

British Lawyers Reportedly Deleted E-mails Regarding Julian Assange Case



London, November 11 (RHC)-- An Italian reporter has revealed that the U.K.'s Crown Prosecution Service, CPS, deleted important emails regarding Julian Assange's case and convinced Swedish officials to forgo interviews with the Wikileaks founder in London.

Italian journalist Stefania Maurizi, working for the Italy-based, La Repubblica, found that CPS lawyers handling Assange's extradition to Sweden for rape charges purged critical e-mails related to the case and possible extradition to Sweden.

Maurizi has been investigating the Australian's case since 2009. During her research not only did she find that Assange-related e-mails were permanently deleted, she found that parts of critical e-mails regarding the Assange case provided by the CPS were modified compared to the same e-mails provided to her by Swedish lawyers.

In addition, Maurizi read in existing e-mails she obtained after filing a Freedom of Information petition, that CPS had actively discouraged Swedish lawyers from traveling to London "in 2010 or 2011 ... to interview Assange" regarding rape accusations from two Swedish women against the whistleblower.

An e-mail from a CPS lawyer from Jan. 25, 2011 read, “My earlier advice remains, that in my view it would not be prudent for the Swedish authorities to try to interview the defendant in the U.K.” British experts on freedom of information petitions suspect that had these interviews occurred, it’s unlikely Assange would have had to seek asylum in Ecuador’s British embassy in 2012.

Assange refused to travel to Sweden regarding the rape case for fear Swedish officials would extradite him to the United States, where he is considered a “priority” for disclosing classified U.S. embassy information in 2009 and 2010.

Maurizi is trying to uncover whether the U.S. was involved in influencing U.K. or Swedish officials to attempt to force Assange’s travel to Sweden regarding the rape case, risking extradition to the United States.

Of the CPS-deleted e-mails Maurizi wrote: “It is incredible to me these records about an ongoing and high-profile case have been destroyed. I think they have something to hide.” CPS officials have said it’s standard practice to purge e-mails and “related material ... three years following the conclusion of proceedings, or for the duration of the convicted defendant’s sentence plus three months.”

The CPS claims the Assange case concluded in 2012 and related e-mails were fair game to delete forever, saying it’s unlikely much information regarding Assange was lost in the purge. An informal tribunal in London will hear Stefania Maurizi’s case this week.

Former Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa granted Assange asylum in 2012 in its British embassy in London sharing the fear his life was in danger. Current President Lenin Moreno told Russia Today in late September: “We will continue to give him (Assange) patronage for as long as we assume that his life may be in danger.”

Meanwhile, the charges of rape against Julian Assange in Sweden were dropped in May.

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