# Julian Assange released from UK prison, heads to Saipan for espionage plea deal



Julian Assange, founder of WikiLeaks, has been released from Belmarsh Prison in the UK and has landed in Bangkok, Thailand. Assange, who had been incarcerated for five years, was freed on bail on June 24, 2024, as part of a plea deal involving the US Department of Justice. The arrangement allows Assange to plead guilty to one espionage charge in a US court located in Saipan, the capital of the Northern Mariana Islands, after which he is expected to return to Australia.

The plea deal includes a provision that spares Assange any additional prison time beyond the five years he has already served. This deal follows years of legal battles and extensive involvement from various parties, including Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. Assange's wife, Stella, confirmed his arrival in Bangkok and subsequent departure to Saipan, with supporters tracking his flight via Flight Aware in case of any issues. The $500,000 fee for Assange's private flight was covered through crowdfunding efforts.

Assange is set to appear in Saipan court on June 26 to enter his guilty plea, after which he will be allowed to return to Australia. This marks the potential end of Assange's 14-year-long legal ordeal, which included charges related to publishing classified US documents and controversies surrounding his asylum in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.