

Assange was careful to protect informants

● Australian-born Assange, 49, is fighting against being sent to the United States

● US requesting extradition over the publication of informants' names

Reuters | London

WikiLeaks' founder Julian Assange was careful to ensure that the names of informants in hundreds of thousands of leaked secret US government documents were never published, his London extradition hearing was told yesterday.

Australian-born Assange, 49, is fighting against being sent to the United States, where he is charged with conspiring to hack government computers and violating an espionage law over the release of confidential cables by



Hearing to decide whether Assange should be extradited to U.S. in London

WikiLeaks in 2010-2011.

A lawyer for the United States told the court last week that it was requesting Assange's extradition over the publication of

informants' names, and not for handling leaked documents.

John Goetz, an investigative reporter who worked for Germany's Spiegel magazine on the first publication of the documents, said the US State Department had been involved in a conference call suggesting redactions, and WikiLeaks had

agreed to hold back about 15,000 documents for publication.

"There was sensitivity and it was one of the things that was talked about all the time," Goetz told the court. Assange was concerned that the media should take measures "so no one would be harmed", he said.

Goetz said WikiLeaks was later frustrated when a password that allowed access to the full, unredacted material was published in a book by Guardian reporters in February 2011.

Assange made international headlines in 2010 when WikiLeaks published a US military video showing a 2007 attack by Apache helicopters in Baghdad that killed a dozen people, including two Reuters news staff.

Assange's lawyers argue that he would not receive a fair trial in the United States and that the charges are politically motivated. They have also said he would be a suicide risk if sent to the United States, where they say he could be sentenced to 175 years in prison.

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In 2012, Assange took refuge in Ecuador's London embassy to avoid extradition to Sweden where he was accused of sex crimes, which he denied and which were later dropped.

After seven years, he was dragged from the embassy in 2019 and then jailed for skipping bail. He has remained in prison ever since, after the United States made its extradition request.

Mass murderer Breivik to apply for parole



Anders Behring Breivik raises his right hand during the appeal case in Borgarting Court of Appeal at Telemark prison in Skien

Reuters | Oslo

Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik will seek to apply for parole, his lawyer told daily VG yesterday.

The far-right extremist killed eight people with a bomb in Oslo and shot dead 69 others on an island nearby, many of them teenagers attending a Labour Party youth camp in July 2011, in what is Norway's worst peacetime atrocity.

He is serving Norway's maximum sentence of 21 years, which can be extended indefinitely.

While Breivik is eligible to seek parole after serving the first ten years of his term, a date he will reach in July 2021, it is up to the courts to determine whether a release is appropriate.

"I have at his demand sent a request for parole," Breivik's lawyer, Oeystein Storrvik, told VG.

"This is a right that all prisoners (who can be detained indefinitely) have and that he wants to use," he said.

Storrvik was not immediately available for comment.

Reactions to the news were immediate and negative. "He will never be released. Never!" tweeted Raymond Johansen, the governing mayor of Oslo,

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Breivik is serving Norway's maximum sentence of 21 years, which can be extended indefinitely.

who was secretary-general of the Labour Party at the time of the attacks.

Human rights

Breivik would also launch a new legal challenge about his prison conditions, Storrvik told VG.

In 2015 Breivik attempted to sue the Norwegian state to end his isolation in prison, arguing that such strict conditions violated his human rights.

He won the first round in 2016 but lost on appeal. The Norwegian Supreme Court did not take up his case, nor did the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The Nordic country has one of the most liberal regimes in Europe in terms of crime and punishment, with most prisoners released after serving two-thirds of their sentences.

However, criminals can be detained indefinitely if they are deemed to still pose a threat to society.

Indian, China troops exchanged gunshots twice last week

● Indian Express newspaper said 100-200 rounds were fired

Reuters | New Delhi

Indian and Chinese border troops had an exchange of gunfire last week just days before a meeting of their foreign ministers, Indian officials said yesterday, in a further breach of a decades-old restraint at the frontier.

The two sides have had a long-standing agreement for troops not to use firearms at the poorly defined Line of Actual Control or the informal border and for 45 years no shot has been fired.

But since late last month, there have been three incidents of warning shots fired in the western Himalayas where troops are locked in a faceoff over competing territorial claims, often in close proximity, officials aware of the situation said. "In all these cases shots were fired in the air and not at each other thankfully," said one of the officials.



Indian soldiers stand in a formation after disembarking from a military transport plane at a forward airstrip in Leh

One of them occurred on the north bank of the bitterly contested Pangong Tso lake in the run-up to a meeting between Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Moscow last Thursday.

The shooting which neither side has made public was the most intense, a second official said. The official said he was not in a position to provide more details but the Indian Express newspaper said 100-200 rounds were fired.

The two sides are jockeying for advantageous positions on the undemarcated mountain border in the Ladakh sector which adjoins Tibet. Last Monday, troops had fired in the air on the southern bank of the lake, the two sides said.

Jaishankar and Wang agreed to dial down tensions and since then the situation has calmed, the Indian officials said. But there is no pulling back of troops yet.

Former Indian military commander lieutenant general D. S. Hooda said distrust was so large now it would be difficult to get back to the agreement under which troops carried few firearms at the contested border during their patrols.

"We should no longer be talking about peace and tranquillity along the LAC, but conflict prevention," he said.

Aussie diplomat sorry for Cambodian turtle soup meal

AFP News

Australia's ambassador to Cambodia has apologised for eating a dish containing softshell turtle, which are highly protected in parts of the

world.

Ambassador Pablo Kang shared an image earlier this month of a bowl containing cooked turtle his party consumed during a visit to rural Pai-

lin, but deleted the tweet after drawing criticism online.

"I have removed my tweet about softshell turtles and eels, and apologise to all those who took offence," Kang tweeted on Tuesday.

The ambassador's culinary faux pas stirred little interest inside Cambodia -- where one particular softshell turtle species can be legally farmed and sold for food.

The meat is often made into a soup that is a particularly popular delicacy in capital Phnom Penh.

But many other species of softshell are considered crit-

ically endangered around the world, and the pictures drew the wrath of online critics.

The Australian embassy told local outlet VOD, the dish had been offered as an official meal and the ambassador was assured the turtle had been farmed, and not from the wild.

"My intent was not to promote these dishes, but to tell people about some of the foods I was offered during my recent provincial visit," Kang said.

"I certainly do not condone the harvesting of any endangered species for food or other purposes, and will be more careful about my actions in future."

