# Julian Assange Freed from Five Years of Solitary Confinement



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London - Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, has been released from Belmarsh Prison in London after serving five years in solitary confinement. Assange, who had been fighting extradition to the United States, was freed following a plea agreement that saw the U.S. drop 17 out of 18 espionage charges against him.

He departed London on a chartered flight funded partially by WikiLeaks' fundraising campaign. Assange was accompanied by a WikiLeaks lawyer, a representative of the Australian government, and a medic to monitor his health. His destination was the U.S. territory of the Northern Mariana Islands, where he will plead guilty to one espionage charge related to obtaining and disclosing information of national importance.

Upon the conclusion of these proceedings, Assange will return to his home country, Australia, to reunite with his wife, Stella, and their two young sons. Stella Assange expressed a mixture of relief and anger over her husband's long period of imprisonment, highlighting the intervention of Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese as crucial to his release. Albanese had urged U.S. authorities to drop the charges, emphasizing that the case had dragged on for too long.

The decision to release Assange came after a private bail hearing and extensive negotiations. U.S. officials have agreed to withdraw the extradition request following his court appearance in the Northern Mariana Islands, scheduled to take place on June 26, 2024.

Assange's flight touched down on the island of Saipan at 6:14 am local time. After the legal proceedings, he will travel to Australia to begin his life anew with his family.