

PRESS PACK - CHRISTOPHER EMMS

Christopher Douglas Emms, 33 year old British Citizen wanted by the FBI for “Conspiracy to Violate the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).



Summary:

British citizen Chris Emms who worked closely with [Roger Ver](#), is a regular speaker on cryptocurrencies. He was invited to a cryptocurrency conference in North Korea following President Trump's visitation and remarks that there was hope for a future friendship. Chris checked with the British Ambassador before his visit and was advised that while he probably won't enjoy it, it was perfectly legal for him to go. A number of attendees joined him from different countries, including one US citizen (Virgil Griffith) who he met for the first time, at the event. After a few days in Pyongyang, the conference was over and Chris resumed his normal life.

He was later flagged at the airport in London and contacted by the FBI about the conference. He fully cooperated with their inquiries, not imagining that there could be any issue with him. During the (lengthy) conversations, the FBI began accusing him of violating US sanctions, something he adamantly denied and in any case, didn't apply to him. He was told they could prosecute him under IEEPA and that juries will automatically convict him based on the mere mention of "North Korea" and "sanctions". No non-US person has ever been prosecuted successfully under IEEPA, but Chris didn't think it was even fair to ask him to come to the US, be put in pre-trial detention and have to fight an unfair prosecution. After all, he's not American and doesn't have to follow US law. He didn't violate any UK sanctions or international laws.

Chris was pushed to provide false testimony against another **high value target** but refused to do so, explaining to them that if he did, he would be perjuring himself. They tried to persuade him to do so, offering him a 'plea deal' where they would reduce the IEEPA allegation to a catch-all "wire fraud" that carried a lesser and likely non-custodial sentence. It would however taint his reputation for life. Chris refused to perjure himself and partake in dirty tricks to help lock up a potentially innocent man who he had nothing to do with, (apart from attending the same busy conference in Puerto Rico once). Chris also refused to plead guilty to a crime he had not committed and tarnish his name forever. He was only in his 20's and had his whole life ahead of him. Being in the financial sector, it was important to him not to have a phoney conviction for wire fraud.

Chris did not hear anything for some time. In fact, he thought they'd realised he wouldn't cooperate with the witness testimony request and moved on though he kept in touch via the Embassy in Dubai where he was living temporarily. No problems seemed apparent.

The Arrest and Extradition

In April 2019, he felt safe to travel to a tech conference and had no issues at UAE immigration when departing. But while he was on the short flight over, an Interpol warrant was activated and he was arrested on arrival in Saudi Arabia.

KSA officials told him it was at the request of the US and that he'd been accused of sanctions violations. He was now in custody (awful conditions) and facing extradition proceedings. Chris hired a lawyer and was able to achieve bail while fighting the request.

This was an extremely stressful time for him and his family. He discovered the US had managed to freeze all of his bank accounts in the UK, including his Coinbase accounts. He suddenly had no access to his own money so his mother, who is a realtor in Surrey, UK, had to help pay the legal fees and Airbnb's. It was incredibly unjust that a foreign country was able to do this to him. His local MP in England, Conservative Crispin Blunt was outraged that the US would do this to a British Citizen who wasn't subject to their jurisdiction.

<https://news.sky.com/story/foreign-office-accused-of-washing-its-hands-of-brit-detained-in-saudi-arabia-12659579>

Crispin Blunt, MP [escalated the matter to Parliament](#) and made a public statement,

"Chris Emms was detained as he tried to leave Saudi Arabia on 4th February 2022. This was in response to a Red posting on the Interpol system by the USA. He has committed no crimes against British, Saudi or international law. He is accused of conspiracy with a US citizen to break US sanctions on North Korea, having met him once at a conference in Pyongyang in 2019. This is a straightforward exercise of improper "extraterritoriality" by the USA and the UK has every reason to resist this in defence of its own citizens in Saudi Arabia."

Publicity

Chris Emms was listed as the FBI's #1 Most Wanted in their technology division and circulated their allegations to the media in an attempt to sway Saudi authorities and to defame Chris. This forced Chris to address the public relations element of his legal defence, including [appearing on 60 Minutes](#) to discuss his plight.

Saudi Arabia Denies Extradition

The extradition process took eight months and Chris was imprisoned multiple times throughout the ordeal. The US was very slow when asked for actual evidence by authorities. They struggled to find a crime that would warrant extradition. When a Saudi Judge eventually reviewed the case, he ruled that the US had no case to ask for extradition, that there was no dual criminality and that the US does not have the ability to apply their laws internationally, against foreigners, just as Saudi Arabia can not. [Chris was freed in September 2022.](#)

<https://detained-in-dubai.prowly.com/209224-crypto-pioneer-chris-emms-released-from-saudi-arabia>

<https://therecord.media/us-fails-in-bid-to-extradite-brit-for-helping-north-korea-evade-sanctions-with-cryptocurrency>

Winning the extradition in Saudi did not protect Chris from future attempts in other jurisdictions and did not automatically cancel the Interpol Red Notice. The US would immediately be able to open a new request in the UK, a practice known as “jurisdiction shopping”. The US deliberately waited for Chris to be in Saudi, expecting the pressure to surrender him would be high and Saudi would be more cooperative than the UAE, where they were aware he was residing. Biden had less diplomatic influence than he thought. Tensions with Saudi Arabia were high and he wasn't respected. They were not going to agree to an extrajudicial or fast tracked extradition.

Persecution & Concerns for Safety

After exhausting all resources defending himself against extradition and the trauma endured from being imprisoned and isolated in Saudi, Chris had two options he was faced with. He could either face the same process again in the UK where he would not have been able to afford competent extradition barristers or he could seek asylum elsewhere.

Chris knew the Biden DOJ and Cryptocurrency taskforce was on a mission and needed successful prosecutions and snitches. He didn't have the money nor the energy for another legal fight. He had seen how the UK had progressed the extradition of Julian Assange and didn't trust that they wouldn't fall to American political pressure. Roger Ver let him use a private jet and he made the trip to Russia. After reviewing his case and the Saudi ruling, Russia provided Chris with asylum on the basis that he was being politically persecuted.

Russia

From the safety of Russia, Chris has been fighting to clear his name and reclaim his freedom. He would love nothing more than to be able to travel freely, visit his mother in England and live without the fear of a haunting Interpol Red Notice and ending up in a corrupt prosecution in the USA.

United Nations

A United Nations application was pursued on behalf of Chris, citing multiple violations of his human rights in violation of international law.

Frozen Bank Accounts

His bank accounts are still frozen, which is a violation in itself, to be able to freeze a foreigner's overseas accounts and deny him access to his own legally earned money. Freezing a target's bank accounts is just another pressure tactic employed by law enforcement to force plea deals. It's unethical and should be unlawful. Imagine if Saudi or China were able to freeze an American's bank accounts at the click of a button, without due process, without any lawful conviction or judgement. There is simply too much unchecked power.

US Persons

Chris was not in America, was not considered a US person or citizen and no foreign national has ever been successfully prosecuted under the IEEPA which specifies it only applies to US persons.

The territorial overreach is akin to Saudi or China imposing its own sanctions on US citizens who have nothing to do with either country, putting them on Interpol, then jurisdiction shopping until they find a country that's likely to extradite their American targets. It's unthinkable.

Southern District New York (SDNY) AUSA Prosecutors in Emms Case

New York AUSA's Kimberly J. Ravener and Kyle A. Wirshba were in charge of the liaison with Chris, the subsequent indictment and FBI's "Most Wanted" listing. These are the same AUSA's who have pursued J6 prosecutions and been cited for [failing to disclose Brady material](#) (exculpatory evidence).

In another failed prosecution against police officer [James Grant](#), lawyers accused her star witness of giving false testimony against their clients in a bid to get a lighter sentence. Grant was found not guilty of corruption charges.

The ongoing conduct of Ravener and Wirshba sets the stage for a pattern of persuading people to give false testimony in return for lighter sentences. This raises concern that guilty

pleas obtained by Ravener and Wirshba may have been coerced and that witness testimony against others like Grant may be false and coerced. An urgent review into cases handled by SDNY and most certainly these individuals must be prioritised by Pam Bondi and Kash Patel.

DOGE is encouraged to review the various Biden task forces founded to target individuals in different sectors such as cryptocurrency and technology.

The international pursuit of innocent foreigners is unethical and costly to the taxpayer. If we wouldn't accept it from other countries, we should not be doing it ourselves.

President Trump, Pam Bondi, Kash Patel, Elon Musk Urged to Help

Frivolous indictments, prosecutions and extraditions cost the taxpayer tens of millions. SDNY is highly critiqued for politicized & weaponized prosecutions, prosecutorial misconduct, coerced guilty pleas and coerced witness statements.

The new administration is being urged to drop the case against Christopher Emms, review the current New York AUSA appointments, review the DOJ/FBI task forces for politicization, and review cases where there are allegations of misconduct.

<https://www.newyorktriallawyers.org/blog/2021/03/03/sdny-judge-calls-for-doj-208735/>

[GQ Reported](#), *“Stirling believes Emms’s case is borne of frustration among the US authorities, who have struggled to get results in their assault on crypto’s underbelly. “Biden set up a recent task force just to go after cryptocurrency, and I think they’re looking to secure convictions,” Stirling said. The US government is probing to see if it can catch and convict a foreigner under IEEPA. According to Stirling, Emms was unlucky enough to blunder into their reach”.*

[Radha Stirling](#), CEO of [Due Process International](#)

Radha Stirling is the founder of Due Process International, Detained in Dubai, and IPEX Reform. She has assisted Mr Emms from the time he contacted her while he was in Saudi.

Stirling is a crisis manager, human rights, Interpol and extradition expert. She has represented numerous high profile clients including Sheikha Latifa Al Maktoum, Tara Reade, RAK Ceramics CEO Khater Massaad, and along with top celebrity Attorney Marc Ignifilo, the CEO of Asia’s largest cement holding.

Press Releases from Due Process International

1. [US seeks extradition of British national over cryptocurrency conference: The case of Christopher Emms](#) 25 April 2022
2. [Extradition of British crypto expert to USA would challenge UK sovereignty](#) 09 May 2022
3. [Colonising the Cryptosphere](#) - 17 June 2022
4. [United Nations to hear US FBI abuse of crypto expert Chris Emms](#) 19 June 2022
5. [MP accuses Foreign Office of 'washing hands' of Brit detained in Saudi](#) 27 July 2022
6. [60 Minutes | British Cryptocurrency expert wanted by FBI after trip to North Korea](#) 07 August 2022
7. [Crispin Blunt Condemns Foreign Office Inaction Over Constituent Detained in Saudi Arabia](#) 22 August 2022
8. [Crypto pioneer Chris Emms released from Saudi Arabia](#) 30 September 2022
9. [DOJ persecutes crypto entrepreneurs for cash & currency domination](#) 25 November 2022

Media Coverage:

1. 60 Minutes (TV): [Cryptocurrency expert wanted by the FBI after trip to North Korea | 60 Minutes Australia](#) 8 Aug 2022
2. GQ Magazine [Inside the great Pyongyang crypto caper](#) 24 November 2022
3. Gulf in Justice Podcast (TV): [FBI 'Most Wanted' talks Universal Jurisdiction with Radha Stirling on the Gulf in Justice Podcast](#) 27 May 2022
4. Blockworks: [Crypto Insider Stuck in Saudi Arabia Over North Korean Conference](#) July 29, 2022
5. Sky: [How a British man ended up on the FBI's 'Most Wanted' list for allegedly helping North Korea evade sanctions](#) 29 June 2022
6. 60 Mins [International criminal or naive crypto geek? Man wanted by FBI over trip to North Korea](#) 8 Aug 2022