# Julian Assange strikes plea deal with US Justice Department, to be released from prison



Julian Assange, founder of WikiLeaks, has struck a plea deal with the US Justice Department, leading to his release from Belmarsh Prison in London after over five years. The 52-year-old will plead guilty to conspiring to obtain and disclose classified US national defense documents. The hearing will be held in Saipan, a US territory in the Northern Mariana Islands, on June 26, 2024. Assange is expected to be sentenced to 62 months of time already served, allowing him to return to Australia.

This development concludes a prolonged legal battle that saw Assange spend seven years in the Ecuadorian embassy in London and subsequent time in a high-security British prison. His wife, Stella Assange, who has been part of his legal team, intends to seek a pardon, expressing concern over the implications of an espionage conviction for journalists worldwide.

The plea deal spares Assange further incarceration, but he will have to bear the significant cost of his transport back to Australia, prompting the launch of a fundraising campaign to cover the expenses. The arrangement follows years of diplomatic efforts by the Australian government, advocating for Assange's release.