



By: TA | AP Brief

ICC chief prosecutor removed from post over sexual misconduct allegations



The **chief prosecutor** of the International Criminal Court was removed from office on Friday, nearly two years after sexual misconduct allegations against him first emerged.

The ouster of Karim Khan comes at a time when the court is already facing daunting challenges, including a campaign by the United States to “dismantle” the ICC, which was established to prosecute people responsible for humanity’s worst crimes.

By a large majority, the ICC’s 125-member states voted to remove Khan, a British barrister, for “serious misconduct and serious breach of duty,” the court’s oversight body, the Assembly of States Parties, said in a statement.

“The ICC should hold itself to the highest standards. This includes ensuring a safe workplace with effective and credible mechanisms available to staff or others who experience abuse, including sexual violence or harassment,” Liz Evenson, international justice director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement to The Associated Press.

The 56-year-old Khan was accused of sexual **misconduct with a female aide**, as outlined by the AP in a series of stories, allegations he has steadfastly denied.

According to documents seen by the AP, Khan engaged in a sexual relationship with the woman and tried to prevent her from pursuing her allegations.

The oversight body will now need to hold elections for a new prosecutor, someone who is likely to face sanctions by the Trump administration, which has already brought the force of financial penalties and travel bans on 13 members of staff, including Khan.

Venezuela announced it would withdraw from the court

Khan's lawyers criticized the process leading to his ouster, complaining that he was blocked

from addressing the session Friday and arguing the regulations had been rewritten to disadvantage him.

Khan's “removal was determined by a process in which he was never given a fair opportunity to be heard, and in defiance of the conclusions of the independent judges who examined the full evidential record,” attorney Tayab Ali said in a statement. He said Khan's legal team would challenge the decision “through all available legal mechanisms.”

The decision comes at a time when the global tribunal is under **enormous pressure**.

In a statement last week, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the U.S. was launching a “sweeping campaign to dismantle the threat posed by the International Criminal Court to U.S. sovereignty.”

Rubio said he will pressure member states to withdraw from the institution, sanction organizations that work with the court and ban staff from traveling to the United States.

Countries that “enjoy the benefits of the U.S. security umbrella” will be called upon to reject the court’s jurisdiction over U.S. citizens, Rubio said.

Venezuela considers that the Court’s actions reflect a demonstrated geographical bias

Hours after Friday's vote, Venezuela announced it would withdraw from the court.

“Venezuela considers that the Court’s actions reflect a demonstrated geographical bias, which has disproportionately concentrated its work on African and Latin American countries, to the detriment of the Global South,” Félix Plasencia, the country’s foreign affairs minister announced in a statement.

Earlier this year, prosecutors at the court announced they were **dropping an investigation** into whether U.S. sanctions against Venezuela qualified as crimes against

humanity, citing a lack of evidence.

A separate investigation into possible crimes committed by Venezuelan security forces under former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro will continue.

Trump's administration already has brought sanctions against Khan and a dozen other ICC staff in retaliation for warrants the court has issued for top **Israeli officials**, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, over the war in Gaza and investigations into U.S. personnel in Afghanistan.