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Jerusalem Rabbinic Court Allegedly Ignored Testimony on Pedophile Rapist

Court reportedly heard testimony about ultra-Orthodox elementary school teacher 18 months before police found out and indicted him.

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The Jerusalem Rabbinic Court allegedly ignored evidence of serious sex crimes perpetrated by a teacher in an ultra-Orthodox elementary school for boys, Haaretz has learned.

The police found out about the alleged crimes only 18 months after the religious court was first informed of them, and indicted the teacher last month.

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The teacher, Gil Goren, 45, lived and taught in a settlement in the northern West Bank. In 2010 a soldier living in the community said that Goren had raped him when he was a teen, but initially refused to file a police complaint.

The settlement investigated the matter internally, after which Goren moved to Petah Tikva.

However, a few months ago the soldier came forward and filed a police complaint, and the police also found another teen who said Goren had raped him, leading to Goren's indictment.

However, Haaretz learned that in 2010 Goren's wife sought a divorce in the Jerusalem Rabbinic Court with rabbinic judges Avraham Sheinfeld, Eliyahu Abarjil and Mordechai Toledano presiding.

The minutes of the case were declared confidential by judicial order but two people who saw the material confirmed to Haaretz that the court knew Goren's wife asked for a divorce due to his alleged sexual offenses.

The judges ordered psychological testing for Goren and that he see a probation officer to determine whether he was fit to see his children.

According to the law, a person who knows of a crime against a minor or individual considered legally helpless, must report the crime to the police or a social worker.

The rabbinic courts administration confirmed that the first hearing in the divorce case took place in December 2010. When Goren's wife was asked whether she thought her children would be in any danger from their father, she said no, the courts administration said.

A spokesman also said that the divorce was finalized in January of this year and included visitation rights for Goren.

Nir Alfasa, the Public Defender's Office attorney representing

police were not involved, since the complaint was made anonymously."

Alfasa said his client would respond to the charges in court and that for the past two years "harmful behavior had not repeated itself."



A rabbinical court in Jerusalem (illustration). Credit: Tess Scheffan



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