

Judge grants bail to WikiLeaks' Julian Assange

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Shot through a tinted window, Wikileaks founder Julian Assange reacts from inside a prison van as he arrives at the High Court in London for his bail appeal hearing, Thursday, Dec. 16, 2010. A judge is set to decide Thursday whether WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange will be freed or remain in prison, as authorities appeal a court's decision to grant him bail. (AP Photo/Sang Tan)

(AP) -- Julian Assange will be freed on bail from a British jail, a U.K. judge ruled Thursday, rejecting an appeal by prosecutors to keep the WikiLeaks founder in prison as he fights an extradition request by Sweden.

Cheers erupted outside the London court as the verdict by High Court justice Duncan Ouseley was reported. The judge then outlined the bail conditions to Assange in a packed courtroom full of lawyers, journalists and supporters.

Assange has been in prison since Dec. 7, following his surrender to British police over a Swedish sex-crimes warrant. He denies wrongdoing but is refusing to surrender to Sweden's request to extradite him for questioning.

Assange was granted a conditional release on 200,000 pounds (\$316,000) bail Tuesday, but [prosecutors](#) sought to keep him behind bars, arguing there was a risk he would flee.

Last month WikiLeaks deeply angered U.S. officials by beginning to publish its trove of 250,000 secret U.S. diplomatic cables.

Lawyers acting for Sweden say Assange is accused of rape, molestation and unlawful coercion by two women for separate incidents in August in Sweden. He has not been charged.

Assange's lawyers say the allegations stem from a dispute over "consensual but unprotected sex" and argue that he has offered to make himself available for questioning via video link or in person in Britain.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

LONDON (AP) - A U.K. judge has rejected an appeal and granted bail to WikiLeaks founder [Julian Assange](#), who will be freed from a British jail.

High Court justice Duncan Ouseley rejected prosecutors' argument that Assange should stay in prison and granted him conditional bail.

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questioning.

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