

Julian Assange UK bail appeal to be heard Thursday

December 15 2010, By JILL LAWLESS , Associated Press



People take part in a protest supporting Julian Assange outside Westminster Magistrates Court in London, Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2010. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange appeared in a London court Tuesday seeking to fight his extradition to Sweden in a sex-crimes investigation and trying to secure bail after being held for a week in a British prison cell. The 39-year-old Australian was ordered held in custody by a judge at a hearing a week ago after surrendering himself to Scotland Yard to answer a Swedish arrest warrant. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham)

(AP) -- WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange will spend at least one more night in a British prison, after court officials said Wednesday that an appeal against the decision to grant him bail would not be heard for at least 24 hours.

Officials at the High Court in London said the appeal by Swedish authorities would be heard Thursday. The court said further details

would be confirmed later Wednesday.

On Tuesday, a judge ordered Assange released on 200,000 pounds (\$316,000) bail, but Swedish [prosecutors](#) challenged the decision.

Assange has spent a week in prison following his surrender to British police over a Swedish sex-crimes warrant. He denies any wrongdoing but has refused to voluntarily surrender to Sweden's request to extradite him for questioning.

Supporters of the 39-year-old Australian say the charges are trumped up and possibly politically motivated.

Assange's British lawyer, Mark Stephens, said Wednesday that "somebody has it in for [Julian Assange](#) and we only can conjecture why."

But lawyer Gemma Lindfield, acting for Sweden, told Tuesday's hearing that Assange faced serious allegations and may abscond if granted bail.

She said he is accused of rape, molestation and unlawful coercion by two women for separate incidents in August. She said one had accused him of pinning her down and refusing to use a condom. A second woman says Assange had sex with her without a condom while he was a guest at her Stockholm home and she was asleep.

Assange has not been charged in Sweden. His 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.

Lindfield also rejected attempts to link Assange's case with the work of [WikiLeaks](#) - which last month deeply angered U.S. officials by

beginning to publish its trove of 250,000 secret U.S. diplomatic cables.

"This is not a case about WikiLeaks, rather a case about alleged serious offenses against two women," Lindfield said.

District Judge Howard Riddle approved bail on condition Assange wear an electronic tag, stay at a specific address in southern England, report to police every evening and observe two four-hour curfews each day in addition to putting up the bond.

His lawyers are struggling to assemble the bail money, which the court wants to see up front and in cash. Stephens said he had about half the amount by Wednesday.

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