

# *Brazilian president demands Julian Assange's release*

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London, May 7 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva demanded the release of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange after attending the coronation of King Charles III as part of the 2,200 guests invited to the ceremony, local press reported Sunday.

"It is a disgrace that a journalist who denounced deceit from one state to another is arrested, condemned to die in prison and we do nothing to free him. It is madness," commented the head of state of the South American giant, quoted here by The Independent newspaper.

"We are talking about freedom of expression. The man is in jail because he denounced improper acts and the press does nothing in defense of this journalist," said Lula da Silva, in a clear reference to the double standards used by the West in this specific case.

Although he claimed to have forgotten to address the Assange issue in his meeting with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the Brazilian head of state promised to do so in a letter upon his return to his country.

The day before, coinciding with the coronation, Assange who in April 2019 was forcibly removed from the Ecuadorian embassy, where he was under protection of the government of that country, to be imprisoned in the British prison of Belmarsh, wrote a missive to the monarch.

"I implore you, King Charles III, to visit His Majesty's prison at Belmarsh, for it is an honor worthy of a king," said the Australian journalist, who at the time published thousands of documents on secret actions by the United States and other Western powers.

"At my lord's coronation, I thought it would be appropriate to extend a cordial invitation to him to commemorate this momentous occasion by visiting his own kingdom within a kingdom: His Majesty's Prison at Belmarsh," Assange stresses.

In addition, the WikiLeaks founder notes that 687 of the king's loyal subjects are held in the aforementioned prison, supporting the UK's record as the nation with the largest prison population in Western Europe.

In 2019, the government of then Ecuadorian President Lenín Moreno withdrew Assange's protection at the country's embassy in this capital, where he had been held since July 2012.

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