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Sweden should issue assurance it won't extradite Assange to USA

The Swedish authorities should issue assurances to the UK and to Julian Assange that if he leaves Ecuador's London embassy and agrees to go to Sweden to face sexual assault claims, he will not be extradited to the USA in connection with Wikileaks, Amnesty International said.

In the wake of the Wikileaks co-founder addressing the UN and with talks due between British Foreign Secretary William Hague and Ecuadorian officials, Amnesty International added that it was time to break the impasse.

"If the Swedish authorities are able to confirm publicly that Assange will not eventually find himself on a plane to the USA if he submits himself to the authority of the Swedish courts then this will hopefully achieve two things," said Nicola Duckworth, Senior Director for Research at Amnesty International.

"First, it will break the current impasse and second it will mean the women who have levelled accusations of sexual assault are not denied justice.

"It is vital that states show they are serious about dealing with allegations of sexual violence and that they respect both the rights of the women who made the complaints and the person accused.

While Amnesty International has no evidence that Sweden plans to extradite Assange to the USA it seems evident that fears about such an outcome have played no small part in the current stand-off.

Amnesty International believes that the forced transfer of Julian Assange to the USA in the present circumstances would expose him to a real risk of serious human rights violations, possibly including violation of his right to freedom of expression and the risk that he may be held in detention in conditions which violate the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.