

UK High Court Grants Limited Permission for US to Appeal Assange Extradition Ruling

By [Reporters Without Borders](#)

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As the UK High Court grants limited permission for the US government to pursue its appeal against the decision opposing the extradition of Wikileaks publisher Julian Assange, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) reiterates the call for Assange’s immediate release and for the case against him to be dropped.

On 7 July, the UK High Court gave notice to the parties involved that the US government’s appeal against the extradition decision will be listed for a hearing. No date has yet been given. The US government will be permitted to appeal only on technical grounds, not on the broader merits of the case.

The US appeal is against the decision by UK District Judge Vanessa Baraitser on 4 January, ruling against Assange’s extradition to the US on mental health grounds. Although RSF welcomed the decision against extradition, [RSF condemned the court’s failure](#) to take a strong position for press freedom and journalism, as the substance of the ruling – which found largely in favour of the prosecution’s arguments – leaves the door open for further similar prosecutions.

“It comes as no surprise that the UK High Court will consider the US government’s appeal, but Julian Assange should not be in this position in the first place. He has been targeted for his contributions to public interest reporting, and his prosecution in the US would have severe and long-lasting implications for journalism and press freedom around the world. We call again for the Biden administration to drop the appeal and close the case, and for the UK to immediately release Assange from prison, where his mental and physical health remain at high risk,” said RSF’s Director of International Campaigns Rebecca Vincent.

In the US, Assange faces a total of 18 charges — 17 under the Espionage Act, and one under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. Assange would be the first publisher prosecuted under the Espionage Act, which lacks a public interest defence. If convicted, Assange could face a total of 175 years in prison. RSF is one of 24 press freedom, civil liberties, and international human rights organisations that [has called on the Biden administration](#) to stop pursuing its appeal.

The UK and US are respectively ranked 33rd and 44th on RSF's [2021 World Press Freedom Index](#).

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