

Convicted paedophile Jeffrey Epstein is facing a new criminal investigation and is involved in a civil suit with a lawyer

The Duke of York could be asked to give evidence in two separate legal cases involving Jeffrey Epstein, his paedophile friend, The Daily Telegraph has learnt.



Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell stayed at Sandringham as guests of the Duke Photo: ALBANPIX/GEOFF PUGH

By [Jon Swaine](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/jon-swaine/) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/jon-swaine/>), in Palm Beach, Florida

10:00PM GMT 10 Mar 2011

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Lawyers for a Florida attorney who is being sued by Epstein have disclosed that they want to take a statement from the Duke because they believe he may be able to shed fresh light on Epstein's alleged sex offences.

Meanwhile the FBI has indicated that it will reopen its criminal investigation into Epstein after receiving new information. He was convicted in 2008 for soliciting an under-age girl for prostitution. Sources in America have said the FBI could ask the Duke to give evidence as part of the new investigation.

Epstein, 58, was sentenced to 18 months in prison after admitting two sex offences as part of a plea bargain deal. But allegations were made against him by as many as 40 girls, of whom 17 have settled civil claims they brought against the billionaire.

Epstein is himself suing Brad Edwards, a lawyer for several of the girls. Epstein alleges that Mr Edwards was linked to a fraud committed by a former colleague — a claim dismissed by the local bar association — and that his clients' cases against Epstein were therefore invalid.

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[Further scrutiny on Duke of York over lobbying \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/theroyalfamily/8372507/Further-scrutiny-on-Duke-of-York-over-lobbying.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/theroyalfamily/8372507/Further-scrutiny-on-Duke-of-York-over-lobbying.html)

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[Duchess negotiated debt pay-off for several months \(http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/theroyalfamily/8366981/Duchess-of-York-spent-nine-months-negotiating-with-convicted-paedophile-Jeffrey-Epstein-to-pay-off-her-debts.html\)](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/theroyalfamily/8366981/Duchess-of-York-spent-nine-months-negotiating-with-convicted-paedophile-Jeffrey-Epstein-to-pay-off-her-debts.html)

Mr Edwards, meanwhile, claims Epstein is abusing the legal system by seeking to intimidate other lawyers and girls, and is counter-suing the financier for substantial damages.

He is seeking to prove to the court that Epstein did sexually abuse dozens of children, allegedly at his Florida mansion in most cases, where the Duke enjoyed holidays and massages. Jack Scarola, the lawyer representing Mr Edwards, told The Daily Telegraph: "We would be very keen to speak with Prince Andrew, given his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein.

"We want to obtain additional details on the scope of Mr Epstein's alleged sexual abuse of children — when, where, how frequently and the extent to which it involved the transport of children inside and outside the United States for sex.

"We have reason to believe that Prince Andrew has been in the company of Mr Epstein while Mr Epstein has been in the company of under-aged children."

Asked whether he had any reason to suspect the Duke had been present while under-age girls were abused, Mr Scarola said: "That's not something I can publicly comment on. We have an ongoing investigation and an ongoing prosecution of a civil case. These are not matters of public record and I am restricted in what I can say on the public record."

There is no allegation that the Duke had sexual contact with any of the girls or that he was aware of any wrongdoing by Epstein.

Mr Scarola added: "Deposition testimony has been taken generally concerning Mr Epstein's association with many high-profile people."

Documents filed in the case so far include Epstein's private phone directory — which included numerous contact details for the Duke, along with masseuses and dozens of other prominent friends. They also include flight logs for Epstein's private jet, which detailed a trip the Duke took with him in 2000 and a 1998 meeting between Epstein, the Duchess of York and Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie.

Mr Scarola said he anticipated "significant procedural impediments" in obtaining sworn deposition from the Duke, due to his ability to claim diplomatic immunity. He said he may be forced to turn to international law.

"The Hague Convention specifically outlines procedures that must be followed for the citizen of one country to be compelled to give testimony regarding a case pending in another," he said.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman declined to comment.

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