

The Norwegian Royal Family: When it Rains, it Pours

MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

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19 August 2025

The indictment against Marius Borg Høyby was announced to the public on 18 August 2025. The following day, the first meeting between Crown Prince Haakon and the media took place, during which the Crown Prince commented on the situation. He stated that:

“Now that the content of the indictment has been clarified, it is up to the courts to decide how the matter will ultimately be resolved.”

(Crown Prince Haakon, quoted in Børstad et al., 2025)

In the interview, the Crown Prince further explained that they will continue to carry out their work and focus on the duties they are expected to perform, which will be their main priority in the coming months. Throughout the interview, the Crown Prince did not take a legal position, emphasizing that this is the responsibility of the courts. This position was further reinforced by Guri Varpe, Head of Communications at the Royal Court, who told NRK that it is up to the court to handle the case and reach a decision, and that there is nothing further to add beyond this statement.

However, the Crown Prince also added that the situation is very difficult for the family and for everyone involved, but did not open up for further questions.

28 January 2026

On 28 January, one week prior to the start of Høyby’s court trial, the Crown Prince gave an initial statement to the press. The Crown Prince started off by acknowledging and sympathizing with all individuals who had been affected by this trial in any way and that his thoughts go out to them. The Crown Prince then continued by affirming his trust in the legal system and the individuals responsible for overseeing the proceedings of the trial. Thereafter, the Crown Prince proceeded by emphasizing the following: the Crown Prince himself along with Crown Princess Mette-Marit would not be present in the court room or comment on anything during the course of the trial, the Royal House would continue their duties as usual, and the Crown Princess would go on a private trip during the upcoming weeks. To conclude the statement, the Crown Prince added that Høyby does not hold a royal title and that his actions are therefore not a representation of the Royal House; they do, however, care deeply for Høyby but highlight that he is a citizen like everyone else and will be treated as such.

After the statement, the Crown Prince opened for questions from the journalists. During the subsequent questions, the Crown Prince was asked about how the Royal Family was coping with the situation, whether he was concerned that the case might

weaken public trust in the monarchy, and how they justified not attending the trial as parents. In response, he described the situation as challenging for all parties involved, but indicated that his focus was on handling the matters within his control. Regarding the decision not to attend the trial, he stated that it was the result of an overall assessment of what was considered the most appropriate approach under the circumstances, and that they would continue to follow the case and support Høiby in other ways. The Crown Prince declined to comment on private family matters.

30 January 2026

On the same day that the Epstein files were released, the Crown Princess, through the Royal Court, issued a press statement:

“Jeffrey Epstein is personally responsible for his actions. I must take responsibility for not checking Epstein’s background more thoroughly and for not understanding quickly enough what kind of person he was. I deeply regret that, and this is a responsibility I must take. I showed poor judgment and regret ever having had any contact with Epstein. It is simply embarrassing. I want to express my deep sympathy and solidarity with the victims of the abuses committed by Jeffrey Epstein.”

(Crown Princess Mette-Marit, quoted in Kongehuset, 2026)

Following the statement issued on 30 January, the Royal Court also referred to information from 2019, where it was communicated that the Crown Princess had ended her relationship with Epstein and that their last contact occurred in 2013. The statement also reiterated the explanation of how they came to know each other, emphasizing that they only met in social settings, primarily in the U.S. Additionally, the Royal Court reminded the public that the Crown Princess never accepted any money from Epstein. At the time of their contact, she was not aware of the nature or extent of the crimes he later became known for.

6 February 2026

On 6 February 2026, precisely at 14:00, the Royal Court released a press statement. The statement provided an updated response to the disclosures concerning the Crown Princess’s past contact with Epstein. Specifically, it acknowledged the strong public reactions and expressed understanding of the concerns raised.

The Royal Court stated that the Crown Princess distances herself from Epstein’s criminal actions and regretted not earlier having understood the nature of his conduct. It further indicated that she wished to provide a more detailed explanation, but was not in a position to do so at that time, referring to the demanding circumstances. The statement included the following message from the Crown Princess:

“I would like to express my deepest regret for my friendship with Jeffrey Epstein. It is important for me to apologize to all of you that I have disappointed. Some of the content of the messages between Epstein and I does not represent the person I want to be. I also apologize for the situation that I have put the Royal Family in, especially the King and Queen.”

(Crown Princess Mette-Marit, quoted in Kongehuset, 2026)

One hour after the Royal Court issued its public statement, the Crown Prince met the press in connection with a scheduled official visit. Although the visit was unrelated to the Epstein files, journalists raised questions regarding the matter. The Crown Prince acknowledged the legitimacy of public interest, but stated that he would not address detailed questions at that time. He emphasized that his immediate priority was to support his family during a demanding period:

“When a lot is happening at the same time, as it has been for our family now, I feel that we need to make sure our priorities are in the right order.”

(Crown Prince Haakon, quoted in Hvitmyr et al., 2026)

In his remarks, he expressed support for both his wife and Høiby and indicated that the Crown Princess required time before providing further clarification. He stated:

“She understands that many people want to hear from her. She feels that is completely natural. But right now she is not able to do that. And I also tell her that she is not allowed to. She needs time to gather herself. And she would like to explain more about the case. We hope there is understanding that she needs a little time. Thank you.”

(Crown Prince Haakon, quoted in Hvitmyr et al., 2026)

Following the statement, the Crown Prince did not take further questions.

On the same day, the Royal Secretariat sent out a letter to organizations under the patronage of the Crown Princess (see **Exhibit 1**). The letter, signed by the Chief of the Royal Secretariat, stated that the Crown Princess had requested that it be sent because of the recent developments in the Epstein case. The letter acknowledged that many, including the recipient organizations, might have strong reactions related to the disclosures. It emphasized that the patronages were of great importance to the Crown Princess and reaffirmed her support for the organizations’ work. The letter also reiterated that she had not been aware of the extent and nature of Epstein’s criminal conduct at the time of their contact.

17 February 2026

During the TV show *Debatten* on 17 February, a former victim of Epstein, Marina Lacerda, condemned the Crown Princess for her contact with Epstein. She mentioned that the Crown Princess has the responsibility of being not only a princess, but a mother and a woman. When asked what she would say to the Crown Princess, Lacerda responds:

“She should start with honesty. Take responsibility for the conversations she had with this man who was in a world where he trafficked and abused children.”

(Lacerda, quoted in Andersrød et al., 2026)

That same evening, a rarely seen written statement from the Crown Princess was sent to *Debatten* in response to Lacerda:

“I am deeply shaken by the stories of the many victims of Epstein, and they have my full support. It is important that their voices are heard. Both as a woman and a mother, I support them.

I must take responsibility for not checking Epstein’s background better and for not understanding quickly enough what kind of person he was. I deeply regret that, and this is a responsibility I must take.”

(Crown Princess Mette-Marit, quoted in Andersrød et al., 2026)

The second part of this written statement is identical to a previous statement from the Royal House that was published on 30 January.

Note: All quoted statements originally published in Norwegian have been translated into English by the authors for the purpose of this case.

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Exhibit 1 Letter to Organizations under the Patronage of the Crown Princess

Exhibit 1 presents the letter sent by the Royal Secretariat on behalf of Crown Princess Mette-Marit to organizations under her patronage, acknowledging recent developments and reaffirming her support.



Deres ref.:

Vår ref.:

Saksbehandler:

Dato:

6. februar 2026

Hennes Kongelige Høyhet Kronprinsessen har bedt meg om å sende dette brevet etter det som har kommet fram den siste tiden i Epstein-saken.

Beskytterskapene betyr svært mye for Kronprinsessen. Hun er stolt av å kunne støtte opp om det viktige arbeidet dere gjør. Kronprinsessen har forståelse for at mange – også dere – har reagert sterkt på det som har kommet fram.

Kronprinsessen fortalte i 2019 om kontakten og møtene med Epstein. Det var en nøktern framstilling om forhold som lå et stykke tilbake i tid. Hun ser i dag behovet for en mer utfyllende framstilling og ønsker å bidra til dette så godt hun kan. Det klarer hun ikke nå. Kronprinsessen er i en svært krevende situasjon, med flere store utfordringer samtidig. Hun håper på forståelse for at hun trenger tid til å samle seg.

Dersom hun i denne perioden hadde visst det som nå er kjent om Epstein, hadde hun aldri hatt kontakt med han. Kronprinsessen ønsker igjen å understreke at hun ikke var kjent med omfanget og karakteren av de kriminelle forholdene Epstein var dømt for og hadde sonet for. Det omtalte google-søket endrer ikke dette.

Hun ønsker å bruke denne anledningen til å takke både for omtanke og for ærlighet i det som har blitt uttrykt de siste dagene.

Med hilsen

Gry Høeg Ulverud
Sjef Det kongelige sekretariat

Vedlegg

Dokumentet er elektronisk godkjent og har derfor ikke signatur.

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Source: Hvitmyr & Kreutz-Hansen (2026)