# Julian Assange to be Freed After Reaching Plea Deal with U.S. Justice Department



Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, will soon be free after reaching a plea deal with the U.S. Justice Department. Assange, an Australian citizen, was originally facing up to 175 years in prison on 18 counts under the Espionage Act for the 2010 publication of over 250,000 classified documents. This legal saga, spanning over a decade, saw him spending nearly seven years in the Ecuadorian embassy in London and over five years in Belmarsh Prison.

On Tuesday, Assange's plane refueled in Bangkok before heading to Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, for a court hearing. He is expected to plead guilty to one count of conspiring to unlawfully obtain and disseminate classified U.S. national defense information. This deal, advocated strongly by Assange’s supporters and international press freedom groups like Reporters Without Borders (RSF), aims to resolve the long-standing case while allowing him to return to Australia after sentencing.

Stella Assange, Julian's wife, confirmed the deal, expressing relief and detailing some of the logistical challenges and costs involved. Kristinn Hrafnsson, WikiLeaks' editor-in-chief, highlighted the significant role of Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in facilitating the agreement.

Assange’s plea is anticipated to mitigate further imprisonment, accounting for his time served. His case drew widespread attention for confronting press freedom issues and has implications for journalism and handling classified information globally.