

Ghislaine Maxwell trial delayed for months by new charges

Will Pavia, New York

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Ghislaine Maxwell is sketched next to her lawyer Bobbi Sternheim, left. ELIZABETH WILLIAMS/AP

Ghislaine Maxwell's trial will be delayed until the autumn because of additional charges filed by prosecutors, a judge ruled yesterday.

Maxwell, 59, was arrested in New Hampshire last July, accused of assisting [Jeffrey Epstein](#) in his sexual abuse of three minors between 1994 and 1997. He took his own life in jail while awaiting trial. Her trial date was set for July 12 this year, almost precisely a year from the date that she first appeared in a federal court in New York to plead not guilty to the charges.

In March, after prosecutors filed two additional charges of sex trafficking that relate to a later period between 2001 and 2004, her defence attorneys asked Judge Alison Nathan to delay the trial until January, to give them more time to investigate the allegations.

Judge Nathan agreed that the defence would need time to “conduct new investigations based on the new charges” and to “re-evaluate her trial preparation and strategy”.

She added that the pandemic would continue to slow these efforts. However, she rejected requests from the defence to delay until January and one from prosecutors, asking that if the trial be delayed, it be set back until March next year, because lawyers on both sides were due to appear in other cases.

“Any victims and the public more broadly have a strong interest in trial proceeding without undue delay,” she said. She asked both sides to confer and agree “the earliest possible date” in the autumn by May 10.

In a separate order, the judge ruled that surveillance videos showing [Maxwell](#) meeting her lawyer must be preserved by a Brooklyn jail in the light of a dispute over documents seized by prison guards after the meeting.

Maxwell met her lawyer Bobbi Sternheim on April 25 at the Metropolitan Detention Center. She claims that after the meeting the guards “wrongfully seized and reviewed her confidential legal documents”. Sternheim said guards falsely claimed that Maxwell had been handed those documents by her lawyer, in breach of prison rules.

Sternheim said Maxwell had received the documents through the proper channels and demanded a copy of the video recording of the meeting. Judge Nathan ordered that the recording be preserved but denied a request that she order it to be handed over.