

FOOD THEFT

An Italian court has ruled that food theft brought about by hunger is not illegal. Italy's highest court of appeal, the Supreme Court of Cassation, threw out the conviction of a homeless Ukrainian man, Roman Ostriakov, who was sentenced to six months in jail for stealing cheese and a sausage worth \$4.50. Mr Ostriakov was also fined \$115 by the court. His lawyers initially appealed for a reduction in that fine and were surprised when the whole conviction was quashed. The court said Mr Ostriakov taking the food, "does not constitute a crime" because he stole a small amount of food out of desperation. The court of appeal ruled that stealing small amounts of food to stave off hunger is not a crime.

Many people hope Mr Ostriakov's case will highlight the extent of poverty and homelessness in Italy. They also believe the ruling may mean other hungry people who are arrested for shoplifting will not be convicted. Criminal lawyer Maurizio Bellacosa said the Ostriakov case, "is a new principle, and it might lead to a more frequent application of the state of necessity linked to poverty situations". The court ruled in a statement that: "People should not be punished if, forced by need, they steal small quantities of food in order to meet the basic requirement of feeding themselves." Italy's La Stampa newspaper said: "The court's decision reminds us all that in a civilised country, no one should be allowed to die of hunger."

1. THEFT: Rank these with your partner. Put the worst instances of stealing at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- food when hungry
- neighbour's wi-fi
- illegal movie downloads
- not buying a train ticket
- clothes when cold
- medicine when ill
- flowers from a garden
- eating chips in a supermarket

1. TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| a. The court in the article is Italy's highest court of appeal. | T / F |
| b. The man who stole the food was from Milan. | T / F |
| c. The man was given a \$1,000 fine. | T / F |
| d. The court said it wasn't a crime because it was a small amount. | T / F |
| e. People hope the case will put a focus on homelessness in Italy. | T / F |
| f. A judge said no one would be arrested for stealing food. | T / F |
| g. A lawyer suggested more people might be let off for stealing food. | T / F |
| h. An Italian newspaper disagreed with the court's decision. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. ruled | a. degree |
| 2. threw out | b. amount to |
| 3. jail | c. quantity |
| 4. constitute | d. decreed |
| 5. desperation | e. simple |
| 6. extent | f. rule |
| 7. case | g. prison |
| 8. principle | h. rejected |
| 9. amounts | i. legal action |
| 10. basic | j. hopelessness |

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

- 1) How high was the court that made the decision?
 - a) quite high
 - b) about 27 metres
 - c) the second highest
 - d) the highest court of appeal
- 2) Where was the man who stole the food from?
 - a) Italy
 - b) Ukraine
 - c) Peru
 - d) England
- 3) How much was the food he stole worth?
 - a) \$54 b) \$45 c) \$5.40 d) \$4.50
- 4) How much was the man initially fined by the court?
 - a) \$11,500
 - b) \$1115
 - c) \$115 d) \$11.50
- 5) What did the court say the man stole the food out of?
 - a) a restaurant
 - b) a bag
 - c) a taxi
 - d) desperation
- 6) What do people hope the case will highlight in Italy?
 - a) crime
 - b) health
 - c) poverty
 - d) food
- 7) For which crime might people not be convicted?
 - a) shoplifting
 - b) pickpocketing
 - c) fraud
 - d) assault
- 8) What is Maurizio Bellacosa's job?
 - a) chef
 - b) charity worker
 - c) lawyer
 - d) police officer
- 9) What was the basic requirement for people mentioned in the article?
 - a) following the law
 - b) feeding themselves
 - c) giving to charity
 - d) compassion
- 10) What is the name of the newspaper that spoke about the case?
 - a) La Stampa
 - b) La Gazzetta
 - c) La Italia
 - d) La Journal

CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORD

An Italian court has *ruled / riled* that food theft brought about by hunger is not illegal. Italy's highest court of *appealing / appeal*, the Supreme Court of Cassation, threw *up / out* the conviction of a homeless Ukrainian man, Roman Ostriakov, who was sentenced *to / for* six months in jail for stealing cheese and a sausage *worthy / worth* \$4.50. Mr Ostriakov was also *funded / fined* \$115 by the trial court. His lawyers *initially / initials* appealed for a reduction in that fine and were surprised when the whole *convicted / conviction* was quashed. The court said Mr Ostriakov taking the food, "does not constitute a crime" because he *stole / stealing* a small amount of food out of desperation. The court of appeal ruled that stealing small amounts of food to *stave / staff* off hunger is not a crime.

Many people hope Mr Ostriakov's case will *lowlight / highlight* the extent of poverty and homelessness in Italy. They also believe the ruling may mean other hungry people who are arrested *from / for* shoplifting will not be convicted. Criminal lawyer Maurizio Bellacosa said the Ostriakov *cease / case*, "is a new principle, and it might lead to a more *frequently / frequent* application of the state of *necessity / necessary* linked to poverty situations". The court ruled in a statement that: "People should not be *punishment / punished* if, forced by need, they steal small *qualities / quantities* of food in order to meet the basic *requires / requirement* of feeding themselves." Italy's La Stampa newspaper said: "The court's decision *rescinds / reminds* us all that in a civilised country, no one should be allowed to *die / death* of hunger."

Talk about the connection between each pair of words in italics, and why the correct word is correct.