

Lynch's extradition fate in Home Secretary's hands

Cambridge tech entrepreneur Dr Mike Lynch is continuing to fight a bid by US lawmakers to extradite him on allegations of fraud in the \$11 billion sale of Autonomy to American giant HP in 2011.

Dr Lynch's immediate fate is in the hands of Home Secretary Priti Patel who has until midnight on Friday to either sign his extradition order, refuse to sign citing speciality or ignore the request and let the extradition order lapse.

Dr Lynch's team is hoping Option 3 prevails and that Patel will ignore the order. If not Dr Lynch will appeal the magistrate's decision that he should be tried in a US court – and the resulting legal process could drag on for months. Dr Lynch continues to deny charges that he acted improperly in the Autonomy sale to HP.

The latest twist was triggered by a High Court ruling not to overrule a magistrate's decision to refuse the Home Secretary time to review the – as yet undelivered – verdict from Dr Lynch's UK High court civil battle with HP.

Justice Hildyard's verdict from that case is expected anytime and Patel felt it was right to wait for that before deciding on extradition to the US.

HP triggered the civil case in 2015 and Dr Lynch counter-sued.

Having been cleared by the UK's Serious Fraud Office shortly after the acquisition went through, a ruling in Dr Lynch's favour from the UK civil battle might be enough to repel the extradition threat.

It would certainly give Patel and Dr Lynch's legal team ammunition with which to fight the extradition order.

Leading politicians and tech entrepreneurs have urged the UK not to back Dr Lynch's extradition. They warn that the long-term implications of caving to such demands could set a dangerous precedent as transatlantic acquisitions continue to flow thick and fast.

- PHOTOGRAPH: Home Secretary Priti Patel. Credit: Cubankite / Shutterstock.com