

Alex Salmond appears in court charged with attempted rape

Former First Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond, appeared in the dock at the High Court in Edinburgh this morning accused of a charge of sexual assault with intent to rape, a further 10 charges of sexual assault and two of indecent assault.



Alex Salmond arriving at the High Court at 8.15am
After the short preliminary hearing which was heard before Lady Dorrian at 10.00am he returned outside to speak to members of the press just before 10.30.



Mr Salmond has denied all charges against him. The court papers allege that the assaults happened in Bute House, the First Minister's official residence, Stirling Castle, Glasgow and The Scottish Parliament between 2008 and 2014. The allegations have been made by seven women.

He said : "Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen. As I am sure you will understand I'm not permitted to say too much today. We have lodged our defence statement with the court to plead not guilty to all charges and explained some of the circumstances in which they have come about.

"I am also conscious that we are in the middle of a General Election campaign. I'm not going to say anything which would influence that democratic process. We are now into our second year of court actions. It's over 10 months since we won the civil action. I'm innocent and I will defend my position vigorously. But the only proper place to answer criminal charges is in this court, and that's exactly what we intend to do next spring."

Salmond is represented by Gordon Jackson QC, Dean of Faculty of Advocates, who arrived at court shortly before 10.00am. The prosecution is led by Alex Prentice QC.

Mr Salmond left court with three women who accompanied him to court and went to Parliament House for a consultation with his legal team. He was followed all the way by press photographers and broadcast cameras.

There was a considerable police presence outside the court.

