

Dotcom claims he is broke, facing New Zealand jail

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND: Internet mogul Kim Dotcom, accused of pocketing more than \$175m from pirated copies of movies and other material, claimed on Wednesday he was broke and facing jail in New Zealand.



Kim Dotcom addressing a crowd in July 2013.
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In a live video link from his New Zealand mansion to the UnBound Digital conference in England, the German-born entrepreneur said he had no money left to defend himself at a bail hearing in Auckland on Thursday.

"I'm defenceless and they're using that opportunity to try and get my bail revoked and that's what I'm facing on Thursday," said Dotcom, who is fighting extradition to the United States where he is wanted on Internet piracy charges.

"This might be my last public appearance and if I go back to jail you can tell everybody that was the one."

Dotcom, whose New Zealand lawyers recently quit, claimed he has spent \$10m on legal costs since he was arrested in a dramatic police helicopter swoop on his mansion in January 2012.

Drained resources

"They have certainly managed to drain my resources," he said.

Dotcom's Megaupload operation, at the centre of the piracy accusations, has been shut down and he said shares in his new data storage company Mega were held in trust by his wife and children.

He and his wife separated earlier this year.

Dotcom, who was born Kim Schmitz, said he also regretted dabbling in politics when he invested several million dollars in a new political party which failed to win a seat in New Zealand's September general election.

"Before I started my political movement, I was quite popular in New Zealand. Everyone was cheering for me to win my case," he said.

"But after I got involved in politics and the prime minister and his party attacked me viciously, labelling me as a Nazi and saying I'm only going into politics to stop my extradition, well the New Zealand public heard that narrative and now I'm a pariah.

Keeping a high profile isn't always a good idea

"The witch-hunt worked, everyone wants to see me burn, and on Thursday I might go to jail because of that."

He also admitted his flamboyance made him an easy target.

"When you travel around on private jets and you go around with cars that have number plates saying 'God', 'Stoned' and 'Mafia' on them, it's probably not the best for keeping a low profile."

The US Justice Department and FBI claim Megaupload and related sites netted more than \$175m in criminal proceeds, and cost copyright owners more than \$500m by offering pirated copies of movies, TV shows and other content.

Source: AFP, via I-Net Bridge

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