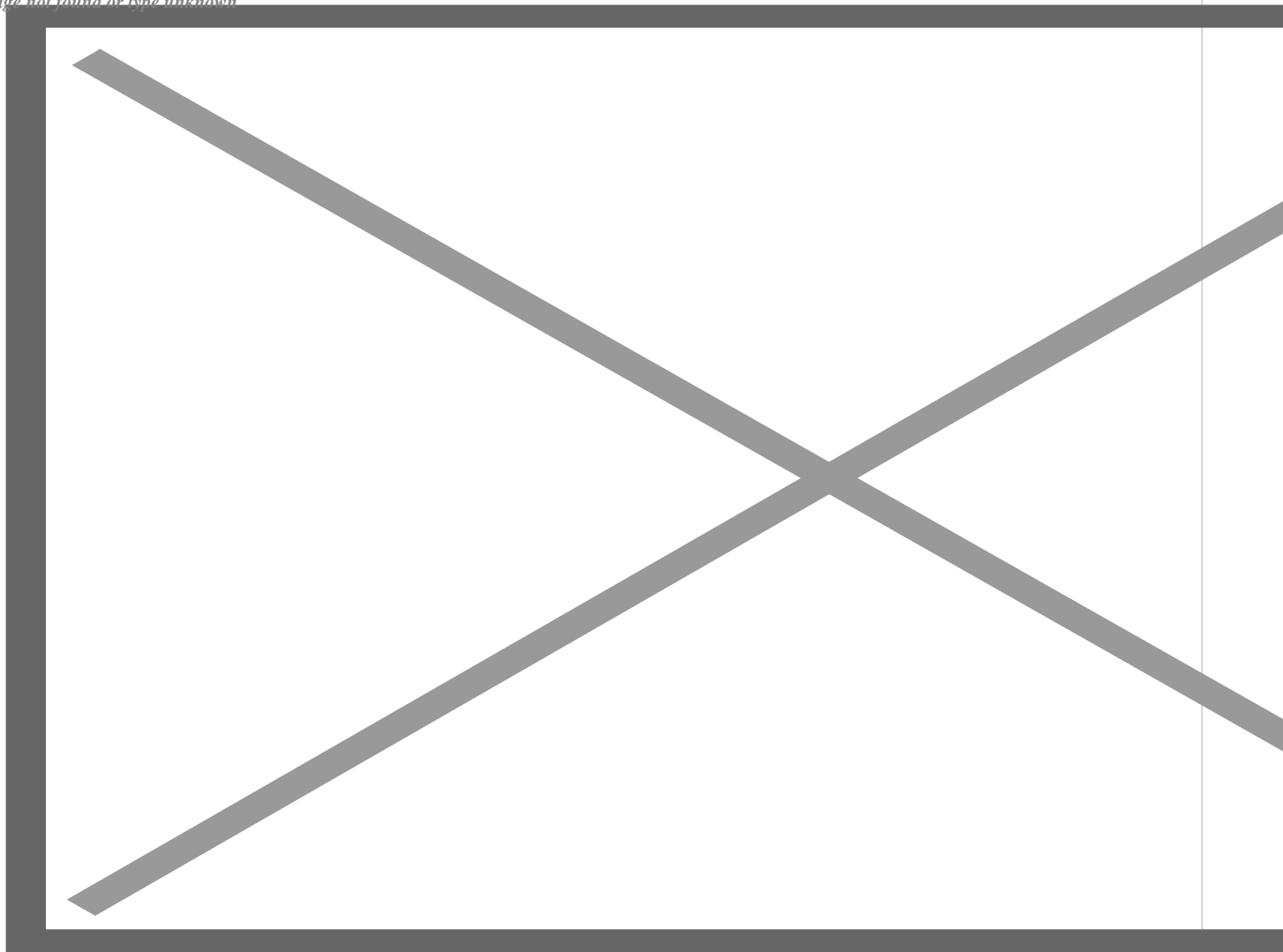


Journalists' organizations demand Assange's release

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Geneva, June 24 (RHC)-- Press unions and associations meeting Wednesday in Geneva, Switzerland, demanded from the UK authorities the "immediate" and "unconditional" release of Australian journalist

Julian Assange.

The president of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Dominique Pradalié, raised at a press conference the demand that the founder of the WikiLeaks platform "be released, rehabilitated and handed over to his family, so that he can finally live normally."

Julian Assange, who leaked information from the U.S. government, which implicated White House meddling in other nations, human rights violations and war crimes, is being held in a British maximum security prison awaiting extradition to the U.S., where he will be tried on charges of espionage.

The president of the IJF, with more than 600,000 members in more than 140 countries, said in relation to the situation of the arrested journalist that "when reporting a crime is treated as if you were committing a crime, you are being led by criminals."

Meanwhile on her Twitter account, the vice-president of the IJF, Zuliana Lainez, said that the decision to extradite Assange "does irreversible damage to the profession. Journalism is criminalized. Exposing issues of public interest is not (a) crime."

Mika Beuster, co-president of the 30,000-member Association of German Journalists, meanwhile noted the case of Assange, 50, "sets a very dangerous precedent for press freedom."

"By extraditing Assange, we are taking democracy hostage," said Pierre Ruetschi, director of the Swiss Press Club.

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