# Julian Assange released from Belmarsh Prison and leaves UK after plea deal negotiations with US authorities



Julian Assange, founder of WikiLeaks, has been released from Belmarsh Prison and has departed the UK following negotiations for a plea deal with US authorities. Assange spent over five years in the maximum-security facility before being granted bail by the High Court in London. He flew out from Stansted Airport on June 24 and is expected to return to Australia.

Assange, facing charges under the Espionage Act, has agreed to plead guilty to conspiring to illegally obtain and disseminate classified information. His plea and sentencing are scheduled for Wednesday in the Mariana Islands.

This development concludes Assange's prolonged legal battle against extradition to the United States. Authorities had pursued his extradition following WikiLeaks' publication of thousands of classified documents related to US military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. His legal struggles also included a seven-year asylum stay in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London to avoid extradition to the US and Sweden.

Assange will reunite with his wife, Stella, and their children, who have only known him behind bars. The Australian government continues to provide consular assistance, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese remarking on the lengthy nature of Assange's incarceration.