

Weinstein and accusers reach tentative \$45m deal

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Harvey Weinstein and his bankrupt film studio have agreed in principle a \$45m settlement with a group of women who accused him of sexual assault, which would put an end to nearly all civil lawsuits against the disgraced movie mogul, according to people familiar with the matter.

A portion of the sum would be allocated to cover the legal fees for the board members of the Weinstein Company, which is in the middle of bankruptcy proceedings. The rest would go to accusers and creditors of the film studio, according to people involved in the negotiations.

The settlement is not finalised, these people cautioned, and must still be approved by a US bankruptcy court. The agreement was first reported by the New York Times.

While dozens of women have agreed to the deal, some accusers rejected the settlement, including Wedil David, an actress who accused Mr Weinstein of raping her in a hotel room. Her lawyer, Douglas Wigdor, called it “shameful” that part of the settlement will be shared with “directors who we alleged enabled Harvey Weinstein”.

Since 2017, when scores of women came forward with allegations of sexual abuse against Mr Weinstein, victims have sought legal recourse through dozens of lawsuits. However, the process has been complex and challenging, with numerous setbacks.

A previous deal that would have given \$90m to the accusers fell apart, while Eric Schneiderman, the New York attorney-general who had been guiding the settlement negotiations, stepped down over accusations of his own sexual misconduct.

The agreed settlement does not cover a criminal case against Mr Weinstein, which will go to trial next month in New York. Mr Weinstein was accused of five sex-crime charges, including rape, and was arrested in May 2018. He pleaded not guilty and then was released on \$1m bail.

Earlier on Wednesday, however, a Manhattan judge quintupled Mr Weinstein’s bail to \$5m on allegations that he disabled a tracking monitor attached to his ankle.

New York prosecutors had asked Judge James Burke to increase Mr Weinstein’s bail from \$1m to \$5m, claiming that he had failed dozens of times to properly wear his tracking device, leaving his whereabouts unknown for hours. Judge Burke agreed to the bail increase

and warned Mr Weinstein that he would issue a warrant for his arrest if there were further problems, according to news agencies.

Mr Weinstein, 67, has attended the court hearings in New York appearing feeble, using a cane and being helped by handlers on one occasion, and used a walking frame during his latest appearance.

Mr Weinstein's lawyers declined to comment on the settlement, but said he was "looking forward" to his trial next month.