

Julian Assange marks 2nd year in Ecuador's embassy

June 19 2014, by Raphael Satter



Supporters of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange hold a vigil outside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London to mark his two years in refuge at the embassy, Thursday, June 19, 2014. Julian Assange entered the embassy in June 2012 to gain political asylum to prevent him from being extradited to Sweden, where he faces allegations of sex crimes, which he denies.(AP Photo/Sang Tan)

The gathering at the Ecuadorean Embassy in London has the feel of something which may become an annual fixture.

For the second time in as many years, [journalists](#) were invited Thursday to the embassy to mark the anniversary of WikiLeaks chief Julian Assange's stay there—a bid to escape extradition to Sweden, where he is wanted over allegations of [sexual misconduct](#), and to the United States, where an investigation into WikiLeaks' dissemination of hundreds of thousands of classified U.S. documents remains live.

Supporters—including one with a figure of Assange on a crucifix—chanted slogans outside the embassy. Inside, Assange said he has no intention of going to Sweden because he has no guarantee he wouldn't subsequently be sent to the U.S.

Dressed in a suit and sneakers and appearing relaxed, he traded pleasantries with Ecuadorean Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino as reporters crowded around to listen in on the banter.

"I can see that your beard is longer now," Patino joked via videolink from Ecuador, referring to Assange's wispy white stubble. Assange in turn paid tribute to Ecuador's "robust resistance" to pressure from outside powers—which he said is why "I have a liberty to work today."



A figure depicts Julian Assange on a cross on top of a supporter of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange during a vigil outside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London to mark his two years in refuge at the embassy, Thursday, June 19, 2014. Julian Assange entered the embassy in June 2012 to gain political asylum to prevent him from being extradited to Sweden, where he faces allegations of sex crimes, which he denies.(AP Photo/Sang Tan)

Assange had been under a form of supervised release in the U.K., but shortly after losing his battle in Britain's highest court he jumped bail and applied for asylum at the Ecuadorean Embassy on June 19, 2012.

British police on guard outside the embassy have orders to arrest him should he ever step out.

That doesn't seem likely.



A supporter of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange holds a vigil outside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London to mark his two years of refuge at the embassy, Thursday, June 19, 2014. Julian Assange entered the embassy in June 2012 to gain political asylum to prevent him from being extradited to Sweden, where he faces allegations of sex crimes, which he denies. (AP Photo/Sang Tan)

Patino told journalists that negotiations with Britain over Assange's fate were at an impasse and that there would be no attempt to force him back to Sweden.



Police officers stand guard outside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London where WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is in refuge at the embassy, Thursday, June 19, 2014. Julian Assange entered the embassy in June 2012 to gain political asylum to prevent him from being extradited to Sweden, where he faces allegations of sex crimes, which he denies.(AP Photo/Sang Tan)

"We will protect Julian Assange for as long as necessary," he said.

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