# Julian Assange released from UK prison and departs country after lengthy legal battle



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has been released from Belmarsh Prison in the UK following a lengthy legal battle and has departed the country, according to a statement from WikiLeaks posted on June 24. Assange, who spent 1,901 days in the maximum-security facility, was granted bail by the High Court in London. He was released at Stansted Airport in the afternoon, where he boarded a plane and left the UK.

This release comes as part of ongoing negotiations with the US Department of Justice regarding a plea deal. Assange is scheduled to appear in federal court in the Mariana Islands, a US commonwealth in the Western Pacific, on Wednesday to plead guilty to an Espionage Act charge related to conspiring to unlawfully obtain and disseminate classified national defense information. This pertains to the massive leak of documents concerning the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

The Australian-born Assange had been fighting extradition from the UK for more than five years, much of this time confined in Belmarsh. His plea deal includes a proposed sentence of 62 months, aligning with the time he has already served, which could allow him to return to his home country, Australia, soon.

Assange initially entered the Ecuadorean Embassy in London in 2012 to avoid extradition to Sweden and was later detained by British authorities in 2019. His release follows a global campaign and various legal appeals against his extradition to the US.

Julian Assange, who gained international notoriety in 2009 after WikiLeaks published tens of thousands of classified documents, will soon reunite with his wife, Stella Assange, and their children. The Australian government has maintained consular support for Assange, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese stating that his incarceration has lasted too long.