
Dotcom forced to wait on bail decision

By NZ Herald Online staff

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German internet millionaire Kim Dotcom will have to wait until tomorrow afternoon to find out whether he will keep his freedom ahead of an extradition hearing in August.

At the High Court at Auckland today, Justice Tim Brewer reserved his decision until tomorrow following a hearing before a packed courtroom that included Dotcom's heavily pregnant wife Mona.

Crown lawyers, on behalf of the US Government, appealed last week's decision to grant the Megaupload founder bail, arguing he was still a flight risk.

The FBI wants to extradite Dotcom and three associates to the US to face charges including conspiring to commit racketeering, conspiring to commit money-laundering, copyright infringement and aiding and abetting copyright infringement.

The 38-year-old is accused of breaching international copyright laws to the value of US\$500 million through the company he founded - file-sharing site Megaupload - in what US prosecutors allege was a "mega conspiracy".

Dotcom has denied any wrongdoing and has consistently said he will not try to leave New Zealand.

His lawyer, Paul Davison QC, said today his client had taken his bail conditions very seriously and had even erected signs at his Coatesville property asking people not to bring 3G mobile phones into his home.

Dotcom's bail conditions include not using the internet or a helicopter, and he cannot travel more than 80km away from his \$4.3m mansion.

Mrs Dotcom is due to give birth to twins next month.

Earlier today, Germany could be a safe haven for Megaupload founder Kim Dotcom, the Crown alleged at the High Court.

Crown prosecutor Anne Toohey has told the court the internet tycoon still has two passports under a different name, despite a third being cancelled recently, Newstalk ZB reported.

The US Government is seeking to extradite Dotcom to the United States for breaching international copyright laws to the value of US\$500 million, but a hearing is likely to be six months away.

Ms Toohey said Germany does have an extradition treaty with the US but has a clause where it is likely to prosecute its own nationals.

That means Germany remains a much better option for Dotcom to travel to rather than the US if he is to be extradited, she said.

In a hearing last week Dotcom said he did not have enough money to leave the country, and could barely afford to pay his legal fees.

Ms Toohey has said it is uncertain all Dotcom's assets have been seized.

Under current bail conditions he is not allowed to use the internet or his personal helicopter, and can not travel more than 80km away from his mansion in Coatesville, just north of metropolitan Auckland.

He strongly denies any wrongdoing and has consistently said he would not try to leave NZ.

He had hoped receiving bail would give his wife confidence he would be home when she gives birth to twins next month.

- APNZ

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