# Karim Khan faces sexual misconduct allegations amid ICC war crimes probe into Israel



In recent weeks, Karim Khan KC, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), has found himself at the centre of a storm following allegations of sexual misconduct alongside his high-profile push for war crimes charges against Israeli officials. Mr Khan, who has held the prosecutor role since 2021, has been a prominent figure in the international legal landscape, notably seeking arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his then-defence minister, Yoav Gallant, for alleged crimes in Gaza.

Reports unearth that these significant legal pursuits coincided with the emergence of serious accusations against Khan himself. According to investigations, including a recent piece in *The Wall Street Journal*, Khan allegedly urged a female colleague, referred to as a complainant, to withdraw her allegations of sexual assault. He reportedly contended that proceeding with the complaint would have dire consequences for both her family and the justice efforts for Palestinians. Significant claims suggest he stated, "The casualties will unfortunately be three: You and your family, me and my family and the justice of the victims." Such manipulative assertions raise grave concerns regarding not only his ethical conduct but also the integrity of the ICC.

The complainant alleges repeated sexual advances from Khan during professional engagements, described as coerced physical interactions occurring at various international locations. Her allegations paint a troubling image of a persistent pattern of behaviour that reportedly spanned multiple countries, including Colombia, Congo, and France. Documented interviews with UN investigators revealed that she felt 'trapped' by Khan’s alleged conduct, which she recounted in submissions to the ongoing investigation.

Khan's lawyers have categorically denied these claims, labelling them unfounded and asserting that he had informed the US State Department of his legal intentions regarding Netanyahu prior to the emergence of these allegations. Nevertheless, the seriousness of the allegations has prompted the UN to scrutinise whether Khan attempted to intimidate those who reported his purported misconduct, a matter of significant concern given his influential role within the ICC.

These unfolding events are set against a backdrop of Khan's challenging interactions with the ICC’s investigations into Israeli actions during the ongoing Gaza conflict. While aiming to hold Israeli leaders accountable, Khan faced fierce backlash from various quarters, including international leaders. In one notable instance, former US President Joe Biden made a statement dismissing any moral equivalence between Israel and Hamas, while Prime Minister Netanyahu condemned the arrest warrants as a "moral outrage."

The legitimacy of the ICC's inquiries into alleged war crimes by Israel has faced scrutiny, with Khan criticising Israeli authorities for their lack of earnest investigation into these claims, asserting that the ICC acts as a "last resort" when national judicial mechanisms fail. Historical precedent shows that Israel has engaged in covert actions against the ICC, including threats and surveillance aimed at deterring prosecutions of its leaders amid ongoing investigations regarding actions taken in occupied territories.

Adding another layer to the complexity of Khan’s position, the US has recently imposed sanctions on him for his efforts against Israeli officials, signifying heightened tensions between American policy and the ICC. This political backdrop underscores not only the challenges Khan faces in seeking justice for alleged war crimes but also the weight of the allegations against him concerning personal misconduct.

The dual narratives of pursuing justice for Palestinians while confronting serious allegations of personal misconduct create a precarious situation for Karim Khan. As investigations into both his professional conduct and the ICC's scrutiny of Israel unfold, the global community watches closely. The implications of these developments not only affect Khan's future and the ICC's authority but could also influence international discourse surrounding accountability in wartime actions.

The gravity of these issues raises critical questions about the ethical responsibilities of those in positions of power, as well as the mechanisms designed to ensure justice in the complex arena of international law.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
2. Paragraphs 3, 7
3. Paragraphs 3, 7
4. Paragraphs 7
5. Paragraphs 4, 8
6. Paragraphs 4
7. Paragraphs 7, 8

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14700901/British-law-chief-war-crimes-Israel-Gaza-silence-sex-assault.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/icc-prosecutor-sees-no-real-effort-by-israel-probe-alleged-gaza-war-crimes-2025-01-17/> - In January 2025, ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan criticized Israel for not adequately investigating alleged war crimes during the Gaza conflict. He stated that Israel had not made a genuine effort to scrutinize these allegations, emphasizing the court's role as a last resort when national authorities fail to act.
3. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/17/icc-prosecutor-sees-no-real-effort-to-probe-gaza-crimes-says-icc-prosecutor> - ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan defended the court's issuance of arrest warrants for Israeli leaders, asserting that Israel had not made 'any real effort' to investigate war crimes allegations. He expressed hope for future cooperation from Israel in addressing these serious charges.
4. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/05/29/israel-s-shadow-war-against-the-icc-between-threats-and-surveillance_6673015_4.html> - Over the past decade, Israel has conducted a covert campaign against the ICC to prevent prosecution of its leaders for alleged crimes in occupied territories. This included threats, surveillance, and intimidation targeting ICC officials, despite the court's ongoing investigations into these allegations.
5. <https://www.apnews.com/article/4a77229e4eacd288d6dfc331b9f51ec5> - In March 2025, the United States imposed sanctions on ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan in response to the court's arrest warrants against Israeli officials. The sanctions blocked Khan from conducting business with Americans and restricted his entry to the U.S., highlighting tensions between the U.S. and the ICC.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2024/oct/27/icc-prosecutor-karim-khan-allegedly-tried-suppress-sexual-misconduct-claims> - Allegations have emerged that ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan attempted to suppress claims of sexual misconduct against him. Reports suggest that he tried to prevent the woman from filing a formal complaint, raising serious concerns about his conduct and the integrity of the ICC.
7. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/uk/2024/08/26/icc-has-power-to-arrest-israelis-for-war-crimes-in-gaza-says-chief-prosecutor/> - ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan emphasized the court's authority to arrest Israeli leaders for alleged war crimes in Gaza. He urged judges to expedite proceedings, stating that delays would adversely affect the rights of victims seeking justice for the atrocities committed.