
UN Torture Expert Urges Ecuador Not to Expel Assange

06/04/2019



Assange's health was in "serious decline" and if expelled, he was likely to be extradited to the U.S., the UN. expert said.

Fears over Julian Assange's expulsion from the Ecuadorean Embassy in London have been growing over the past few days, following threats by Ecuadorean President Lenin Moreno that he will "make a decision in the short term" on the situation of the Wikileaks editor.

RELATED: [INA Papers: The Corruption Case Against Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno](#)

The Ecuadorean President argued Tuesday that the Wikileaks founder has "repeatedly violated" the terms of his asylum in the country's London embassy. The statement was made following the release of the INA Papers, a publication which leaked private conversations of the president and his family, linking him to an off-shore company which allegedly received millions in dollars for illicit business deals. As a result, the president is now facing a corruption probe.

Wikileaks argues the INA Papers publication is now being twisted against Julian Assange and used as a pretext to expel him from the Embassy. The organization tweeted Thursday that a high-level source within the Ecuadorean government revealed that the expulsion is being prepared "within hours to days."

However, Wikileaks' website or social media accounts never published press releases or images of President Lenin Moreno's private life. The page issued a single tweet on March 25,

2019, which reported that a "corruption investigation opened against Ecuador's President Moreno after purported leaked contents of his iPhone (Whatsapp, Telegram) and Gmail were published. New York Times reported that Moreno tried to sell Assange to the U.S. for debt relief."

BREAKING: A high level source within the Ecuadorian state has told [@WikiLeaks](#) that Julian Assange will be expelled within "hours to days" using the [#INAPapers](#) offshore scandal as a pretext--and that it already has an agreement with the UK for his arrest.<https://t.co/adnJph79wq>
— WikiLeaks (@wikileaks) [April 4, 2019](#)

Nils Melzer, U.N. special rapporteur on torture, voiced concern that Assange's health was in "serious decline" and that, if expelled, he is likely to be arrested by British authorities and extradited to the United States.

"Such a response could expose him to a real risk of serious violations of his human rights, including his freedom of expression, his right to a fair trial and the prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment," he said.

"I therefore urge the Government of Ecuador to abstain from... ceasing or suspending his political asylum until such time as the full protection of his human rights can be guaranteed."

"Extradition without due process safeguards, including an individual risk assessment and adequate protection measures violates international law, particularly if the destination state practices the death penalty and has not disclosed the criminal charges held against the person concerned. Under such circumstances, the international legal prohibition of 'refoulement' is absolute, regardless of considerations of national security, political expediency or any other similar considerations," the Special Rapporteur said.

Following the outrage over a possible expulsion and pressure by various Human Rights groups as well as the United Nations, Ecuador's Foreign Minister, Jose Valencia, took to twitter stating that "diplomatic asylum is a sovereign matter of a State, which has the right to give it or take it way unilaterally when considered justified."

El asilo diplomático es una facultad soberana de un Estado, que tiene el derecho de otorgarlo o retirarlo unilateralmente cuando lo considere justificado.

— José Valencia (@ValenciaJoseEc) [April 5, 2019](#)

In addition, a United Nations Special Rapporteur on Privacy is also due to visit Assange on April 25 to investigate Ecuador's spying on the activist.