

Assange's fiancée Stella Moris speaks outside court: This political persecution must end!

Our reporters
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Stella Moris and WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Kristinn Hrafnsson spoke outside the Royal Courts of Justice in London yesterday at the end of a two-day extradition appeal by the United States government.

The Biden administration is seeking to extradite and imprison Julian Assange under the Espionage Act for his journalism that exposed US war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Hrafnsson's remarks and those of Assange's partner Stella Moris are reprinted below.

Kristinn Hrafnsson:

This afternoon the lawyers for Julian Assange were tearing apart the so-called assurances, the revokable assurances the US is now claiming that they can put forward. The assurances that Julian will be treated fairly, treated well, in the prisons of the United States, that he will get medical help and all that.

I just want to remind people that in the magistrates' court they had all the opportunity to actually voice such assurances. They did not. On the contrary, they went on the defence for the prison system in the United States.

They said that so-called Special Administrative Measures—which basically equals solitary confinement, which basically means torture and for Julian in his condition, death—that SAMS were not that bad at all. They also defended ADX Florence, Colorado, the most notorious prison in the United States, where Julian might end up. They were defending that prison in a manner that was extraordinary.

They were saying that Julian and prisoners in ADX Florence could have recreational activities, they could play bridge. What are they saying? That Julian would in ADX Florence be sitting down with [drug kingpin] El Chapo, with Timothy McVeigh, the Unabomber and other homegrown terrorists and play bridge?

They also said, which Julian's lawyers pointed out

this afternoon, that they could have “individual recreational activity in their own cells”. What does that mean? They are throwing people in cells and keeping them in there for 22-23 hours a day. Only an hour a day outside their cell—in another cell with nothing in it.

That's what waits Julian on the other side, on Devil's Island, if he is extradited. That cannot happen.

The judges here have only two choices: uphold the decision not to extradite Julian Assange or de facto hand out a death sentence. That cannot happen. We have to rely on all of you to make sure that in the weeks ahead, while these two judges are deliberating, that you make your voice heard. That you put pressure on your media and your politicians. Because this cannot happen, this must come to an end.

Stella Moris:

If the US wants to treat Julian fairly and well, they should drop this case. They should release Julian from prison because he is suffering right now. In court today, Mark Summers QC, Julian's defence, said that ‘there is nothing normal about this case’.

There is nothing normal about this case.

It is not just the defence which says that. The [Crown Prosecution Service] told Sweden in 2010, “please do not think that we are treating this as a normal extradition case.” This is a political persecution that has used the law, extradition law, as a tool to further its political agenda. To take revenge on a journalist. For what? For the publications that he is now indicted over. Publications that revealed war crimes, targeted assassinations, rendition, torture, but also the US subversion of the judiciary in Germany, in Spain, in Italy, when those judges, those investigators had the gall to investigate those same crimes. To investigate CIA rendition and torture of their citizens.

This US extradition case has been falling apart since

the moment it started because it was born rotten. It was born at a time when the CIA was plotting to assassinate Julian. And it is also proving to be devastating for the US in the courts. Not only because the US prison system and its inhumane conditions is exposed before these courts in its whole barbarity. But also because the crimes that have been undertaken by the US government against Julian are also exposed before these courts.

Today we were able to air in court Mike Pompeo's plans, his 'sketches' and 'options' to assassinate Julian in London. To assassinate a journalist in this city for doing his job because he exposed their crimes.

This country cannot tolerate, should not tolerate, the targeted assassination of journalists for doing their jobs. This should be obvious. We shouldn't be here. I hope the courts reach the right conclusion. But I also call on the US government to not just say they defend media freedom, to not just say journalists shouldn't be killed and imprisoned, but they should walk the walk, not just talk the talk. They should drop this case. They should free Julian.



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