned
building in Mea
Shearim, an
ultra-Orthodox
Jerusalem
neighborhood,
and allegedly
molest them.

In Kahalani's
verdict, Judges
Tzvi Segal,
Moshe Drori and
Moshe Cohen
wrote that the
children who
were victims
"grew up in a
religious
environment, in

a conservative and closed society. They trusted the defendant and believed he was their friend, and he took advantage of their innocence and abused them behind closed doors."

Kahalani was imprisoned in 1992 after being convicted of indecent assault, and was sent to prison again for three years in 2001 after he sexually abused two minors.

"The case at hand is particularly severe. The defendant is dangerous, he has a criminal

background and he has shown no motivation or intent to rehabilitate himself," the judges wrote in Kahalani's sentence.

Kahalani's attorney, Hanan Rubenstein from the Public Defender's Office, claimed that the police and prison authorities were biased against him because of Kahalani's Haredi lifestyle and his opposition to Israel's secular government.



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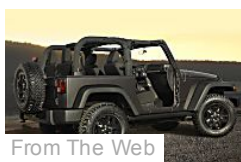
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