

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange denied bail by UK court



London, January 6 (RHC)-- Julian Assange has been refused bail because he “has an incentive to abscond” and there is a good chance he would fail to return to court if freed, according to the judge who delivered the decision in London.

Wednesday’s ruling by District Judge Vanessa Baraitser at Westminster Magistrates Court means the WikiLeaks founder will continue to be held at the maximum-security Belmarsh prison in the UK capital. Baraitser told the court: “I am satisfied that there are substantial grounds for believing that if Mr Assange is released today he will fail to surrender to the court to face the appellant proceedings.”

The decision marks a defeat for Assange’s legal team, which had been celebrating a ruling earlier this week against the United States’ attempt to extradite him. WikiLeaks said it would appeal against the denial of bail.

On Monday at the Old Bailey, Baraitser said if Assange were sent across the Atlantic to face 18 criminal charges of breaking an espionage law and conspiring to hack government computers, he would be at risk of suicide. Assange, who is 49 years-old and an Australian citizen, has been jailed at Belmarsh since he was arrested at the Ecuadorian embassy in London in 2019 for breaching bail conditions in a separate extradition case involving Sweden.

The U.S. government charges relate to the release by WikiLeaks of hundreds of thousands of confidential U.S. military records and diplomatic cables nearly 10 years ago. The documents revealed war crimes committed by U.S. troops and implicate Washington in crimes against humanity.

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