

A US court has ruled that an American activist who fled Saudi Arabia with her daughter in 2019 will be allowed to defy a Saudi custody order and remain in the country with her child because she would face a serious risk of being put to death if she returned to the kingdom. "A Washington court need not enforce a decree of another nation's child custody decree and may exercise jurisdiction over custody if the law of the foreign country punishes 'apostasy' by death," the judges wrote. The case represents the first time that Saudi rules governing child custody and its use of the death penalty against female activists have faced judgment in a US court. The amended custody law was ultimately cited by the appeals court in its ruling. "I have a lot of gratitude for everyone who helped. The legislators, my legal team, but also those in Saudi who helped us in the process of getting out," she said. "I am kind of in shock. This has been going on for several years ... I don't know where we would be without that change in the law."