

Beat: News

Italian court overturns Amanda Knox acquittal, orders retrial

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USPA News - Italy's top criminal court on Tuesday ordered a retrial of American student Amanda Knox and former boyfriend Raffaele Sollecito after overturning their 2011 acquittal for the murder of a British student, but it appeared unlikely the country could force her to return for new hearings. The Supreme Court of Cassation, which is usually seen as the major court of last resort, overturned Tuesday the pair's acquittal in an appellate court in 2011.

The judges ruled both Knox and Sollecito should stand trial again for the murder, and said the retrial will take place at the appeal court in Florence. Italian courts usually take weeks or months before they publish their reasoning behind rulings, and as such few other details were immediately available. The court also upheld Knox's defamation conviction for falsely accusing her employer, bar owner Patrick Lumumba, of the murder. Knox, who is now 25, was initially sentenced to 26 years of imprisonment after being found guilty of murdering 21-year-old British flatmate Meredith Kercher in the Italian city of Perugia in November 2007. Kercher's body was found semi-naked and with her throat slashed in what appeared to be a burglary. Prosecutors claimed Knox, Sollecito and Rudy Guede, a drifter and small-time drug dealer, had started a sex game on the day of the murder, but that Kercher refused to participate. Sollecito, who was initially sentenced to 25 years in prison, was claimed to have held Kercher while Knox stabbed her to death. Guede was sentenced to 16 years of imprisonment. Knox described Tuesday's ruling as "painful" and said the prosecution's theory of her involvement had previously been revealed to be unfounded. "I believe that any questions as to my innocence must be examined by an objective investigation and a capable prosecution," she said. "The prosecution responsible for the many discrepancies in their work must be made to answer for them, for Raffaele's sake, my sake, and most especially for the sake of Meredith's family. Our hearts go out to them." The American student said she will continue to face the legal battle to prove her innocence, but it appears unlikely that Italy could force Knox to return for the new hearings. "No matter what happens, my family and I will face this continuing legal battle as we always have, confident in the truth and with our heads held high in the face of wrongful accusations and unreasonable adversity," she said.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

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