

# #FreeAssange: Sign to Urge UK Home Secretary Priti Patel to Reject Julian Assange's Extradition to the United States!

By [Reporters Without Borders](#)

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*On 20 April, the Westminster Magistrates' Court signed an order confirming the alarming next step in the more than decade-long case against Wikileaks publisher Julian Assange. Following more than two years of extradition proceedings in UK courts, Assange's fate has once again become a political decision for the Home Secretary – the very office that made the political decision to green-light the US extradition request in 2019.*

Assange's legal defence team now has four weeks to make representations, meaning that after 18 May, Home Secretary Priti Patel could approve or reject the extradition order at any time. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) urges #FreeAssange supporters around the world to mobilise during this crucial four-week period by signing this petition calling on the Home Secretary to refuse the extradition request.

If extradited to the United States, Assange could face up to 175 years in prison on 18 charges related to Wikileaks' publication in 2010 of hundreds of thousands of leaked classified military and diplomatic documents, exposing war crimes and human rights violations and informing extensive public interest reporting around the world. RSF fully believes that Assange has been targeted for this important contribution to journalism.

Assange's extradition and prosecution would set a dangerous precedent for journalism and press freedom around the world. He would be the first publisher prosecuted under the Espionage Act, which lacks a public interest defence. The same precedent could be applied to any journalist, any publisher, or any source working with leaked classified information, which would create a distinct chilling effect internationally.

Although the case against Assange has been brought by the US government, the UK government has also failed to protect journalism and press freedom in its treatment of Assange, keeping him detained on remand for more than three years at London's high-

security Belmarsh prison, in sharp contrast to the UK's stated commitment to promote and protect media freedom globally.

Meanwhile Assange's mental and physical health remain at high risk in prolonged detention, in particular following a mini stroke that he suffered in Belmarsh prison during the High Court's consideration of his case in October 2021. The serious risks to his mental health would be severely exacerbated in conditions of extradition to the United States, even if the US government honoured its diplomatic assurances regarding his treatment. Put simply, Assange's life is at risk if he is extradited to the United States.

It is time now, more than a decade after the case against Assange was opened, for the UK government to protect journalism and press freedom by refusing to extradite him to the United States and acting to #FreeAssange without further delay.

Over 90,000 #FreeAssange supporters signed our previous petition from 2020 urging the UK not to comply with the US request to extradite Assange. Can you help us beat that number now, with just four weeks left before the Home Secretary must act?

As a matter of urgency, [please sign this petition](#) before 18 May calling on Home Secretary Priti Patel to refuse the extradition request and #FreeAssange!

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