

BY REUTERS

King Charles' brother arrested over Epstein files

LONDON. King Charles' younger brother Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor was arrested yesterday on suspicion of misconduct in public office over allegations he sent confidential government documents to Jeffrey Epstein.

Mountbatten-Windsor, celebrating his 66th birthday, was arrested and questioned by detectives from Thames Valley Police, which this month said it was looking into allegations that he had passed documents to the late convicted sex offender while working as a trade envoy.

"Following a thorough assessment, we have now opened an investigation into this allegation of misconduct in public office," Thames Valley's Assistant Chief Constable Oliver Wright said in a statement.

"We understand the significant public interest in this case, and we will provide updates at the appropriate time."

The former prince, the second son of the late Queen Elizabeth, who is in police custody, has always denied any wrongdoing in relation to Epstein, and said he regrets their friendship.

But he has not responded to requests

BACKGROUND

The misconduct investigation is not the only accusation against Mountbatten-Windsor into which police are looking. Republic has also reported him over allegations he was involved in the trafficking of a woman to Britain for sex in 2010. Thames Valley Police said the force was assessing allegations that a woman had been taken to an address in Windsor, where the former prince lived until recently.

for comment since the latest mass release of documents by the US government. Mountbatten-Windsor's office did not respond to a request for comment.

He becomes the first senior royal to have been arrested in this manner, and presents his elder brother with the big-



Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor

gest scandal of his reign.

"I have learned with the deepest concern the news about Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and suspicion of misconduct in public office," King Charles said in a statement, adding the authorities had the royals' "full and wholehearted support and cooperation".

"Let me state clearly: the law must take its course. As this process contin-

ues, it would not be right for me to comment further on this matter. Meanwhile, my family and I will continue in our duty and service to you all."

British media published pictures of six unmarked police cars and around eight plain-clothed officers who arrived at Wood Farm on the Sandringham estate in eastern England where Mountbatten-Windsor now lives.

While being arrested means that police have reasonable suspicion that a crime has been committed and that the royal is suspected of involvement in an offence, it does not imply guilt.

A conviction for misconduct in a public office carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, and must be dealt with in a Crown Court, which only deals with the most serious criminal offences.

In 2022, the former prince settled a civil lawsuit brought in the United States by the late Virginia Giuffrè who accused him of sexually abusing her when she was a teenager. The police investigation is not related to this or any

other allegation of sexual impropriety.

The former prince was forced to quit all official royal duties in 2019 over his ties with Epstein and was then stripped by his older brother of his titles and honours last October amid further revelations about their relationship.

Mountbatten-Windsor had been reported to police by the anti-monarchy campaign group Republic following the release of more than 3 million pages of documents relating to Epstein, who was convicted of soliciting prostitution from a minor in 2008.

Those files suggested Mountbatten-Windsor had in 2010 forwarded to Epstein reports about Vietnam, Singapore and other places he had visited on official trips.

Thames Valley Police and the Crown Prosecution Service have previously said that they were in discussions about the case. Police said allegations of misconduct in public office, which is a 'Common Law' offence and so is not covered by written statute legislation involved "particular complexities".