

Alex Salmond faces 14 charges



Former First Minister of Scotland Alex Salmond appeared at Edinburgh Sheriff Court this afternoon having been charged with nine counts of sexual assault, two counts of indecent assault, two counts of attempted rape and one count of breach of the peace.

He made no plea or declaration during the private hearing and was committed for further examination.

Speaking outside the court today, the 64-year-old stressed that he was 'innocent of any criminality' and refuted the allegations against him.

He also insisted that he would love to say more but would not do so in order to respect the court.

He said: "Let me say at the outset, I am innocent of any criminality whatsoever.

"As you'll remember in the long process of judicial review, I made it clear in order to respect the court, that I would make no comment until proceedings had concluded. That I did in the statement I made on the steps of the Court of Session two weeks ago. "

Now that these criminal proceedings are live, it is even more

important to respect the court and, therefore, the only thing I can say is that I refute absolutely these allegations of criminality and I'll defend myself to the utmost in court. 'I've got great faith in the court system of Scotland. I've got recent cause to have great faith in the court system of Scotland.

"That is where I'll state my case. Now, I'm informed court rules are that your questions and my answers might well breach court rules

"'You know me well enough to know that I'd love to say a great deal more but I've got to observe the rules of the court, and in court is where I'll state my case.

"And therefore, if you'll forgive me, I'll go back in to consult my legal team."

Scottish Parliament Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh told MSPs prior to First Minister's Questions: "Members will be aware of reports in the media this morning that the former first minister Alex Salmond has been arrested.

"As I hope members will also be aware, and as applies with all such matters, that means that parliamentary rules on sub-judice apply as this case is now active."