



Her Excellency Mrs Vicki Treadell
High Commissioner for the United Kingdom
British High Commission
Commonwealth Avenue,
Yarralumla, ACT 2600
Australia.enquiries@fco.gov.uk

cc. Senator the Hon Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
foreign.minister@dfat.gov.au

cc. Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Opposition spokesperson for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
senator.wong@aph.gov.au

12 April 2019

Your Excellency,

Re: Julian Assange

We write to convey concerns about the possible extradition to the United States of Julian Assange, the publisher of WikiLeaks, and urge the UK and Australian governments to oppose extradition to that country.

Mr Assange is an Australian citizen and has been a member of MEAA's Media Section – the trade union and professional association of Australian media workers – since 2007.

MEAA is concerned that Mr Assange is facing possible extradition to the United States regarding WikiLeaks' publication of US government files nine years ago. We believe a prosecution of WikiLeaks' personnel will have a chilling effect on the public's right to know what governments do in the name of their citizens.

It is a principle of a free press that the media have a duty to scrutinise the powerful and to hold them to account. The media report legitimate news stories that are in the public interest.

WikiLeaks was established in a way to allow whistleblowers seeking to publicly expose wrongdoing to upload material anonymously and with no possibility of being traced. This is common practice among media organisations around the world – using technology that allows whistleblowers to submit material to a media outlet anonymously and confidentially.

On April 5 2010 WikiLeaks revealed US military gunsight video showing US military helicopters killing two Reuters war correspondents, Saeed Chmagh and Namir Noor-Eldeen, in Iraq on July 12 2007.

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The publication of US diplomatic cables in November-December 2010 was done with the full collaboration of numerous media outlets in several countries including the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* in Australia, *The Guardian* in the United Kingdom, *The New York Times* in the US, *El Pais* in Spain, *Le Monde* in France and *Der Spiegel* in Germany. None of these media outlets have been cited in any US government legal actions as a result of the publishing they have done in collaboration with WikiLeaks.

In 2011 the WikiLeaks organisation was awarded the Walkley Award for Most Outstanding Contribution to Journalism – in recognition of the impact WikiLeaks' actions had on public interest journalism by assisting whistleblowers to tell their stories. The judges said WikiLeaks applied new technology to “penetrate the inner workings of government to reveal an avalanche of inconvenient truths in a global publishing coup”.

Extradition of Mr Assange and prosecution by the United States would set a disturbing global precedent for the suppression of press freedom.

We welcome the provision of Australian consular assistance. We urge that he be provided with medical assistance if required. The Australian and UK governments should publicly oppose the extradition of Mr Assange to the United States.

Yours sincerely,



Marcus Strom
media president
MEAA Media



Paul Murphy
chief executive
MEAA