

Julian Assange says his life is at stake as U.S. seeks his extradition



London, June 15 (RHC)-- In London, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange appeared before a magistrates' court on Friday, saying his life was "effectively at stake" if the U.K. honors a U.S. request for his extradition.

Assange appeared by videolink from the high-security Belmarsh Prison, where he's serving a 50-week sentence for skipping bail in 2012 when he took refuge in the Ecuadorean Embassy in London. U.S. prosecutors have indicted Assange on 18 counts, including 17 violations of the Espionage Act, in the first-ever case of a journalist or publisher being indicted under the World War I-era law. U.S. authorities blame him for directing WikiLeaks' publication of a huge trove of secret documents that disclosed the names of people who provided confidential information to American and coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The co-founder of Wikileaks Julian Assange will now reportedly face a new, full U.S. extradition hearing in February 2020, a court at Westminster magistrates in London. The February 2020 hearing will reportedly last for five days. The hearing date was set after British Home Secretary Sajid Javid revealed that he had signed and certified the U.S. extradition order papers.

The 47-year-old Assange is currently in Belmarsh Prison on the outskirts of London serving a 50-week sentence for jumping bail in Britain. He was too ill to appear at a recent hearing but appeared at Westminster Magistrates' Court Friday via video link.

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