



Assange Put on Suicide Watch After Patel Decision, Father Says

Description

UK/USA: John Shipton said Julian Assange was stripped naked and put in an empty cell to prevent him from killing himself over the home secretary's decision to sign his extradition order, Joe Lauria reports.



John and Gabriel Shipton at Berlin rally. (Joe Lauria)

By Joe Lauria
in Berlin
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After British Home Secretary Priti Patel signed Julian Assange's extradition order on Friday the authorities in Belmarsh prison stripped Julian Assange and threw him into a completely empty cell in an attempt to prevent his suicide, Assange's father has said.

It was just one more instance in which the prison humiliated his son, Shipton told a rally on Tuesday night at the offices of the *junge Welt* newspaper in Berlin. About 300 people attended, with an overflow crowd watching on close circuit TV in the courtyard.

“The ceaseless malice that has descended upon Julian, a deluge of malice, the strip-searching of Julian ... this is the latest humiliation,” Shipton said. “The staff of the jail, their concern after hearing he has to be extradited to the United States, thought he may commit suicide. Their solution was to strip him naked, and put him in a bare cell.”

Testimony was heard from expert defense witnesses during Assange’s extradition hearing that he might try to end his life in prison once he learned he was going to the United States.

It is not the end of the road for Assange legally, however. His lawyers have until July 1 to file for an appeal of Patel’s decision to the High Court. They also intend to apply for a [cross appeal](#) of issues such as the political nature of the charges, the threat to free speech and the reported C.I.A. plot to kidnap or kill Assange before his arrest.

Shipton and Gabriel Shipton, Assange’s brother, are in Berlin to lobby the German government to put pressure on the United States to drop the case against Assange.

On Monday, the Shiptons met with Tobias Lindner, the minister of state, at the German foreign ministry. “It was a practical and appropriate step for Tobias to take, to welcome Julian Assange’s father and bother into the foreign ministry,” John Shipton said. “The invitation in itself and the meeting in the foreign ministry indicates that the German government is sincere in bringing about the freedom of Julian Assange.”

But Shipton said he would like to hear a public statement from Germany in support of his son. “We’d like Tobias to confirm what he’s said.”

A German government spokesman on Monday said however that Germany was unlikely to intervene with either the U.K. or the U.S. “This is a legal process that is already in motion, so I would be a little wary of political intervention,” he said, the French Press Agency (AFP) reported.

by Joe Lauria

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