

Teen Nearly Dies After 7-Day Crucifixion-Style Exorcism

Four former members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, believing they were performing an exorcism on a teenager, are on trial in Paris facing charges of kidnapping, acts of torture and barbarism, AFP reported this week.

The four, including the victim's former boyfriend, are accused of tying up the 19-year-old Cameroonian girl in a crucifixion-type position and keeping her bound for seven days to a mattress. The four men's attorney said they were "acting in faith" by performing an exorcism because they were convinced she had been possessed by the devil.

According to the AFP report, the accused all say the victim consented to the exorcism, and they deny any acts of violence.

"To them she was possessed. That is why they did not call a doctor," Jacques Bordais, the group's attorney, says. "You call a doctor when someone is sick; when someone is possessed, you exorcise them."

Police found the victim, who testified that her captors kept her alive by feeding her small amounts of oil and water, at a housing estate in the southern suburbs of Paris. Upon her rescue, she was emaciated, dehydrated and in a state of shock, showing signs of having been beaten.

The four men had all been expelled from the Seventh-day Adventist Church last year. The church, according to the AFP report, stressed that this type of exorcism is not justified by any of its doctrines.

The victim accused her former boyfriend, Eric Deron, as the leader of the group. The AFP report says prosecutors say he had delusions of being a prophet on a divine mission.