

Saab's defense presses request to limit Zoom access to hearings

United States v. Alex Nain Saab Morán · S.D. Fla. No. 1:19-cr-20450 (2019 case)
Judge Robert N. Scola Jr. · Docket entry #67 · Filed 2021-11-08 · Filed by: Defense

What happened

Alex Saab's defense clarified it did not ask the court to "close" hearings, but to limit Zoom access to accredited press, necessary participants and Saab's family, while leaving the rest of the public able to listen by phone. The filing says warning Zoom attendees not to record or photograph proceedings has not worked in the past, though no images of Saab circulated from the November 1, 2021 hearing because he waived his appearance and was not shown on the feed. The defense says it does not object to holding hearings in person at the courthouse, so long as that does not mean Saab is placed back in quarantine at the detention facility every time he must attend.

What it means

The filing shows the dispute is not over whether the public can follow the case, but over how to do so without images of Saab continuing to circulate despite the court's warnings. The defense argues that if the judge does not choose in-person hearings, it should at least be possible to identify and hold accountable those watching the trial over Zoom.

What happens next

The docket does not state a date for the court to rule on the motion.

Key passages from the filing (verbatim)

"Hence, warning against recording or photographing Zoom proceedings, although appropriate, is inadequate."

Page 2 — Sums up the defense's core argument for why warnings alone are not enough.

"Mr. Saab respectfully requests that the Court limit Zoom access to those members of the public and press it can hold accountable if they violate Rule 53."

Page 3 — Is the concrete request the defense makes to the court.

Docket text (official, in English)

Defendant's REPLY TO RESPONSE to Motion by Alex Nain Saab Moran as to Alex Nain Saab Moran, Alvaro Pulido Vargas re 59 Defendant's MOTION Motion to Enforce Rule 53 and Limit Zoom Access (Bell, Henry) (Entered: 11/08/2021)

Online version: <https://mailmaduro.com/caso.php?d=saab-sdfl-2019-e67>

Full original filing: <https://mailmaduro.com/caso.php?d=saab-sdfl-2019-e67&f=original>

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