

Australian prime minister says he won't ask Joe Biden to intervene in Julian Assange case

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Canberra, October 29 (RHC)-- The prime minister says he discussed the case of Julian Assange with the U.S. president during their Oval Office meeting this week – but he isn't demanding Joe Biden intervene in the Justice Department process.

Assange has been held in London's high-security Belmarsh prison since 2019 – as the United States seeks his extradition over the release of classified documents in 2010. His supporters want the U.S. to

drop the case and argue that President Biden should intervene.

Last month, a bipartisan group of Australian politicians visited Washington to lobby members of Congress for the 52-year-old's release.

Prime Minister Albanese has repeated his view on the drawn-out saga that "enough's enough" and said he wants the case brought to a conclusion – but not necessarily through a presidential intervention.

"[It's] time this issue was brought to conclusion," he told ABC's Insiders on Sunday.

"Joe Biden doesn't interfere with the Department of Justice — Joe Biden is a president who understands the separation of the judicial system from the political system. That's an important principle."

When asked if it was time to work on a plea deal, the prime minister said: "Australian officials are working very hard to achieve an outcome which is consistent with the position I've put."

Anthony Albanese tells the ABC he is "frustrated" the U.S. government is continuing its prosecution of Julian Assange despite being "very aware" the prime minister opposes his ongoing incarceration.

Fresh off his trip to Washington, Albanese now heads to China where he said he would raise concerns with President Xi Jinping about China's support for Russia and its refusal to condemn terrorist group Hamas.

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