

Academics Call for Julian Assange to Win Nobel Peace Prize



London, June 23 (RHC)-- Intellectuals from around the world are gathering in Quito, Ecuador this week to amplify the international call for Julian Assange's release and for his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize, along with whistleblowers Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden.

Ignacio Ramonet, a Spanish columnist for *Le Monde Diplomatique* helping lead the call, said: " And we'll see, when Assange win the Nobel Peace Prize, whether the British government prevents him from leaving the Ecuadorean embassy to receive his prize in Norway."

The "Julian Assange, 4 Years of Freedom Denied" forum, organized by the International Center for Advanced Studies in Communications in Latin America (CIESPAL), brings together academics to discuss the Wikileaks founder in the context of geopolitics from the South, the Panama Papers and cyberwar, among other topics.

The Australian cyber-activist took refuge in the Ecuadorean embassy in London in June 2012. The British government was prepared to extradite him to Sweden, which had received two allegations of sexual assault. Assange has maintained that the claims were a front for his extradition to the United

States, where he could receive the death penalty for leaking hundreds of thousands of classified military documents and diplomatic cables. The United Kingdom is estimated to have spent over US\$20 million on security to monitor the Ecuadorean embassy and be prepared to arrest him if he steps foot outside the embassy.

Sweden asked now asked to question Assange in the Ecuadorean Embassy, marking an apparent shift in the stalemate after repeated requests for him to be interviewed in his asylum to avoid extradition.

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