



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Brielle Nalence

212-627-9895

Like Many Rape Victims, DSK Victim Won't Get Her Day in Court

New York – Yesterday, the Manhattan D.A.'s office filed a motion to dismiss all charges against Dominique Strauss-Kahn (DSK), the former IMF chief who was charged with sexually assaulting Nafissatou Diallo, a hotel worker who was cleaning his room at the Sofitel hotel in Manhattan in May of this year. This morning, a Judge officially dismissed the charges. A multitude of women's rights advocates gathered outside the courthouse wearing red to stand in solidarity with Nafissatou and to highlight the injustices that rape victims face in bringing a case forward. Holding signs that said, "Blame DSK" and "DSK, Stop Your Rampage" the crowd chanted "DSK, Shame on You!" as he left the courthouse with his wife.

Sonia Ossorio, Executive Director of the National Organization for Women – New York City says, "The prospect of Dominique Strauss-Kahn simply walking away scot-free is appalling. Here's a man with a long history of predatory behavior toward women who won't be held accountable. I hope that the rape victim who has come forward in France is able to secure a better outcome."

A staggering number of women—1 in 6 in the U.S.—will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. Less than 40% of these women will ever report it to authorities. In fact, it's estimated that only 6% of rapists will ever go to jail. Ossorio says, "Every time a rapist walks, more women are put at risk of sexual assault."

"This case illustrates well-worn patterns of bias in rape cases and the tough standard that women rape survivors are held to. Too often, the trial becomes more about the victim's past behavior when it's the defendant who's on trial," says Ossorio.

This is not an isolated case. The DSK case is only one in a series of disappointing outcomes for sexual assault cases in Manhattan. Late last year, Tony Simmons, a juvenile court guard who molested and raped several teenage girls in his custody, was set to get out with a probation-only sentence before women's rights groups brought city-wide attention to the case. This month, former sportscaster Marvell Scott was given the opportunity to plead to a lesser crime in a sickening child prostitution case in which a 14-year-old runaway cried during sex with Scott. He's being held accountable with *20 days* of community service.

Appearing at a press conference on the eve of the decision NOW-NYC called on the community to do better. Women in NYC need to know that pressing charges will be taken seriously. Their safety depends on it. Also, it remains critical that women who do come forward know that the press will treat them fairly and that they can be assured they will retain their privacy in coming forward with rape, a crime that still carries a stigma.

The National Organization for Women is the nation's largest organization working to advance women's rights and improve women's lives. The New York City Chapter of NOW, founded in 1966, is the largest chapter in the country with 5,000 members locally and 35,000 statewide. NOW-NYC works to promote women's reproductive rights, secure women's economic empowerment, and end violence and discrimination against women.

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