

International outrage sparked at UK decision to extradite Julian Assange

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??Worldwide outrage at UK decision to extradite Julian Assange to U.S.

London, June 18 (RHC)-- The UK government approved the extradition of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to the United States, sparking protests around the world. The decision was announced Friday morning in London, despite an original British judge ruling that Assange should not be deported due to risk of suicide and a warning by his lawyer that he still remains a risk.

British Home Secretary Priti Patel approved the extradition, following a series of failed legal battles in the UK courts. However, Assange has 14 days to appeal the decision, after which he will be extradited within

28 days if an appeal is refused.

Following the approval of his extradition, one of his lawyers said the move is a “grave threat” to freedom of speech. Jennifer Robinson told reporters that this is not only an attack on Julian Assange, the journalist -- “but on every journalist and editor and media worker in this country.”

Hundreds of supporters rallied in London, even before yesterday morning's announcement of the decision. Other demonstrations were called in major cities around the world when the decision was unveiled on Friday.

Assange's wife, Stella Moris, also denounced the move, saying the UK “should not be engaging in persecution on behalf of a foreign power that is out for revenge... that foreign power committed crimes which Julian put into the sunlight.”

Assange faces trial in the U.S. over the publication of secret files that exposed the U.S. military's war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. WikiLeaks asserted in a statement that Julian Assange “did nothing wrong” and was “being punished for doing his job.” “This is a dark day for press freedom and for British democracy,” it said.

Around the world, supporters of Julian Assange accused the U.S. and the UK of victimizing him and denouncing his prosecution as a politically motivated assault on journalism and free speech.

Mick Wallace, an outspoken member of the European Parliament, also condemned the UK decision and called on the public and the media to support and raise their voices in defense of Julian Assange.

Others also voiced their outrage over Assange's possible extradition to the US. Leading British writer and journalist Jonathan Cook wrote on his Twitter account that killing Assange would solve the British and American problems.

Assange's death would solve a problem for the UK and U.S. governments, who are punishing him to send a stark warning to other journalists not to emulate him but don't want to draw attention to the reason they are punishing him: because he exposed their war crimes.

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