



KEY Updates in Assange Case - US Appeals & its Star Witness Lied

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Taylor Hudak: Hi, everyone, I'm Taylor Hudak with acTVism Munich, and welcome back to another Julian Assange case update. The UK High Courts of Justice has agreed to hear the US government appeal in the extradition case against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. The decision comes seven months after a UK judge denied extradition due to Assange's poor mental health and the conditions he may face in a US prison. The Crown Prosecution Service representing the US government has been given limited permission to appeal on technical grounds. However, the Crown does not have permission to challenge expert medical evidence.

Stella Moris: I know that the grounds that were rejected were... The US tried to second guess that the magistrate's conclusions on the medical and the expert evidence and the High Court rejected that attempt and has accepted the magistrate's court conclusions on the expert evidence.

TH: Julian Assange's physical and mental health has been in decline for many years. Doctors, medical professionals and the UN special rapporteur Nils Melzer have been raising concerns about Assange's health and the impact of his prolonged suffering and subjection to psychological torture.

Dr. Jill Stein: He needs a comprehensive evaluation, and I should just add that as part of his confinement, he was denied even the basic rights of prisoners when he was in Ecuador. He was not allowed even sunshine and recreation and to be deprived of sunshine for over a decade, you know, there is no experiment about that anywhere.

TH: And while the crown has not been given permission to appeal the medical evidence, the US government is changing its tone. The US Department of Justice is now assuring that Assange will not be placed under SAM's or special administrative measures, nor will he serve

his sentence at ADX Florence if extradited, tried and convicted. However, these statements are in fact misleading.

SM: SAM's is the condition where they put you, basically bury you alive, where you cannot speak to your friends or your family, and even your lawyers are gagged from talking about how you are, what your conditions are, or your case basically in public. And ADX is just one of many Supermax prisons. So when the US says we're not going to place him in ADX, they are not saying that they're not going to- that they will not place him in Supermax. There are multiple prisons that they could choose from.

TH: According to Stella Moris, in the US documents to the UK, it states that these new undertakings can change once Assange is in US custody. The head of the CIA, in consultation with other government entities, has the power to determine where Assange will be held and under what restrictions.

SM: The CIA is the same agency that is behind it's agents plotting to kill Julian in the embassy, kidnaping- kidnap him, targeting his lawyers, spying on his legal meetings, even targeting our six month old baby. So does anyone doubt that this agency would not recommend putting Julian in special administrative measures once he's in the United States?

TH: And that's not all, the US States will allow Assange to apply for prisoner transfer to Australia, which is permissible under the Council of Europe Convention on the transfer of sentenced persons. He may only apply when his trial and the appeals process in the United States has concluded.

SM: As long as the case is in the courts, which could take a decade or even two to reach the Supreme Court, Julian would remain in a US prison under atrocious solitary confinement, atrocious conditions that the Magistrates Court judge said would end his life.

TH: This all comes at a time when the key witness for the US government admitted to lying to investigators about Assange in exchange for immunity. The witness Soggi Thordarson admitted during an interview that he fabricated the accusations against Assange. These accusations that are related to hacking that Thordarson now says are false were used to broaden the scope of the conspiracy to commit computer intrusion charge, including in the superseding indictment against Assange.

Dr. JS: It's really fitting that this is the star witness and this is the person on whom the case depends, because the prosecution understood one thing, maybe that one thing only, which was that they would be in trouble if they had to rely only on convicting Assange as a publisher, because that would get them right back into The New York Times problem, which is why they wanted to prove that he was a criminal. Which is why they kind of went to the bottom of the barrel to find somebody who could make something up that would make Julian Assange look like a criminal and would basically implicate him in essentially computer type crimes. So it was complete B.S. from the start. This case just makes such a mockery of the entire Western system of justice.

TH: And governments around the world are taking notice. Several Australian MPs and senators participating in a video directed to President Biden. The video reiterates the

importance of protecting journalists and publishers while also encouraging the US to drop the appeal.

Andrew Wilkie MP: We are Australian parliamentarians and we're calling on the government of the United States to drop the unprecedented Espionage Act charges against Julian Assange.

Julian Hill MP: And we're imploring the British government to release him from prison and send him home.

Susan Templeman MP: Citizens expect us to protect journalists and publishers, not to imprison them for their work.

George Christensen MP: The ruling by UK District Judge Vanessa Baraitser on January the 4th of this year to deny extradition provides the opportunity for urgent reconsideration.

Australian MPs: President Biden, we implore you, please drop the US government's appeal in light of the judgement rendered in the UK.

TH: Additionally, ten Icelandic MPs across five different parties have sent a letter to the US ambassador calling for President Biden to drop the charges against Julian Assange. And 95 Greek MPs signed an open letter once again calling for the Biden administration to drop this case. And ahead of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's trip to the US to meet with President Biden, a group of one hundred and twenty Bundestag members, artists, journalists, producers and writers have sent a letter to Merkel. The letter details concerns over Assange's health, his ongoing imprisonment and the importance of defending the free press. Among the signatories include members of parliament from the entire political spectrum. This includes former foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel, vice president of the German Bundestag, Wolfgang Kubicki, Karl Lauterbach of the Social Democrats, former minister of Finance Oskar Lafontaine, among several others. And a group consisting of more than 250 medical professionals from 35 different countries, "DoctorsForAssange", sent a letter to President Biden urging him to drop the Espionage Act charges against Julian Assange for publishing activity.

Dr. JS: We wrote to President Biden and Attorney General Garland imploring them to drop the case, to drop the case entirely because it is a threat to the health of Julian Assange. It's a threat to the health of our democracy. And, you know, the case is a sham. It is a mockery of democracy. It has become even more ludicrous with the recent legal developments. And, you know, aside from the threats to Julian Assange's health, which we've discussed, it's very much a threat to our democracy and in particular to press freedom.

TH: Since 2019 "DoctorsforAssange" has raised awareness of Julian Assange's poor health, his mistreatment and psychological torture. In this most recent letter to the Biden administration received significant media coverage.

Dr. JS: We had no idea, you know, whether this was going to be picked up by anybody, but we were shocked to see that it got picked up by the AP and it had saturation coverage in Australia, a fair amount in the UK and I'm really grateful to the people who got this going who were largely UK and Australia, who got it founded. And, you know, and it's been

growing ever since. And I'd say if there are any health care providers out there that share these concerns about the health of Assange and the health of democracy, join the uprising.

TH: Julian Assange is still in Belmarsh prison and there is no court date for the US appeal. AcTVism Munich will continue to provide you with the latest reporting on this case. So please make sure that you are subscribed to our YouTube channel. And to support independent journalism, including our coverage of the Julian Assange case, please donate to our organization. I'm Taylor Hudak with acTVism Munich, and I'll see you guys next time.

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