# Julian Assange reaches plea deal with U.S. government, to plead guilty to single charge under Espionage Act



Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, has reached a plea deal with the U.S. government, expected to plead guilty to a single charge under the Espionage Act. This agreement concludes his prolonged legal battle over the extradition to the U.S., sparing him further imprisonment beyond the five years already served in Belmarsh Prison, London.

Assange, 52, flew from London to the U.S. territory of the Northern Mariana Islands to enter his guilty plea in Saipan on June 26, 2024. Following this, he is set to return to Australia to reunite with his family. The plea deal, which resulted in the dismissal of 17 other charges, has sparked a range of reactions across the political spectrum in the U.S. While some view it as a threat to press freedom, others see it as a fair resolution considering the years already spent in custody.

The deal also highlights the diplomatic efforts, particularly from the Australian government, which played a role in negotiating Assange's release. The court in Saipan is expected to credit his time served, leading to his immediate release and return to Australia. The resolution of the case has elicited responses about its implications for journalistic freedom and the legal treatment of those who publish classified information.