

The “Swedish Allegations” Concerning Julian Assange

By [Justice for Assange](#)

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Region: [Europe](#)

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The Facts

There is widespread media misreporting about allegations made against Julian Assange in Sweden in 2010. Here are the facts:

First, Assange was always willing to answer any questions from the Swedish authorities and repeatedly offered to do so, over six years. The widespread media assertion that Assange “evaded” Swedish questioning is false. It was the Swedish prosecutor who for years refused to question Assange in the Ecuadorian embassy: they only did so, in November 2016, after the Swedish courts forced the prosecutor to travel to London. Sweden dropped the investigation six months later, in May 2017.

Second, Assange sought asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in 2012 to avoid [onward extradition to the US](#) – not to avoid extradition to Sweden or to refuse to face the Swedish allegations. Assange would have accepted extradition to Sweden had it provided an assurance against onward extradition to the US (as Amnesty International also [urged](#) at the time) – but both Sweden and the UK refused to provide an assurance that he would not be extradited to the US.

Third, Sweden wanted to drop its arrest warrant for Assange [in 2013](#). It was the British government that insisted that the case against him continue. This is confirmed in emails released under a tribunal challenge following a Freedom of Information Act request. UK prosecutors admitted to [deleting](#) key emails and engaged in elaborate attempts to keep correspondence from the public record. Indeed, the lawyer for the Crown Prosecution Service advised the Swedes in January 2011 [not to visit London to interview Assange](#). An interview at that time could have prevented the long-running embassy standoff.

Fourth, despite widespread false reporting, Assange was never charged with anything related to the Swedish allegations. These only reached the level of a “preliminary investigation”. The Swedish prosecution questioned Assange on two separate occasions, in 2010 and 2016. He has [consistently](#) professed his [innocence](#).

Fifth, almost entirely omitted from current media reporting is that the initial Swedish preliminary investigation in 2010 was dropped after the chief prosecutor of Stockholm concluded that “the evidence did not disclose any evidence of rape” and that “[no crime at all](#)” had been committed. Text messages between the two women, which were later [revealed](#), do not complain of rape. Rather, they show that the women “did not want to put any charges on JA but that the police were keen on getting a grip on him” and that they

“only wanted him to take a test”. One wrote that “it was the police who made up the charges” and told a friend that she felt that she had been “railroaded by police and others around her”.

Sixth, Assange left Sweden after the prosecutor told him that he was free to leave as he was not wanted for questioning. Assange had stayed in Sweden for five weeks. After he left, Interpol bizarrely issued a Red Notice for Assange, usually reserved for terrorists and dangerous criminals – raising concerns that this was not just about sexual accusations.

Seventh, Sweden’s investigation is now entirely closed. It was shelved for six years during the period 2010-2016 while the Swedish prosecutor refused to question Assange in London. Sweden’s Court of Appeal ruled that the prosecutor had breached her duty because a preliminary investigation either has to be open and active leading to a charge, or closed—there is no intermediate phase. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention also [concluded](#) that the prosecutor’s inaction had resulted in Sweden and the UK violating international obligations.

Eighth, there was no technical impediment for the prosecutor to proceed to charge Assange after he was questioned in the Ecuadorian embassy. In early 2017, Assange’s lawyers asked a Swedish court to force the prosecutor to either charge Assange or drop the arrest warrant. The prosecutor closed the investigation in May 2017 without attempting to charge him.

Since his arrest on 11 April 2019, there has been considerable political pressure on Sweden to reopen the investigation. Theoretically any closed investigation can be reopened until the statute of limitations expires—August 2020 in this case. Such calls serve to [displace](#) the critical issue of Assange’s impending US extradition over WikiLeaks publications (whether from UK or Sweden). They also obfuscate critical facts, such as the fact that the UK and Swedish authorities had actively prevented Assange from responding to the allegations, which is contrary to basic principles of due process.

It is critical to note that the re-opened Swedish allegations in September 2010 occurred after WikiLeaks published the Iraq “Collateral Murder” video in April 2010 and the Afghanistan war logs in July 2010. In fact, US grand jury proceedings already began against Assange in June 2010 and by July, the US was publicly [describing](#) WikiLeaks as a “very real and potential threat”. The Intercept’s Charles Glass has reported that “Sources in Swedish intelligence told me at the time that they believed the U.S. had [encouraged Sweden to pursue the case](#).” Other reports from just days before the Swedish allegations were initiated show that the U.S. State Department was [encouraging allied states](#) to initiate prosecutions against Assange. To ignore all this, as much media reporting does, is to ignore vital further context.

In [December 2018](#), the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, together with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, reiterated their finding from 2016 and urged Assange’s freedom to be restored. UN Special Rapporteur on [Privacy](#) and the UN Special Rapporteur on [Torture](#) are currently investigating Assange’s case.

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