Ex-Arsenal Partey granted bail on rape charges

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Ex-Arsenal Partey granted bail on rape charges  
  
Former Arsenal footballer Thomas Partey was granted conditional bail on Tuesday after appearing in a London court on rape and sexual assault charges.  
  
The 32-year-old Ghana international has been charged with five counts of rape against two women and one count of sexual assault against a third woman.  
  
The alleged offences took place between 2021 and 2022, when he was an Arsenal player.  
  
Partey was charged on July 4, four days after leaving the Gunners when his contract expired at the end of June.  
  
The midfielder stood with his arms behind his back in the dock at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Tuesday, wearing a black zip-neck jumper.  
  
The footballer showed no reaction as the charges were read out and was not asked to enter any pleas.  
  
Partey’s lawyer Jenny Wiltshire previously said Partey “denies all the charges against him”, adding he welcomed “the opportunity to finally clear his name”.  
  
Under his bail conditions he cannot contact any of the three women and must notify police of any permanent changes of address or international travel.  
  
Reports in recent days have linked Partey with a move to La Liga club Villarreal.  
  
As bail conditions were discussed in court, chief magistrate Paul Goldspring said: “I understand he’s no longer employed in this country and playing in Spain now.”  
  
Partey is due to appear at London’s Old Bailey court on September 2.  
  
A spokesperson for Arsenal Supporters Against Sexual Violence said the group was “profoundly disappointed” in the London club over their handling of the matter.  
  
Speaking outside court, Honor Barber told the PA news agency: “We never wanted to be in a situation where the club that we love and the club that has values that we believe in was playing, week-in, week-out, a player who is now facing court appearances on six counts of sexual violence.  
  
“We protested outside almost every home game last season because we wanted to disrupt the wall of silence that the club has put up around this issue.”  
  
Barber said the group wanted the club to publish their sexual violence policies, “suspend anyone under investigation for sexual offences” and “properly support the survivors”.  
  
British police said they first received reports of an allegation of rape in February 2022.  
  
Partey joined Arsenal for £45 million ($60 million) from Atletico Madrid in October 2020.  
  
He appeared 52 times for the Gunners last season, scoring four goals. Overall he played 167 games for the club, scoring nine times.  
  
Partey has also made 51 appearances for Ghana.  
  
An Arsenal spokesman previously said: “The player’s contract ended on June 30. Due to ongoing legal proceedings the club is unable to comment on the case.”