# Julian Assange to Plead Guilty to Felony Charge, Ending Standoff with US



Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, has agreed to plead guilty to a felony charge of illegally obtaining and disclosing national security material. This plea arrangement will facilitate his release from a British prison, concluding his prolonged standoff with the United States.

Assange, 52, will appear before a federal judge in Saipan, the capital of the Northern Mariana Islands, as detailed in a court filing made public on Monday. Saipan, a U.S. commonwealth in the Pacific Ocean, is notably closer to Assange’s home country of Australia compared to other U.S. court locations.

The court hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m. local time on Wednesday. Following the proceedings, Assange is expected to return to Australia. This development was confirmed by Matthew J. McKenzie, a counterterrorism official, in a letter to the presiding judge.

WikiLeaks released a video showing Assange boarding a flight at London’s Stansted airport at 5 p.m. on Monday. This announcement coincided with news of his forthcoming guilty plea to violating U.S. espionage law, under a deal allowing him to return to Australia.