
Julian Assange's lawyers to apply for release on bail, citing risk of Covid-19 — WikiLeaks

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Lawyers for Julian Assange are to make a bail application for the WikiLeaks co-founder, arguing that he is in imminent danger of contracting the deadly novel coronavirus at the center of a global pandemic while in prison.

The Australian is currently being held in the notorious maximum-security Belmarsh prison in London on a US extradition warrant for publishing classified information about the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

WikiLeaks released a statement on Monday, saying the 48-year-old's legal team would now be pushing for bail at a hearing at Westminster Magistrates court in London on Wednesday.

The Prison Officers Association trade union revealed last week that over 100 staff and 75 prisoners across the UK were in isolation after showing Covid-19 symptoms. So far, one prisoner has tested positive for the dangerous disease in Manchester.

Earlier this year, 117 doctors signed a letter published in the Lancet medical journal calling for the urgent release of Assange amid concerns over his deteriorating health.

The WikiLeaks founder is wanted in the US for "unlawfully obtaining and disclosing classified documents related to the national defense" with the help of former US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning.

The US Justice Department has indicted the journalist on 18 counts, which carry a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison.