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Lucia Bozzi, Venerando Marano, Giuseppe Pignatone and Carlo Bonzano, judges of the Vatica

Lucia Bozzi, Venerando Marano, Giuseppe Pignatone and Carlo Bonzano, judges of the Vatican City State court, listen to presentations March 9, 2023, during the trial of Cardinal Angelo Becciu and nine other defendants on charges of financial malfeasance. The trial is being held in a makeshift courtroom at the Vatican Museums. (CNS/Vatican Media)

by Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

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Vatican City — September 26, 2025
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The Vatican City State Court of Appeals handed a major victory to Cardinal Angelo Becciu and eight other defendants convicted in late 2023 of crimes related to the Vatican's huge financial loss on an investment property in London.

While all the defendants are appealing their convictions, the Vatican prosecutor's office also had filed an appeal, asking the court to reconsider the three dozen counts that were dismissed or on which the defendants were found not guilty at the first trial.

In the Vatican's civil legal system, like in Italy, both the prosecution and defense can file an appeal.

With Archbishop Alejandro Arellano Cedillo presiding, the court ruled Sept. 25 that Prosecutor Alessandro Diddi's appeal request was "inadmissible" on the grounds of its form, timing and substance.

As Vatican News reported, the court accepted the defense attorneys' arguments that Diddi had not submitted a proper formal appeal but merely a copy of his closing arguments from the original trial and that he did not meet the deadlines established by the Vatican Code of Criminal Procedure.

The appeals court will move on to consider the appeals filed by the defendants.

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The rejection of the prosecution's appeal, Becciu told reporters in the courtroom, "is a good sign, but there's still a way to go."

Claudio Urciuoli, the attorney for defendant Raffaele Mincione, told reporters afterward that with the acquittals at the first trial being final, "things can only get better, not worse."

"It's no longer the trial of the century," said Mario Zanchetti, the attorney for Italian businessman Gianluigi Torzi.

The first trial revolved around the Vatican's investment in a property in London's chic Chelsea district. But the way the deal was structured and restructured ended up costing the Vatican as much as $200 million. Becciu was the No. 3 official at the Vatican Secretariat of State when the property deal, using money invested by the secretariat, was first made in 2014.

At the original trial, Becciu was sentenced to five years and six months in prison on two counts of embezzlement and one of aggravated fraud, but he was found not guilty of abuse of office or witness tampering.

Five other defendants were sentenced to jail time ranging from three years to seven years and were ordered to pay the Vatican millions of dollars in damages. Three defendants were found guilty on lesser charges and fined.