French court sentences Saudi navy officer to 10 years for rape

Date: 2025-09-05

Source: https://punchng.com/french-court-sentences-saudi-navy-officer-to-10-years-for-rape/

A French court on Friday sentenced a Saudi navy officer to 10 years in prison for the 2021 rape of a woman in France.  
  
Meshari Al Shamrani was tried in absentia. He had been released under judicial supervision during the investigation, but failed to check in with the police in January.  
  
Al Shamrani, who was 24 at the time of the rape, attended an engineering school in the western French city of Brest.  
  
He was known as being “gifted and disciplined” at the school, which he attended as part of a Saudi-French cooperation agreement, according to chief prosecutor Elsa Guyonvarch.  
  
But in his personal life, he discovered “a freedom, a moral permissiveness that was unknown to him”, the prosecutor said, adding that this “culture shock” helped to explain his behaviour without justifying it.  
  
Al Shamrani, who got married in Saudi Arabia in 2020, also had a girlfriend in Brest, where he regularly threw parties involving copious amounts of alcohol, the court heard.  
  
After one such evening, a 22-year-old woman stayed over because she had no means of getting home, and woke up to find Al Shamrani penetrating her.  
  
She fought him off, got away, and alerted the police.  
  
“He completely omitted to seek her consent,” said the prosecutor, who had asked for eight years of prison for the accused.  
  
DNA and gynaecological testing backed the woman’s version of events that night that she told the court still haunted her years later.  
  
“I was devastated, I cried all the time and didn’t want to go out,” she said.  
  
Al Shamrani, who at first denied the accusation but then admitted what had happened, told police that he had assumed the woman “wanted to make love because she took her trousers off”.  
  
France has issued a European arrest warrant for the officer, without success so far.  
  
AFP