

WikiLeaks founder 'free to leave Sweden'

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WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, pictured, is free to leave Sweden after prosecutors said there was no arrest warrant against him for an alleged case of rape, according to one of his lawyers

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is free to leave Sweden, after prosecutors said there was no arrest warrant against him for an alleged case of rape, one of his lawyers said Saturday.

Bjorn Hurtig said an investigation was still under way but the head of the whistleblowing website had been given no summons for questioning.

"I have been told that there is no arrest warrant against him," meaning Assange could do what he liked, including going abroad, Hurtig said.

Sweden's director of prosecutions Marianne Ny said on September 1 she was reopening a rape probe against the Australian, who had an arrest warrant against him issued on August 20 but saw it withdrawn by another prosecutor the following day.

Assange, 39, has said the allegations against him are part of a "smear campaign" aimed at discrediting his website, which is locked in a row with the Pentagon over the release of secret US documents about the war in Afghanistan.

A source familiar with the case said one of Assange's two alleged victims had been questioned on Friday and the other would be seen on Monday.

In a telephone interview with AFP on September 8 Assange said the charges against him were part of "a clear set-up," and had caused damage to [WikiLeaks](#).

He said that he had decided to stay in Sweden to prove his innocence.

"This entire rape investigation has been conducted without my input," he said, adding that the police refused to say if there was a warrant out for him or not.

Assange has admitted that he had met both women in question, but refused to say if had had sex with either of them, calling it "a private matter."

In his interview with AFP he would not point a direct finger at US intelligence services, which have expressed alarm at WikiLeaks' publishing of thousands of confidential documents.

But he said his website had "two reliable intelligence sources that state that Swedish intelligence was approached last month by the United

States and told that Sweden must not be a safe haven for WikiLeaks."

Two days before the allegations against Assange were made public, he had applied for a Swedish work and residency permit.

Some of the servers hosting the WikiLeaks website are kept in a basement in the Stockholm suburb of Solna.

WikiLeaks published nearly 77,000 classified US military documents on the war in Afghanistan on July 23, and intends to publish another 15,000.

Newsweek magazine said last week that WikiLeaks was teaming up with news outlets to release a "massive cache" of classified US military field reports on the conflict in Iraq.

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