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# Assange to be a free man after 14 years

WIKILEAKS FOUNDER TO PLEAD GUILTY TO ESPIONAGE CHARGE

LONDON

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange will be a “free man” following a 14-year legal battle after a US judge signs off on his landmark plea deal expected to take place in remote US territory today, his wife Stella said.

Stella Assange said the end of his years-long legal drama that saw him board a plane from London to Bangkok on Monday had been a “whirlwind of emotions”. “I’m just elated. Frankly, it’s just incredible,” she told BBC radio. “We weren’t really sure until the last 24 hours that it was actually happening.”

Freed on bail

Assange was on Monday freed on bail from a high-security prison in southeast London. He had been held there for five years as he fought extradition to the United States which sought to prosecute him for revealing military secrets.

He has agreed to plead guilty to a single count of conspiracy to obtain and disseminate national defence information, according to a document filed in court in the Northern Mariana Islands in the Pacific where the hearing is expected to take place.

Assange said the plea deal



Reuters

Julian Assange disembarks from a plane at the Bangkok airport where it made a scheduled stop to refuel.

## WHO IS JULIAN ASSANGE?

Born in 1971 in Townsville, in the Australian state of Queensland, Assange was considered one of Australia’s most accomplished hackers in the 90s. In 2006 he founded WikiLeaks, an organisation that published leaked material. It wasn’t until 2010 that Assange reached global prominence after publishing a series of leaks by Chelsea Manning, a former US army soldier. Among the files was a video of a 2007 Apache helicopter attack by American forces in Baghdad that killed 11 people, including two Reuters journalists.

involved her husband pleading guilty to the single charge. “The charge concerns the Espionage Act and obtaining and disclosing national defence information,” she said. “The important thing here is that the deal involved time served that if he signed it, he would be able to walk free,”

she added. A charter plane flew the 52-year-old Australian publisher from London to Bangkok, where it made a scheduled stop to refuel. From there it will fly him to Saipan, a US territory where Assange is due in court today.

— Agencies  
**SEE ALSO P10**



AFP

A tear gas canister explodes as protesters try to help injured people outside the Kenya Parliament during a nationwide strike to protest against tax hikes in Nairobi yesterday.

## 5 dead as police fire at protesters trying to storm Kenya parliament

Demonstrators set legislature building ablaze over tax bill

NAIROBI

Police fired on demonstrators trying to storm Kenya’s legislature yesterday and at least five protesters were shot dead, with sections of the parliament building set ablaze as lawmakers inside passed a bill to raise taxes.

In chaotic scenes, protest-

ers overwhelmed police and chased them away in an attempt to storm the parliament compound, with Citizen TV reporting protesters had managed to enter the Senate chamber.

Police opened fire after tear gas and water cannon failed to disperse the crowds.

A Reuters journalist counted the bodies of at least five protesters outside parliament. A paramedic, Vivian Achista, said at least 10 had been shot dead.

Another paramedic, Richard

Ngumo, said more than 50 people had been wounded by gunfire. He was lifting two injured protesters into an ambulance outside parliament.

“We want to shut down parliament and every MP should go down and resign,” protester Davis Tafari, who was trying to enter parliament, told Reuters. “We will have a new government.”

Kenyan activist Auma Obama, the half-sister of former US President Barack Obama, was among the protesters.

— Reuters  
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