

Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — A New Jersey appeals court has rejected a 15-year prison sentence for a man convicted of biting off a police officer's fingertip.

Rafael Pichardo (puh-SHAR'-doh) was convicted of aggravated assault for attacking Atlantic City officers during a 2007 confrontation at the Casbah

nightclub in the Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort.

While resisting arrest, Pichardo bit Officer Dean Dooley, severing the top of his gloved left index finger.

A judge imposed the 15-year term.

But an appellate panel ruled Tuesday it was too severe and ordered Pichardo be resentenced. No date has been set.

Pichardo is from New York City. He remains in prison.

Defense lawyer Peter Willis had promised to appeal the day his client was sentenced in August 2009.

The bitten officer was able to return to work.

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