Twitter Thread by Rebecca Vincent



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I've often said that nothing is normal about Julian Assange's case. Here's my list of the top 10 least normal aspects, strictly on the logistical side of monitoring the extradition proceedings (this is not to mention the many substantive issues that are also far from normal).

1. The judge's stubbornly persistent refusal to acknowledge that NGO observers are professionals and have an important role to play (separate to that of the general public) in ensuring open justice, and refusal to grant us access to be able to do our jobs properly.

2. The constantly shifting goal posts in gaining access to the public gallery, and arbitrary restrictions on numbers in all 3 courts where proceedings have been held. On any given day, it's impossible to predict how many will be let in and when, necessitating very early queuing.

3. Receiving conflicting information from the court about remote access, including being accredited to the Cloud Video Platform and then having that access revoked in September. The same thing seems to have happened to us again for 4th January.

4. After unbelievable difficulty getting in, what we actually observed was a small screen on the other side of a large room. It was often impossible to tell who was who, and I could only follow properly as I had the lawyers' voices memorised from February (when I could see them).

5. Being treated as an inferior class of human at the Old Bailey, where you face extensive searches, cannot bring in any devices (yet there's nowhere to leave them) or have so much as water with you, and where the ladies room was often locked (after queuing for hours to get in).

6. The freezing temperature in the Old Bailey overflow courtroom, which court guards told me was set by the judge herself. Cold air constantly blasted down on us in the public gallery, leaving us shivering for hours, even with coats and other layers.

7. A horrible incessant buzzing from a light that malfunctioned in the public gallery, making it difficult to hear proceedings and giving us headaches. It took the court 6 days to simply remove the bulb causing the problem, and only after intervention from a political observer.

8. Despite the court's insistence that public gallery seats are allocated on a first-come first-served basis, 3 of 5 total seats were held back for mysterious "VIPs" for nearly 3 weeks of proceedings, until we found out they were for diplomats who were unaware & then intervened.

9.Extensive technical difficulties with the remote video testimonies of many of the expert witnesses, wasting hours of court time. Also periodic problems with reverberation in the livestream of proceedings in the main courtroom to us in the overflow room (plus those on the CVP).

10.Aggression from some "activists" whose sole purpose seems to be attacking genuine Assange supporters & blocking others from attending proceedings. One took a photo from the public gallery in February, which the judge is still citing as grounds for blocking NGOs remote access.

To clarify, this is a small number of intentionally disruptive people who are easily identifiable as they engage in similar behaviour online. They purport that Assange's own legal team is part of the conspiracy against him & are vile about his partner and their children. Be wary.