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Julian Assange: Imminent Freedom 105

January 5, 2021 in Uncategorized by craig

It has been a long and tiring day, with the startlingly unexpected decision to block Julian's extradition. The judgement is in fact very concerning, in that it accepted all of the prosecution's case on the right of the US Government to prosecute publishers worldwide of US official secrets under the Espionage Act. The judge also stated specifically that the UK Extradition Act of 2003 deliberately permits extradition for political offences. These points need to be addressed. But for now we are all delighted at the ultimate decision that extradition should be blocked.

The decision was based equally on two points; the appalling conditions in US supermax prisons, and the effect of those conditions on Julian specifically given his history of depression. The media has concentrated on the mental health aspect, and given insufficient attention to the explicit condemnation of the inhumanity of the US prison system.

I was the only person physically present in the public gallery inside the court, having been nominated by John Shipton to represent the family, aside from two court officials. I am quite sure that I again noted magistrate Baraitser have a catch in her throat when discussing the inhumane conditions in US supermax prisons, the lack of human contact, and specifically the fact that inmates are kept in total isolation in a small cage, and are permitted one hour exercise a day in total isolation in another small cage. I noted her show emotion the same way when discussing the al-Masri torture evidence during the trial, and she seemed similarly affected here.

Julian looked well and alert; he showed no emotion at the judgement, but entered into earnest discussion with his lawyers. The US government indicated they will probably appeal the verdict, and a bail hearing has been deferred until Wednesday to decide whether he will be released from

Belmarsh pending the appeal – which court sources tell me is likely to be held in April in the High Court. I should be very surprised if Julian is not released on Wednesday pending the appeal. I shall now be staying here for that bail hearing.

I apologise for not giving a full analysis of the judgement yet, it has all been rather hectic, but wonderful. Here is a brief video giving more detail. I can produce a more considered piece tomorrow.

Craig Murray on the Assange Verdict



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