

Swedish court upholds vendetta against Julian Assange

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The Stockholm Appeals Court yesterday upheld the arrest warrant that a Swedish prosecutor issued against WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange four years ago. Assange's lawyers sought to have the warrant overturned on the grounds it could not be enforced because he was granted asylum by Ecuador and has been residing in its London embassy for more than two years.

In a finding that can only be described as a travesty, the court declared that "account must be taken of the fact that Julian Assange is suspected of crimes of a relatively serious nature." If the warrant were dismissed, the court asserted, "there is a great risk that he will flee and thereby evade legal proceedings."

Before issuing its vindictive decision, the Swedish court was aware that the allegations made by Swedish prosecutor Marianne Ny that Assange raped two Swedish women in 2010 have been thoroughly discredited. As the "Justice for Assange" website detailed earlier this year:

"Over the past year, new information has emerged that both women explicitly deny having been raped by Mr. Assange. In a statement to the UK Supreme Court, the prosecutor acknowledged that the complainants wished only to ask the police for advice about HIV tests, having discovered they had both had sex with Mr. Assange. (There has never been an allegation Mr. Assange has HIV.)

"Neither of the women wished to lodge a formal complaint. The woman of whom Mr. Assange is accused of the offence of 'lesser rape' (a technical term in Swedish law) sent an SMS to a friend saying that she 'did not want to accuse JA [of] anything' and 'it was the police who made up the charges.' The other woman tweeted in 2013 that she had never been raped. Both women's testimonies say that they consented to

the sex. A senior prosecutor already dismissed the 'rape' accusation, saying that there were no grounds for accusing Mr. Assange on this basis."

Assange has been subjected to a monstrous frame-up and political persecution.

On September 1, 2010, prosecutor Ny "re-opened" the prosecution, just days after the allegations were dismissed by one of her colleagues. The decision to pursue the case was made amid growing denunciations of Assange by the US government and its allies over WikiLeaks' publication of leaked information that exposed US war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Assange left Sweden in late September 2010 for Britain, to direct the publication of thousands of secret US diplomatic cables that revealed sordid intrigues and conspiracies organised from American embassies.

Prosecutor Ny, after informing Assange's lawyers that he was free to leave, issued a European Arrest Warrant against him in November 2010 and demanded his extradition. From the time he was arrested in Britain until June 2012, Assange lived under effective house arrest while he fought legal cases through the courts to prevent being returned to Sweden.

The purpose of the rape allegations and arrest warrant was to silence WikiLeaks and discredit Assange as an individual. Assange's prosecution in Sweden for "lesser rape" was intended to provide time for the Obama administration to fabricate espionage charges against him and file for his extradition to the US. Private Bradley Manning, then 23 years old, had already been arrested as the source of leaks. Manning, now known as Chelsea, was convicted last year and sentenced to 35 years' imprisonment by an American military court martial for his courageous actions.

At every level, the British courts have dismissed evidence of the manufactured character of the rape

allegations. Likewise, they have rejected evidence of the witch-hunt atmosphere in Sweden that made clear Assange would not receive a fair trial, and revelations that a secret grand jury in the US had prepared unspecified charges against him.

The previous Labor Party government in Australia, where Assange is a citizen, renounced any defence of his rights. From the outset, it signalled that it backed the Swedish prosecution and would hand him over to the US if he returned to Australia.

After all his legal options in Britain were exhausted, Assange walked into Ecuador's embassy on June 19, 2012 to apply for asylum. Since then, he has been confined to the building. British police are stationed outside to arrest him if he attempts to leave. His physical health has markedly deteriorated but the British government refuses to guarantee that he will not be deported if he seeks hospital treatment.

Assange commented in June that "it would be foolish to relinquish my asylum in light of what happened to Chelsea Manning."

The brutal calculation of the Obama administration and its allies is that a medical emergency will eventually force Assange from the embassy, providing the opportunity to haul him off to the US via Sweden.

The author recommends:

Defend Julian Assange!

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All WWSW Coverage of the Persecution of WikiLeaks



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