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Julian Assange: A timeline of Wikileaks founder's case

🕒 19 November 2019



Wikileaks co-founder Julian Assange is currently jailed in the UK, and is fighting extradition to the United States on espionage charges.

The 48-year-old Australian was arrested in April 2019 at the Ecuadorean embassy in London, where he had been staying since 2012.

He sought asylum at the embassy to avoid extradition to Sweden on a rape allegation that he denied.

After his arrest, he was sentenced to 50 weeks in jail for breaching his bail

conditions and is currently being held at Belmarsh prison in London.

An investigation into the 2010 rape allegation has now been dropped by Swedish prosecutors.

These are the key dates:

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- **August 2010** - The Swedish Prosecutor's Office first issues an arrest warrant for Mr Assange. It says there are two separate allegations - one of rape and one of molestation. Mr Assange says the claims are "without basis"
- **December 2010** - Mr Assange is arrested in London and bailed at the second attempt
- **May 2012** - The UK's Supreme Court rules he should be extradited to Sweden to face questioning over the allegations
- **June 2012** - Mr Assange enters the Ecuadorean embassy in London
- **August 2012** - Ecuador grants asylum to Mr Assange, saying there are fears his human rights might be violated if he is extradited
- **August 2015** - Swedish prosecutors drop their investigation into two allegations - one of sexual molestation and one of unlawful coercion - because they have run out of time to question him. But he still faces the more serious accusation of rape
- **October 2015** - The Metropolitan Police announces that officers will no longer be stationed outside the Ecuadorean embassy
- **February 2016** - A UN panel rules that Mr Assange has been "arbitrarily detained" by UK and Swedish authorities since 2010
- **May 2017** - Sweden's director of public prosecutions announces that the rape investigation into Mr Assange is being dropped
- **July 2018** - The UK and Ecuador confirm they are holding talks over the fate of Mr Assange
- **October 2018** - Mr Assange is given a set of house rules by the Ecuadorean embassy
- **October 2018** - It's revealed he is to launch legal action against the

Assange is reported to have taken legal action against the government of Ecuador - accusing it of violating his "fundamental rights and freedoms"

- **December 2018** - Mr Assange's lawyer rejects an agreement announced by Ecuador's president that would see him leave the Ecuadorean embassy
- **February 2019** - Australia grants Mr Assange a new passport amid fears Ecuador may bring his asylum to an end
- **April 2019** - The Metropolitan Police enter the embassy and detain him for "failing to surrender to the court" over a warrant issued in 2012
- **May 2019** - Mr Assange is sentenced to 50 weeks in jail for breaching his bail conditions
- **May 2019** - Sweden reopens the sexual assault investigation and the US files 17 new charges against Mr Assange
- **November 2019** - Swedish prosecutors discontinue an investigation into an allegation of rape against Mr Assange

Below is more information on how events have unfolded:

11 August 2010

Julian Assange arrives in Sweden on a speaking trip partly arranged by "Miss A", a member of the Christian Association of Social Democrats. He has not met "Miss A" before but reports suggest they have arranged in advance that he can stay at her apartment while she is out of town for a few days.

14 August 2010

"Miss A" and Mr Assange attend a seminar by the Social Democrats' Brotherhood Movement on "War and the role of media", at which the Wikileaks founder is the key speaker. The two reportedly have sex that night.

17 August 2010

Mr Assange reportedly has sex with a woman he met at the seminar on 14

August, identified as "Miss W".

Some time between 17 and 20 August, "Miss W" and "Miss A" are in contact and apparently share with a journalist the concerns they have about aspects of their sexual encounters with Mr Assange.

18 August 2010

Mr Assange applies for a residence permit to live and work in Sweden. He hopes to create a base for Wikileaks there, because of the country's laws protecting whistleblowers.

20 August 2010

The Swedish Prosecutor's Office issues an arrest warrant for Mr Assange based on allegations of rape and molestation.

Both women reportedly say that what started as consensual sex became non-consensual.

Wikileaks quotes Mr Assange as saying the accusations are "without basis" and that their appearance "at this moment is deeply disturbing".

A later message on the Wikileaks Twitter feed says the group has been warned to expect "dirty tricks".

21 August 2010

The arrest warrant is withdrawn.

"I don't think there is reason to suspect that he has committed rape," says one of Stockholm's chief prosecutors, Eva Finne.

Prosecutors say the investigation into the molestation allegation will continue, but it is not a serious enough crime for an arrest warrant.

The lawyer for the two women, Claes Borgstrom, lodges an appeal against this decision to a special department in the public prosecutions office.

31 August 2010

Mr Assange is questioned by police in Stockholm and formally told of the allegations against him, according to his lawyer at the time, Leif Silbersky. The activist denies the allegations.

1 September 2010

Sweden's Director of Prosecution Marianne Ny says she is reopening the rape investigation against Mr Assange.

"Considering information available at present, my judgement is that the classification of the crime is rape," she says.

18 October 2010

The Wikileaks founder (an Australian citizen) is **denied residency in Sweden**. No reason is given, although an official on Sweden's Migration Board tells the AFP news agency "he did not fulfil the requirements".





18 November 2010

Stockholm District Court approves a request to detain Mr Assange for questioning on suspicion of rape, sexual molestation and unlawful coercion. Ms Ny says he has not been available for questioning.

By this time Mr Assange has travelled to London. His British lawyer, Mark Stephens, says his client offered to be interviewed at the Swedish embassy in London or Scotland Yard or via videolink. He accuses Ms Ny of "abusing her powers" in insisting that Mr Assange return to Sweden.

20 November 2010

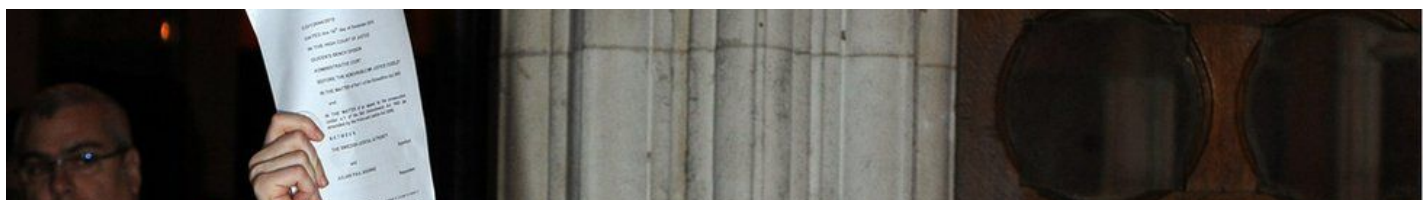
Swedish police issue an international arrest warrant for Mr Assange via Interpol.

8 December 2010

The Wikileaks founder gives himself up to British police and is taken to an extradition hearing. He is remanded in custody pending another hearing.

16 December 2010

Mr Assange is granted bail by the High Court and is freed after his supporters pay £240,000 in cash and sureties.





Mr Assange held up a court document to the media after he was released on bail

24 February 2011

A British court rules that Mr Assange should be extradited to Sweden.

3 March 2011

Lawyers lodge papers at the High Court for an appeal against extradition.

2 November 2011

The High Court upholds the decision to extradite Mr Assange.

5 December 2011

Mr Assange wins the right to petition the UK Supreme Court directly after judges rule that his case raised "a question of general public importance".

30 May 2012

The Supreme Court rules that he should be extradited to Sweden.

19 June 2012

Ecuador's foreign minister says Mr Assange has applied for political asylum at Ecuador's embassy in London.

15 August 2012

Ecuador's foreign minister claims the UK has issued a "threat" to enter the Ecuadorean embassy in London to arrest Mr Assange. The Foreign Office says it reminded Ecuador that it has the power to revoke the diplomatic immunity of an embassy on UK soil and says Britain has a legal obligation to extradite him.

16 August 2012

Ecuador grants asylum to Mr Assange, saying there are fears his human rights might be violated if he is extradited. Mr Assange describes it as a "significant victory", but the UK government expresses its disappointment.





Mr Assange spoke to the media and his supporters from the Ecuadorean embassy in August 2012

20 August 2012

The UK **insists it will not grant Mr Assange "safe passage"** to Ecuador as it seeks a diplomatic solution. Downing Street says the government is legally obliged to extradite him to Sweden.

8 October 2012

Nine people who put up bail sureties for Mr Assange are **ordered by a judge to pay thousands of pounds each** after his failure to appear in court.

29 November 2012

Ecuador's ambassador says Mr Assange has **a chronic lung infection** "which could get worse at any moment". The embassy says it has **sought assurances** Mr Assange will not be arrested if he is taken to hospital.

18 August 2014

Mr Assange **says he will leave London's Ecuadorean embassy "soon"** after two years of refuge. He does not clarify when he will depart but says it is "probably not" for the reasons reported in the UK press. Stories had suggested he required medical treatment.

13 August 2015

Swedish prosecutors **drop their investigation into one accusation of sexual molestation and one of unlawful coercion** against Mr Assange because they

have run out of time to question him. The more serious allegation of rape is not due to expire until 2020.

12 October 2015

Scotland Yard announces **it will no longer be sending officers to stand guard outside the Ecuadorean embassy** in London. Officers had been there since 2012, at an estimated cost of more than £12m.

The Metropolitan Police says the effort is "no longer believed proportionate" but it will be deploying "a number of overt and covert tactics to arrest" Mr Assange.

5 February 2016

A United Nations panel rules that Mr Assange should be allowed to walk free and be compensated for his "deprivation of liberty".

The UN's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention says the Wikileaks founder has been arbitrarily detained by UK and Swedish authorities since his arrest in 2010, and the detention violates his human, civil and political rights.

Mr Assange hails it a "significant victory" and calls the decision "binding" - but **UK Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond brands the ruling "ridiculous"**.

The UK Foreign Office says the report "changes nothing" and it will "formally contest the working group's opinion".

Before the ruling, police said he would still be arrested if he left the embassy.

14 November 2016

Sweden's chief prosecutor Inarid Isaren travels to London to **question Mr**

Assange at the Ecuadorean embassy.

Ms Isgren listened as the questions were put to him by an Ecuadorean prosecutor, under an agreement worked out with Ecuador.



Ingrid Isgren visited Ecuador's embassy in London to question Mr Assange

January 2017

Outgoing US President Barack Obama commutes the prison sentence given to US army private Chelsea Manning for leaking classified documents to Wikileaks.

Mr Assange says he stands by his offer to agree to be extradited to the US if Mr Obama granted clemency to Manning.

21 April 2017

US Attorney General Jeff Sessions says arresting Mr Assange is a priority. No charges have been filed against him in the US, but American media outlets report that federal prosecutors are considering charges

report that federal prosecutors are considering charges.

17 May 2017

Chelsea Manning is released from Fort Leavenworth military prison in Kansas.

19 May 2017

Sweden's director of public prosecutions announces that the rape investigation into Mr Assange is being dropped.

11 January 2018

The Ecuadorean government **confirms Mr Assange was granted Ecuadorean citizenship** in December and asks the UK to recognise him as a diplomatic agent - a move that would give him immunity. The UK refuses.

26 January 2018

Lawyers for Mr Assange ask for a UK warrant for his arrest to be dropped.

13 February 2018

An arrest warrant for Mr Assange is upheld by Westminster Magistrate's Court.

24 February 2018

Ecuador says the country's latest efforts to negotiate the departure of Mr Assange from its London embassy have failed.

28 March 2018

Ecuador cuts Mr Assange's internet connection.

18 May 2018

Ecuador removes extra security at its London embassy following claims that \$5m (£3.7m) has been spent to protect Mr Assange.

27 July 2018

The UK and Ecuador confirm they are holding talks over the fate of Mr Assange. Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno says he was never "in favour" of Mr Assange's activities.

16 October 2018

Mr Assange is given a set of house rules at the Ecuadorean embassy - which include cleaning his bathroom and taking better care of his cat.





The cat could often be seen peering out of the embassy's windows

He is warned that his feline companion could be confiscated and is also told to look after its "wellbeing, food and hygiene".

Ecuador also says it will partially restore Mr Assange's internet connection.

19 October 2018

Wikileaks lawyers say its co-founder is going to launch legal action against the government of Ecuador, accusing it of violating his "fundamental rights and freedoms".

It claims the government of Ecuador has refused Mr Assange a visit by Human Rights Watch general counsel Dinah PoKempner, and has not allowed several meetings with his lawyers.

In a statement, Wikileaks said: "Ecuador's measures against Julian Assange have been widely condemned by the human rights community."

6 December 2018

Mr Assange's lawyer, Barry Pollack, says his client will not be accepting a deal between the UK and Ecuador to allow him to be released.

The agreement was rejected over fears it could be used as a pretext to extradite him to the US.

"The suggestion that as long as the death penalty is off the table, Mr Assange need not fear persecution is obviously wrong," Mr Pollack says.

23 February 2019

Australia reveals that Mr Assange has a valid passport.

The passport would allow Mr Assange, who was born in Townsville, Australia, in 1971, to return to the country.

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) confirmed that the government had approved a passport application filed by Mr Assange in 2018.

5 April 2019

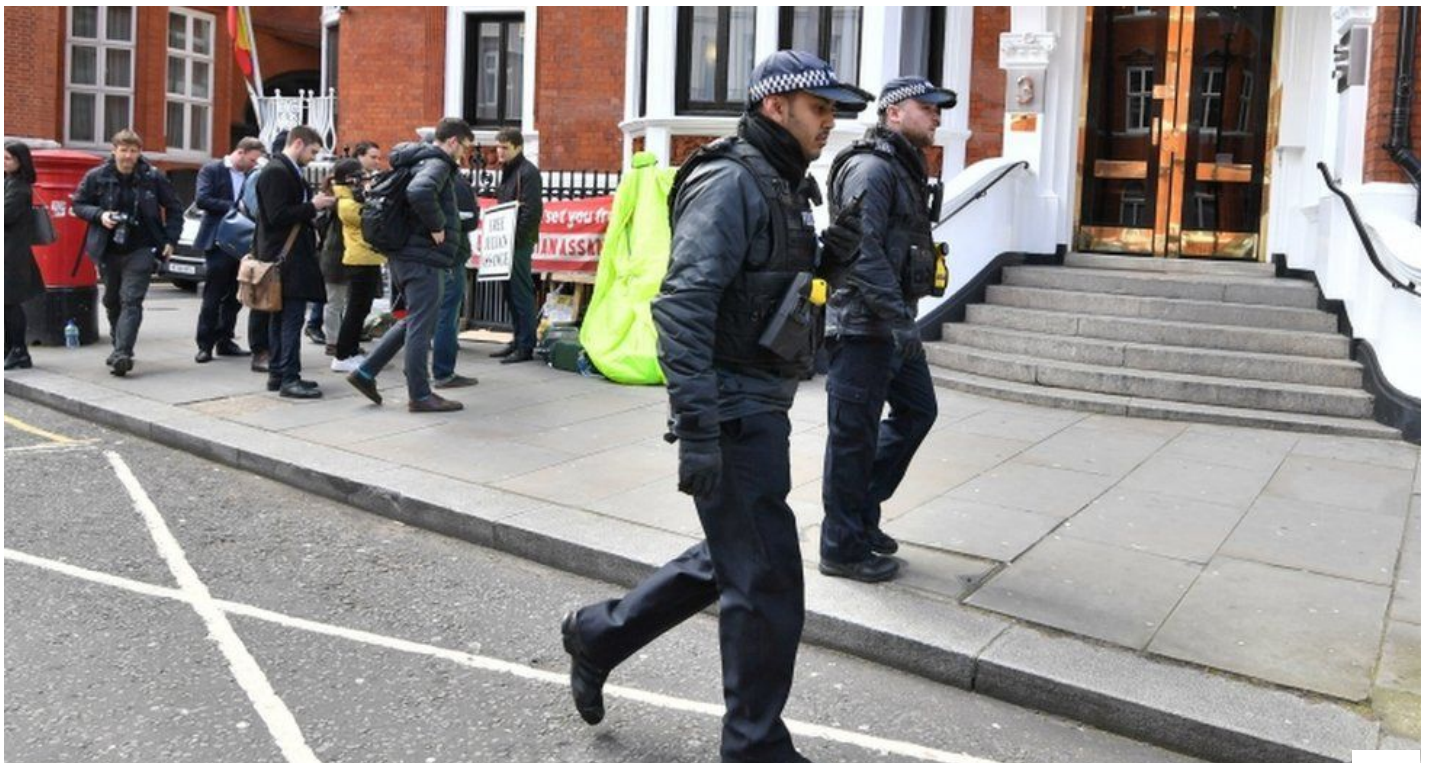
WikiLeaks tweets that a "high level source within the Ecuadorean state" has told them Mr Assange is to be expelled from the embassy within "hours or days".

A senior Ecuadorean official says no decision has been made to remove him from the London building.

11 April 2019

Mr Assange is arrested at London's Ecuadorean embassy by Metropolitan Police officers for "failing to surrender to the court".

Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno says Mr Assange's asylum was withdrawn after his repeated violations of international conventions.





Police officers outside the Ecuadorean Embassy

But WikiLeaks tweets that Ecuador has acted illegally in terminating Mr Assange's political asylum "in violation of international law".

1 May 2019

Mr Assange is sentenced to 50 weeks in jail after being found guilty of breaching the Bail Act.

13 May 2019

Sweden reopens an investigation into a rape allegation made against Mr Assange in 2010, which he denies.

The case was dropped two years before as Swedish prosecutors said they could not progress the case while Mr Assange was still inside the embassy.

Eva-Marie Persson, Sweden's deputy director of public prosecutions, said it would reopen because there was still "probable cause to suspect" that Mr Assange had committed the alleged rape.

23 May 2019

The US justice department files 17 new charges against Mr Assange, accusing him of violating the Espionage Act by publishing classified military and diplomatic documents.

The indictment said Mr Assange had "repeatedly encouraged sources with access to classified information to steal and provide it to Wikileaks to disclose".

Wikileaks tweets that the announcement is "madness" and the "end of national security journalism and the first amendment".

19 November 2019

A Swedish prosecutor says an investigation into an allegation of rape against

A Swedish prosecutor says an investigation into an allegation of rape against Mr Assange in 2010 has been discontinued.

Deputy chief prosecutor Eva-Marie Persson says that because so much time has passed since the allegation was made, the evidence has weakened considerably.

Mr Assange fled to the UK when the allegation of rape, which he denies, was made in 2010.

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