# Julian Assange Returns to Australia After 14-Year Legal Battle



**Julian Assange Returns to Australia After 14-Year Legal Battle**

**CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA - June 26, 2024** - WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange returned to Australia on June 26 to an enthusiastic reception, following a prolonged 14-year legal ordeal. Assange pleaded guilty to violating U.S. espionage laws, culminating in his freedom.

The plea was accepted by Chief U.S. District Judge Ramona V. Manglona in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. Despite claims that Assange's actions endangered lives, the judge noted the inability of U.S. officials to identify specific victims.

At a press briefing on June 26, a U.S. State Department spokesperson reiterated that Assange's releases had put people at risk but failed to provide concrete examples. The Justice Department operated independently in the case, with minimal coordination between the State Department and the Australian government.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong emphasized that Assange's prolonged detention served no purpose, highlighting Australia’s efforts in advocating for his release.

In Canberra, Assange's family requested privacy as he adjusts to freedom, marking the end of a significant chapter in a long and contentious saga.