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London, June 25 (RHC)-- Julian Assange was strip-searched and taken to an empty cell last Friday when it was announced that the British government signed the extradition order to the United States, said his wife, Stella Assange, who said that the WikiLeaks founder was told that his transfer was done "for his own protection."

He had no visitors over the weekend after Home Secretary Priti Patel reported last Friday that she would allow his extradition to the United States, where he would be prosecuted on espionage charges and risk 175 years in prison.

"The mental pressure on Julian is enormous, now that he has to prosecute what is essentially a death sentence. The fact that he is imprisoned while this outrageous extradition process is taking place is in itself a grave injustice," the journalist's wife was quoted as saying by the British newspaper The Independent. She added that Assange is "certain" he will die in U.S. custody when he is extradited, and warned that his health is deteriorating.

The WikiLeaks founder's team of lawyers have 14 days to appeal Julian Assange's extradition from London to Washington and plan to fight to prevent him from being transferred to the United States.

Regarding Assange's treatment by being stripped naked and isolated in an empty cell to prevent him from having anything within reach with which he could commit suicide, according to the authorities, John Rees, who is leading the campaign to free the computer scientist stated, "This is extrajudicial, unacceptable and certainly illegal punishment, but this vindictive behavior demonstrates the pressure the authorities face to free Assange. We must redouble our efforts to prevent extradition."

The WikiLeaks founder is an Australian citizen; he was arrested in April 2019 after spending five years in Ecuador's embassy in London, where he received political asylum when President Rafael Correa was president of that South American nation, but his successor, Lenín Moreno, withdrew that protection.

The United States accuses Assange of releasing hundreds of thousands of confidential U.S. government cables, including many detailing U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and alleges that this endangered the lives of soldiers and officials.

Stella Assange married the father of her two children last March, whom she conceived while the computer scientist was holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy.

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