Twitter Thread by Assange Defense

Assange Defense
@DefenseAssange

Two days after his extradition was denied, Julian Assange is back in court requesting bail. The US, appealing the ruling, wants him to remain in jail. We're covering the bail hearing now and will report here: #AssangeCase

Prosecutor Clair Dobbin, acting for the US government, is arguing to keep Assange in bail. She said judge's ruling, which is based on Assange's mental health, "hangs by a single thread" and must be debated on appeal.

Dobbin is now telling the judge that the 2nd superseding indictment of Assange accuses him of helping Edward Snowden escape from the US after his NSA disclosures.

Dobbin suggesting Assange has the resources and intent to flee the country, references Mexican president offering political asylum to Assange upon denial of his extradition, says there are countries "sympathetic to Mr Assange."

Prosecution reviewing Assange entering the Ecuadorian Embassy in London in 2012, only leaving when asylum was revoked [and UK police arrested him, in 2019], costs of keeping him in the Embassy

(Note: it's on the U.S. to argue why he should be kept in prison rather than freed immediately -- the judge's ruling against his extradition concluded, "I order the discharge of Julian Paul Assange, pursuant to section 91(3) of the EA 2003.")

Dobbin using Assange's mental health diagnoses against him -- notes a doctor's testimony that Assange would rather take his own life rather than be extradited. Says "flight is not far off."

Dobbin trying to argue Belmarsh, where COVID19 has spread to infect other prisoners, is safe for Assange to remain.

Dobbin previewing the US's appeal argument, saying they feel the judge improperly applied the test used to decide whether it would be unjust or oppressive to extradite him (the 'Turner' test, based on previous case law).

(Turner v USA https://t.co/IBIJrxNOCC)

Judge stops the prosecutor to say she accepts that she understands the prosecution thinks they have ground to appeal, says she doesn't need all of the appeal arguments here.

Dobbin says there are more grounds the US intends to raise on appeal, says prosecution's doctor disagreed with the degree of Assange's depression.

Dobbin finished. Now Ed Fitzgerald for the defense, in support of bail. #AssangeCase

Fitzgerald says the judge's ruling "changes everything," changes any motive to abscond rather than to "pursue his remedies in this country."

Fitzgerald says since Oct. 2019, Assange has been detained for 15 months only on the basis of the US extradition request. Now the judge has ruled against extradition in a considered ruling, calling for Assange's discharge.

Fitzgerald: The natural consequence of the judge's ruling "must be that he regains his liberty, at least conditionally."

Fitzgerald noting press reports that the outgoing US prosecutor isn't even sure if the US will continue to prosecute Assange following the judge's ruling. (https://t.co/hTbtBT1N4T)

Fitzgerald notes that the judge's ruling recognized the importance, especially considering his psychiatric conditions, of Assange being able to see his family. Discharging him would "anchor him" to a home and finally allow him physical contact with his own family.

Dispute over COVID numbers at Belmarsh: UK police have told the prosecution today that just 3 people at Belmarsh have COVID. Defense says that 2 weeks ago there was an outbreak and over 90 people have been infected, says Belmarsh confirmed over 60 cases before Christmas.

Dobbin says the police's email says there are 3 people with COVID at Belmarsh -- Fitzgerald says, "...today." #AssangeCase

Fitzgerald saying even if the figures are in dispute (seems to be cases currently vs cases in total), he's much safer out of prison. Says he doesn't want to dwell on this, isn't the primary argument for freeing him now anyway.

Fitzgerald says Assange would be willing to remain under house arrest as a bail condition, just wants to be with his family.

Defense: finally, the court should consider Assange's article 8 human rights, and "broader reasons of humanity", in deciding to release him on bail.

Defense: Assange has already been detained solely based on the US extradition request. That request has been denied, now he must be given liberty, however circumscribed that liberty is.

Fitzgerald concludes his prepared remarks, responds to Dobbin's reference of Mexican asylum. Doesn't know "how on earth he would get to Mexico", and the offer was for after any judicial proceedings. 10 minute recess as Fitzgerald takes instruction.

Back from recess, Fitzgerald notes reports on Mexico have been overstated, the comments were about going through proper channels to look into asylum, not about its embassy. Says Assange is safest in UK, the judge's ruling shows this is where he has protection of the rule of law.

Fitzgerald notes lockdown at Belmarsh will keep Assange both isolated and at risk of COVID. Notes another inmate recently committed suicide while awaiting a ruling.

Defense concludes its argument, asks judge to release Assange on bail. #AssangeCase

Judge is giving her opinion now (apparently was already prepared). Begins by reviewing 2010 to 2012 case when Assange's extradition was requested, Assange went to Ecuadorian Embassy to avoid being sent to the US.

Judge: I ruled not to send Assange to the US, the government has appealed. "As far as Mr Assange is concerned, this case is not yet resolved." Says "the US must be allowed to challenge my decision," Assange has already shown willingness to abscond.

Judge: the conditions at Belmarsh bear no resemblance to those I find he would be put under in the United States. Reviews prosecution argument on Snowden's asylum, updated COVID numbers.

Judge rules to keep Assange in custody.

These proceedings are now concluded. #AssangeCase