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DENPASAR — An Australian businessman was yesterday handed a seven-month jail term for using hashish in Bali.

But Giuseppe Serafino will be released from prison in two months as his sentence was reduced by the amount of time he has already spent in custody since his arrest in October.

The 49-year-old, who ran a bar in Bali, was detained for using hashish on the island with British former war correspondent David Fox, 55. Fox was handed the same jail sentence last week, and is also set to be released in May.

The men could have been jailed for several years under Indonesia's tough anti-drugs laws, which include the death penalty for traffickers, but judges ruling on the cases said the pair had admitted their wrongdoing and acted politely.

Serafino and Fox were caught with several grams of the drug each. Serafino told his trial that he had been using hashish for nine years to help alleviate the symptoms of mouth cancer.

Handing down the verdict in his case, presiding judge Erwin Djong told the court in Denpasar he had been found "convincingly guilty of committing the crime of illegally using narcotics".

Serafino's lawyer Desi Widyantari said her client would not appeal.

Prosecutors had recommended a one-year jail term for both Serafino and Fox.

Authorities raided Serafino's house and found about 7gm of hashish, after which the Australian said Fox had helped him buy the drugs.

Fox was then arrested and police found small amounts of the drug. Fox argued during his trial that he used hashish to relieve post-traumatic stress disorder that he developed while covering numerous conflicts. — AFP