



Norway

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Two senior Norwegian diplomats being investigated over Epstein links

Financial crimes squad investigate husband and wife in connection to alleged relationship with late sex offender

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Two high-profile diplomats are under investigation by Norwegian authorities in connection with their relationship to the late sex offender [Jeffrey Epstein](#).

Norway's financial crimes squad, Økokrim, is investigating Mona Juul, who resigned as ambassador to Jordan and Iraq on Sunday, on suspicion of gross corruption while working at the ministry of foreign affairs, it said on Monday.

It is investigating her husband, Terje Rød-Larsen, a former diplomat and former president of the International Peace Institute (IPI), on suspicion of complicity in gross corruption.



📷 Terje Rød-Larsen in a photograph from the Epstein files released by the US Department of Justice. His phone shows a social media page of a woman in bikini that has been redacted. Photograph: US Department of Justice

Pål Lønseth, head of Økokrim, said: “We have opened an investigation to clarify whether criminal acts have occurred. We are facing a comprehensive and, by all accounts, long-term investigation.”

“Among other things, Okokrim will investigate whether [Juul] received benefits in connection to her position,” Lønseth added in a statement.

Lawyers for both Juul and Rød-Larsen have said their clients are cooperating with investigators and are confident the allegations will be found to be without merit.

The couple, who were part of a small group of diplomats facilitating the 1993-1995 Oslo accords, are the latest heavyweight Norwegians to make the headlines over the Epstein files.

The revelations have sent shockwaves through the Nordic nation, chiefly because of the US financier's relationship [with Crown Princess Mette-Marit](#), but also because of his ties to other notable figures. Økokrim, the national authority for investigation and prosecution of economic and environmental crime, has already opened an investigation into Thorbjørn Jagland, a former Labour prime minister of Norway, former chair of the Norwegian Nobel committee and former secretary general of the Council of Europe.

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Appearance in the files does not in itself imply wrongdoing or illegal behaviour. Mette-Marit has expressed “deep regret” over her relationship with Epstein, [who killed himself](#) in jail in 2019 as he awaited trial for sex crimes against minors, acknowledging “poor judgment”.

Released by the US Department of Justice, the files appear to show that Juul and Rød-Larsen's two children were bequeathed \$10m by Epstein and that Rød Larsen was appointed executor of Epstein's will in 2017 (this was later revoked).

It appears from the files that they visited Epstein's private island with their children in 2011, with Rød-Larsen later thanking the American for the trip and describing the island as “totally unique”. “We all loved it!” Rød-Larsen wrote in an email, before adding: “Mona sends a kiss.”

Announcing Juul's resignation, Norway's foreign minister, Espen Barth Eide, said her contact with Epstein had “revealed a serious lapse in judgment,” adding: “The situation makes it difficult to restore the trust that the role requires.”

Juul's lawyer, Thomas Skjelbred, said a “serious charge” had been brought against his client. He added: “At the same time, she views it positively that the allegations will now be subject to a thorough investigation, allowing the actual circumstances to be clarified. My client does not recognise the accusations made against her.”

Juul, he said, a former ambassador to Britain and Israel, will attend questioning with Økokrim this week and that she will cooperate with the ministry of foreign affairs' inquiries.

Rød-Larsen's lawyer, John Christian Elden, said it had noted the charge against him for alleged complicity in corruption between 2011 and 2018 “centred on an apartment transfer in 2018 and a possible trip in 2011”.

Elden added: “He remains fully available to the investigators and is cooperating to the fullest extent practically possible at this stage. Rød-Larsen is confident that once all the factual circumstances have been thoroughly reviewed, the investigation will clarify that there is no basis for criminal liability, and the case will be dismissed.”

Rød-Larsen has apologised several times for the relationship he had with Epstein and in 2020 stepped down as chief executive of IPI, a thinktank.

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