
Swedish prosecutor could reopen Assange rape case following London arrest

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Swedish prosecutors may reopen an investigation into a rape allegation against Julian Assange following the whistleblower's arrest at the Ecuadorian embassy in London Thursday.

The probe was launched in 2010 following a complaint from a woman and it was closed in 2017 as investigators said they could not access the Australian in the embassy.

"We will do everything we can to get the prosecutors to reopen the Swedish investigation so that Assange can be extradited to Sweden and be prosecuted for rape. As long as the statute of limitations has not expired my client has hope for restitution," lawyer Elisabeth Massi Fritz, the lawyer of the Swedish woman who accused Assange of rape, told AFP.

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Sweden's director of public prosecutions Marianne Ny shut down the preliminary investigation into the allegations in May 2017 arguing that Assange could not be reached due to his exile in the Ecuadorian embassy. However she did state, that were he to become available for questioning in future, prosecutors could reopen the case until 2020.

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The Swedish Prosecution Authority was seemingly caught off guard by news of Assange's

sudden arrest on Thursday.

"This is news to us too, so we have not been able to take a position on the information that is now available. We also do not know why he is under arrest. We are following the developments," said Chief Prosecutor Ingrid Isgren in a [statement](#). Isgren did not assert whether the case would definitely be reopened but stated that the statute of limitation expires in mid-August 2020.

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The accusation dates from August 2010 when the alleged victim claimed that Assange had unprotected sex with her while she slept, despite her repeated refusal to engage in such relations with him beforehand. Assange has consistently denied the allegations which he felt would be used as a pretext to extradite him to the US to face trial for leaking vast troves of sensitive and often classified US government documents.
