

Julian Assange could be released on bail over COVID-19 outbreak

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London, March 25 (RHC)-- Defense lawyers for Australian journalist Julian Assange will apply for bail on Wednesday as they believe he is vulnerable to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the British prison where he is being held.

The application will be presented to the Westminster Court in London, United Kingdom, because "overcrowded prisons facilitate the spread of the virus," Assange's team of lawyers said in a statement. "The lives of inmates, prison staff and their families are at risk in these centers," the founder of the WikiLeaks' lawyers added.

According to the statement, the risk of infection in U.K. prisons is comparable to that of cruise ships. Some countries, such as the United States and Iran, have released thousands of prisoners because of the risk of contagion," the statement said.

Assange is being held in custody at Belmarsh High-Security Prison in south-east London following a request for extradition from the United States. He is accused of having divulged confidential information on US foreign policy ten years ago.

Assange's trial began last February and has been postponed until May 18th, but lawyers admit that it could be postponed further because of the coronavirus epidemic.

Edited by Ed Newman