

Information for victims of rape and sexual assault in Saudi Arabia:

This information is provided to help British nationals overseas make decisions about whether and how to seek medical advice and attention; report to local police; and engage with foreign legal authorities following a rape or other form of sexual assault overseas.

For information on support available in the UK, see Rape and Sexual Assault: Returning to the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rape-and-sexual-assault-abroad-returning-to-the-uk>).

First steps:

It is your choice about what you do next, but this information may help you in coming to a decision. The most important thing is to make sure that you are as safe as you can be. You can:

- Contact the emergency number **911**.
- Contact your tour operator if you are travelling with one.
- Contact the nearest British embassy or consulate.
- The Embassy and consulate staff are trained to deal with your case and you will find them understandable, patient, sensitive and non-judgmental. They can provide you with information on local police and medical procedures. Anything you tell them will be treated in the strictest confidence. They can contact your family or friends for you if you wish. Details of the British Embassy are

<p><u>British Embassy Riyadh</u></p> <p>+966 (0) 11 481 9100</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-riyadh</p>	<p><u>British Consulate</u></p> <p>+966 (0) 11 481 9100</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-riyadh</p>
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- Seek legal advice from a local lawyer.
- If you have a tour operator, they should be able to arrange for someone to support you. If you do not have a tour operator, approach the nearest commission /Embassy or consulate and they will try to send a consular officer to support you.
- If you approach the police directly, you can also ask them to inform the nearest British mission.
- If you choose to report the crime, try to do so as soon as possible, so forensic evidence can be retained. Washing yourself or your clothes may make it difficult for the police to obtain forensic evidence. If you change your clothes, think about

taking those you were wearing to the police. You may wish to preserve evidence by retaining items such as condoms, toothbrushes, or texts.

- Tell the police if you think you have been drugged.
- Insist you get a police report, and request a translation in English if applicable.

If you do not want to report the incident to the police in Saudi

Arabia:

- The British embassy or consulate will be able to help you. This includes helping you make arrangements to contact your insurance company, your family, travel back to the UK and/or provide you with information on local support in the UK. They can provide you with lists of English-speaking medical facilities, lawyers and translators
- If you are travelling with one, you can report the incident to your tour operator and ask them for assistance. Where possible and if you wish, the tour operator may accompany you to the local hospital.

If you want to report the incident to the police in the UK:

It is possible to report the crime to police in the UK. However, it is for foreign police forces to decide whether to investigate a crime in their jurisdiction. UK police forces cannot investigate crimes committed overseas. Foreign police forces can decide to request assistance from the UK police, but this cannot be guaranteed and is a very lengthy process. It can therefore be very difficult to guarantee that any justice can be accessed without reporting the crime locally. Please see [Rape and Sexual Assault: Returning to the UK](#) after rape or sexual assault abroad for more information.

Reporting the crime in Saudi Arabia - what happens next?

If you choose to report the crime in Saudi Arabia, you will be expected to provide a full statement, giving details about where, when, who, the amount of force, any witnesses etc. You may also be asked to leave any clothing that you were wearing at the time of the attack for further forensic testing. You will also be asked to have a physical examination and have a blood test taken. These results will be shared with the police. You may also be asked to share your electronic devices with the local police.

Please also note that the attacker and the victim may be in the same room during the investigation and the victim's identity may not be kept confidential.

The medical examination – what to expect

All local hospitals in the Saudi Arabia, will treat a patient with medical needs, however only government hospitals are normally able to produce forensic reports. A medical professional will carry out any medical examinations and this will be based on what has been requested by the police. Photographs may be taken to be used as evidence. British Embassy staff can support the victim and give options to allow them to make a decision. They can sometimes accompany the victim to the hospital if the police allow this.

Treatment:

We understand that the cost of the examination should be over SAR 1500. If you are a tourist, you may be liable to pay for all treatment costs directly, unless you have travel insurance (you may wish to check whether this would be covered). If you are a resident, you may wish to check if any tests or treatment will be covered by your insurance.

If you are given medication in the Saudi Arabia, you may wish to keep the label or make a note of the name of the medication, so that you can make your local health provider aware when you return to the UK.

Please note that there is no emergency contraception available in the Saudi Arabia.

Police investigations in Saudi Arabia – what to expect

Although cases in Saudi Arabia can be complex, here are a few things that you can expect:

- Reporting crimes to the police Saudi Arabia can be a complex and time consuming process. Local officers may not have specific training in supporting people who have experienced sexual assault, and although in general people reported that investigators were sensitive and sympathetic, some questions may upset you or make you feel very uncomfortable. The case is likely to be cascaded to several departments, so you are likely to be asked to make a statement several times and may be asked to visit the incident site with police officers.
- As part of their investigation, the police may take the victim to the scene of the crime, either to demonstrate what happened or to try and identify and arrest the alleged attacker.
- When an arrest is made, it is usual for the alleged attacker to be taken before the Public Prosecutors office within 24 hours of their arrest.
- It is our understanding that victims will also have to go in front of the Public Prosecution to make a statement. If you appoint a lawyer, they will have access to the case notes and will be able to attend the Public Prosecution Office with you. There is a list of lawyers at the end of this document. The British Embassy can try to obtain information on any criminal cases however, sometimes this information is limited.
- Whether a victim will be permitted to leave the country, will very much depend on the progress of the case. Generally, if a local lawyer has been provided a power of attorney, the victim can leave the Saudi Arabia. If the victim has left, they may be asked to return to provide oral evidence during the court proceedings.

Court procedures – what to expect

- Rape and sexual assault are considered criminal offences in Saudi Arabia, but conviction rates remain very low, and judicial proceedings are likely to be protracted. Leaving Saudi Arabia can lead to the termination of criminal proceedings
- As previously mentioned, cases can be treated differently in Saudi Arabia, therefore it is difficult to give a timescale on how long it will take for a case to be finalised. The Public Prosecution may request additional information or for further investigations to be made which will increase the duration. This can occur multiple times in a case.
- Victims may be called to give more evidence during the court proceedings. It is unusual for a case to be heard in a closed court or for evidence to be given from behind screens or via video link. A lawyer would be able to easily keep up to date with the progress of the case and any actions that are required from the victim.
- Once a case has gone to court it can be difficult for the case to be dropped by either the victim or the alleged attacker. The outcome of the case will be decided by the court.
- If the alleged attacker is found guilty, likely sentences include prison, a fine, deportation or a combination of all three.

When you return home to the UK

- You may want to let your GP or a Sexual Assault Referral Centre know what has happened to you so that you can talk about the experience and seek further support and advice.
- If you believe you may be at risk of having contracted a sexually-transmitted infection (STI), you should ask your local health provider to test you, even if you have been tested in the country that the assault took place in.

Support organisations in the United Kingdom:

The following are links to organisations in the UK who are able to provide support and guidance for you and your family, in addition to your local UK based Rape Crisis Centre:

- www.rapecrisis.org.uk
- www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk
- www.nexusni.org
- www.glasgowclyderapecrisis.org.uk/content/survivors-abroad/
- www.survivorsuk.org

List of Lawyers

If you wish to have legal advice or representation, there is a list of lawyers on our website below. Please speak to the British Embassy if you need help on where to start.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/saudi-arabia-list-of-lawyers>

Disclaimer: This information is provided by the British Government for the convenience of enquirers, but neither Her Majesty's Government nor any official of the Consulate accept liability for any loss or damage which you might suffer as a result of relying on the information supplied. This information is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical or legal advice.

Medical information has been provided by The Havens Sexual Assault Referral Centres of Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and The Rowan SARC NI and was accurate at the time of production.