

British government admits spying on Julian Assange's lawyer



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London, June 9 (RHC)-- The British government admitted that it spied on Australian lawyer Jennifer Robinson, a member of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's legal team, and shared the information with the United States, the lawyer herself revealed Thursday.

Robinson said that she reached an amicable agreement with the UK authorities after they acknowledged to the European Court of Human Rights that she was under surveillance during Assange's asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

"The British government now admitted that they violated my rights by surveilling me and sharing information with the United States, and that includes the protection of confidential journalistic material," said the lawyer, who filed the lawsuit before the European Court in 2016, along with two other plaintiffs.

Robinson added that her case is part of a pattern of illegal spying on the WikiLeaks founder and his legal team, something that also came to light during the Australian journalist's extradition trial.

According to what transpired at the time, the Spanish security agency hired by the Ecuadorian embassy in London routinely spied on Assange during the seven years he was in protected asylum in the diplomatic building, and shared the information with the U.S. intelligence services.

The WikiLeaks founder, whom the United States intends to try for exposing war crimes committed by the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan and thousands of secret files, has been locked up in a British maximum security prison since Ecuador withdrew his political asylum in April 2019.

Last January, a trial judge opposed Assange's extradition for fear that it would threaten his life to be imprisoned in the United States, but four months later, the High Court accepted the US prosecution's appeal and the case is now in the hands of Home Secretary Priti Patel.

If tried and convicted by a US court, the Australian journalist could be sentenced to 175 years in prison on the 17 Espionage Act-related charges.

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