

Home secretary upholds decision to extradite Richard O'Dwyer

Theresa May says she will not review case that could see Sheffield student facing 10 years in US jail

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The home secretary, Theresa May, has told the House of Commons that she will not revisit plans to extradite Sheffield Hallam student Richard O'Dwyer to the US on copyright charges, saying the decision had "already been taken".

O'Dwyer faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in a US jail for alleged copyright offences, for which the UK declined to press charges. The charges relate to a website, tvshack.net, which O'Dwyer when he was 19 and which linked to places to watch TV and films online.

Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales launched a campaign against his extradition late last month, including a petition which on Monday hit 225,000 signatures, primarily from the UK and the US.

Conservative MP Zac Goldsmith, who has previously raised concerns over several US extradition cases, asked May at home secretary's questions in the Commons on Monday if she planned to review the case, given that it involved "an offence, if it is one, that our own authorities thought did not merit a prosecution."

May, who must personally approve extraditions under the US/UK treaty, said the decision had been taken and O'Dwyer must rely on his court appeal.

"As you know that case is due to go to court later this year," she said. "As regards the extradition decision, that has already been taken and, as you know, I have decided to uphold the extradition."

Previous campaigns against extradition have called on home secretaries to review their decisions to extradite, most famously in the case of Chile's General Pinochet, where former prime minister Margaret Thatcher called on the Labour home secretary to revoke his permission for extradition.

Wales is currently seeking a meeting with May and her advisors to discuss the O'Dwyer case. In his call for the meeting, he said: "The home secretary continues to ignore

hundreds of thousands of citizens, the UK tech community, business leaders, celebrities and MPs from all parties on this issue.

"She should be very clear that we are not going to go away and new supporters are joining the campaign all the time."