

# *Demonstrators in London demand freedom for Julian Assange*

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London, January 16 (RHC)-- Supporters of Wikileaks co-founder Julian Assange are calling for him to be released from prison after his appearance at London's Westminster Magistrates Court for a brief hearing once again reignited concerns about the state of his physical and mental well-being.

Campaigners are also wary of the legal proceedings being the next step in his extradition to the United States where he will face multiple charges related to computer hacking and the release of incriminating government documents.

Assange's court appearance drew crowds of supporters throughout the day, calling for his immediate release from the maximum security Belmarsh prison, where he is currently being detained and where he spends most of his days in solitary confinement.

One protest organizer said that it seems as if, step by step, Julian Assange is on the road to extradition to the United States, "something that people here are absolutely in opposition to, and what this will mean for journalism in general if Julian Assange is extradited to the United States."

Julian Assange was arrested after he was expelled from the Ecuadorian Embassy, in April of last year, where he had sought asylum for seven years in order to avoid another extradition hearing over sex offence allegations in Sweden which were consequently dropped.

Human rights organizations have expressed concern for the condition of Julian Assange in Belmarsh prison, with reports emerging raising questions as to whether he has been mistreated at the facility and if this has broken the laws.

For a man who has been pursued for the crime of making information on state sponsored terrorism and war crimes open to the public, it seems to many that the governments of both Britain and the US are working together to set an example to others who wish to follow in the footsteps of Julian Assange.

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