

Sweden drops some allegations against Julian Assange but US-backed persecution continues

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Swedish director of public prosecutions Marianne Ny announced Thursday that she will be “compelled” by August 18 to “discontinue” investigations into three of four politically motivated allegations of sexual offences made in 2010 against WikiLeaks’ editor Julian Assange, because a five-year statute of limitations will have expired. In making the statement, Ny stressed that her office will continue to seek to charge 44-year-old Assange with a remaining allegation of rape, which can be pursued until 2020.

Ny’s decision brings into focus the unrelenting determination of the Obama administration, with the collaboration of the governments of Sweden, Britain and Australia, to condemn Assange to a prison cell—or worse. The passing of five years has not dampened their vindictive hatred of the WikiLeaks editor for his role in the publication of information that revealed the extent of US war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, and Washington’s no less criminal diplomatic intrigues around the world. They will not rest in their vendetta to make an example of him.

The allegations that Ny declared she has to “discontinue,” as well as the remaining claim of “rape,” have been thoroughly exposed as a part of an orchestrated attempt to frame-up Assange, detain him in Sweden and then extradite him to the US to face espionage charges.

On August 20, 2010, just one month after WikiLeaks published the “Afghanistan War Diary”—thousands of documents that proved the extent of civilian killings by US and NATO forces—two women with whom Assange had had consensual sexual relations went to a Stockholm police station to see if they could compel him to take an HIV test.

From then, the situation spiralled into police and a prosecutor issuing a warrant for Assange’s arrest on

suspicion of “molestation” and “rape”—outlandish claims that were immediately leaked to the media. After a second prosecutor dismissed the rape allegation due to lack of any evidence, Assange voluntarily went to the police on August 30 and made a statement regarding the assertion of molestation. He was not charged and left Sweden for London on September 27 unimpeded.

On November 20, after WikiLeaks had released the “Iraq War Logs” of US crimes in Iraq and as it was preparing to release hundreds of thousands of leaked US diplomatic cables, Swedish prosecutors issued an Interpol Red Notice warrant for his arrest. The warrant demanded his extradition to Sweden to be interviewed on the rape allegation, which Marianne Ny had revived in September. An international media frenzy ensued, aimed at personally discrediting Assange and undermining the explosive revelations made public by WikiLeaks.

For the following 20 months, Assange and his legal defenders pursued every avenue through the British courts against the extradition, arguing that the Swedish allegations were the means to have him transferred to the US. American Vice President Joe Biden had publicly labelled Assange a “high-tech terrorist” and reports pointed to the convening of a secret grand jury in Virginia and the issuing of a warrant for his prosecution for espionage. Private Bradley (now Chelsea) Manning was being held in solitary confinement on charges of being the source of the data supplied to WikiLeaks.

The exhaustion of Assange’s legal efforts in the UK to fight his political persecution led him to seek refuge in the Ecuadoran embassy in London on June 19, 2012, and apply for political asylum. Despite his request being granted by Ecuador, the Cameron government

has maintained a 24-hour police guard on the embassy, ready to arrest Assange and dispatch him to Sweden if he attempts to leave.

The website “Justice For Assange” has meticulously assembled all the relevant information and documents regarding what transpired from August 20, 2010 to the present day. The evidence is overwhelming: the claims of sexual assault against Julian Assange were a frame-up.

A 2012 investigation by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation “Four Corners” program, headlined “Sex, Lies and Julian Assange,” also provided a damning exposure of the actions of Swedish authorities on behalf of the Obama administration. It is still available for viewing on the ABC website.

Moreover, both women who initially sought to have Assange take a blood test have since explicitly repudiated the allegations. One sent an SMS to a friend stating that she “did not want to accuse JA [of] anything” and “it was the police who made up the charges.” The other tweeted in 2013 that she had never been raped.

Ny’s declaration that three of the allegations will be “discontinued” follows months of stalling by her office over when it would interview Assange at the Ecuadoran embassy in London. It is still unclear as to whether the Swedish prosecutors will travel to the UK to interview him over the remaining claim. Swedish authorities have categorically refused to give Assange a guarantee that if he travelled to Sweden he would not be extradited to the US.

Julian Assange issued a brief statement yesterday following Ny’s announcement, which read in part: “I am an innocent man. I haven’t even been charged. From the beginning I offered a simple solution. Come to the embassy to take my statement or promise not to send me to the United States. This Swedish official refused both. She even refused a written statement. Now she has managed to avoid hearing my side of the story entirely. This is beyond incompetence.”

Assange’s de facto imprisonment inside the embassy, where he is denied access to the open air and natural sunlight, has had considerable impact on his health. In 2014, he was diagnosed with a potentially life-threatening heart defect and a chronic lung condition. His persecution nevertheless continues unabated.

Although Assange is an Australian citizen, the

government of Australia continues to openly collaborate with the US campaign. In 2010, the Labor Party government of Julia Gillard denounced Assange and WikiLeaks as “illegal” and ruled out any assistance to him as he faced political persecution. In 2012, it amended legislation to remove any barrier to extraditing Australian citizens on “political offences” committed in other countries, in the event Assange somehow made it back to Australia. Labor’s role as Washington’s accomplice has been continued seamlessly by the conservative government of Tony Abbott that came to power in September 2013.

The Cameron government in the UK announced yesterday that it will file a formal protest against Ecuador and remains intent on extraditing Assange to Sweden. In a statement of Orwellian dimensions, British Foreign Office minister Hugo Swire declared: “Ecuador must recognise that its decision to harbor Mister Assange more than three years ago has prevented the proper course of justice.”

The Obama administration remains ready should it get its hands on Julian Assange. In March this year, a US court threw out a Freedom of Information Act request for the release of documents relating to FBI investigations into WikiLeaks on the grounds it would prejudice a “multi-subject investigation” that is “still active and ongoing.”

In August 2013, Bradley (Chelsea) Manning was sentenced to a brutal 35-year prison term for his courageous role in the exposure of war crimes.



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