

*Stella Assange says her husband
Julian plans to swim every day
and sleep in real bed*

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Canberra, June 28 (RHC)-- WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange will take a dip in the sea, get some proper rest and try much-missed food as “a free man,” his wife says, just days after the Australian landed home after striking a remarkable plea deal with U.S. prosecutors.

The 52-year-old Australian journalist and former political prisoner on Monday left the British prison from where he had been fighting against extradition to the United States for the past five years. He had sought refuge at Ecuador’s London embassy for nearly seven years before that, in a bid to avoid spending the rest of his life behind bars.

He has not made a public comment since his return to the Australian capital on Wednesday. But his wife, Stella Assange, on Thursday offered a glimpse of how her husband is planning to return to normal life, as she appealed to the public to give him space to “rest and recover.”

“He is just savoring freedom for the first time in 14 years,” she said. “Julian plans to swim in the ocean every day. He plans to sleep in a real bed, he plans to taste real food, and he plans to enjoy his freedom.”

Stella Assange wed the WikiLeaks founder while he was incarcerated at London’s Belmarsh prison in 2012 and they have two children together.

Assange has yet to be reunited with them. “But they were very excited when they found out that daddy was coming home,” Stella Assange said. “I had to tell them gradually. So they were very, very excited.”

Reluctant to step foot in the continental U.S., prosecutors from the Justice Department orchestrated for Assange’s plea deal to take place at a remote U.S. federal court located in Saipan, the largest island and capital of the Northern Mariana Islands.

As part of the plea deal, Assange ultimately pled guilty to one charge of conspiracy to obtain and disclose national defense information, as opposed to the 18 counts he faced originally. In exchange, he was given a “time served” sentence and allowed to fly onwards to Australia.

Stella Assange said a “breakthrough” between Assange’s legal team and U.S. prosecutors came after the UK High Court ruled in May that he had the right to appeal in his final challenge against extradition to the US.

“The issue before the High Court was going to be his ability to rely on constitutional protections in the U.S. for freedom of speech and freedom of expression, and it was only then that there was a breakthrough in the negotiations, and things started moving very quickly,” Stella Assange told reporters.

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