

How the Julian Assange Support Group can hold to account the Albanese government for its failure to support Julian Assange and how you can help



Starting on Tuesday 20 February, 9 days from today, a two day hearing, to decide whether or not Julian Assange is to be extradited to the United States, will commence. It seems highly likely that the judge will rule that Assange be extradited to the United States. There he will face a kangaroo court hearing, thence imprisonment for 175 years, in conditions even worse than the solitary confinement he is now being made to endure in London's Belmarsh Prison.

Those who could possibly act to prevent this from happening should treat this as urgent and act accordingly.

One week prior to that London hearing, at 10:30am this coming Tuesday 13 February, four parliamentary supporters of Julian Assange - Andrew Wilkie, an independent MP from Tasmania, Josh Wilson, Labor MP for Fremantle, Bridget Archer a Liberal from Tasmania and NSW Greens Senator David Shoebridge - will be speaking at a rally, to demand the Australian Government act to prevent the United States from extraditing Assange. They will the

hold a press conference where they will put their views to the newsmedia and invite questions from the newsmedia.

This protest and press conference will be held during the [second of four sitting days](#) of the House of Representatives this coming week. They and other members of the *Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Support Group* (Assange Support Group) could also put these demands inside our Parliament. This could be in the form of a motion which requires this government to act prevent the extradition of Assange. Were they to do so, why couldn't they also include in the motion, a demand that the British government end its illegal imprisonment of Assange and, should they wish, allow him, his wife Stella and their children to come home to Australia?

Their demand that the government act to prevent Assange from being extradited to the US rightly disregards Foreign Minister Penny Wong's lame excuse for doing nothing: "These are not legal proceedings to which we are a party" (Senate Hansard, 9/5/2023). The fact that the Australian government has chosen not to be a party to those legal proceedings which are being conducted against Australia's most famous and most revered citizen, since he was arrested on 11 April 2019, is no reason why the Parliament of his country should not, at least, inform itself about this case. If all of the pertinent facts of the Julian Assange case were put to our Parliament and then properly discussed, then the injustice towards Assange would be understood by every interested Australian citizen.

If those facts had been acknowledged by our Parliament, the appalling conduct by the judges of the UK and the US towards Julian Assange would have been made clear to all concerned Australians, but this has not, so far, occurred. Had this occurred, then it would have been made obvious that no judge with any integrity, or any fairly selected jury, would have kept Assange behind bars, even for one day.

But, how can members of the *Assange Support Group* make our Parliament acknowledge these facts?

Since 11 April 2019, when Assange was dragged out of the Ecuadorian Embassy, he has been discussed in Parliament, by my count, 218 times. On only a few very rare occasions have these efforts by supporters of Assange drawn any response whatsoever from the government, either the current Government of Anthony Albanese or the previous Liberal government of Scott Morrison.

As far as I can tell, not one petition in support of Assange, nor any of the many statements by members of the *Assange Support Group* has had any impact whatsoever. Whilst questions put in Question Time can cause some government Ministers to be momentarily embarrassed, none of them have made any enduring difference, as far as I can tell.

However, by putting to Parliament an actual motion - not just a statement of support - calling upon the Government to use its powers as the government of a sovereign nation to make the UK government end its illegal imprisonment of

Assange, might the Assange Support Group hope to make the Albanese government uphold its basic duty of care towards Assange?

Just over 3 years ago, on 2 December 2021, Andrew Wilkie tried to foreshadow a motion which called upon the then Morrison government to act to free Julian Assange. The foreshadowed motion is included below as an Appendix. However, Wilkie failed to win the vote for the necessary Suspension of Standing Orders to allow his motion to be put. That an apparent majority of the House of Representatives voted against Wilkie's motion about the plight of Australia's most famous citizen to even be put, is a clear violation of the principles of democracy and free speech that should have been upheld by our Parliament. Unfortunately, Wilkie did not call for a division, so Australian voters were unable to know the names of those MPs who, by behaving so unconscionably, were clearly not fit to be members of our Parliament.

Given that other efforts by the Assange Support Group have apparently made so little difference, they should seriously consider, putting to this week's sitting of Parliament an updated version of Wilkie's foreshadowed motion of 2021, but this time, should the necessary motion of a suspension of Standing Orders be defeated, they should call for a division. Should the majority of parliamentarians have the gall to vote to disallow debate, this time, we will know their names.

Appendix from Hansard: Wilkie's foreshadowed motion in support of Assange which was DISALLOWED

Evidently, those who control our Parliament, from both sides of the aisle, fear debate about Julian Assange. On Thursday 2 December 2021, they chose not just to oppose the motion below, but to not even allow it to be put:

That the House:

(1) notes that:

(a) Walkley Award winning Australian journalist, Mr Julian Assange, remains incarcerated in HMP Belmarsh in the United Kingdom, despite a British Court earlier this year finding that Mr Assange could not be extradited to the United States of America for health reasons;

(b) the US continues to pursue Mr Assange and has recently been back in court in the UK appealing the earlier decision to refuse the extradition;

(c) the reason for the US's determination to extradite Mr Assange is limited to Wikileaks' exposes in 2010 and 2011 of US war crimes and other misconduct in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in Guantanamo Bay, including the release of the 'Collateral Murder' video in which a US helicopter in Iraq gunned down innocent civilians including journalists;

(d) recent revelations in the media show the Central Intelligence Agency developed plans to abduct and assassinate Mr Assange; and

(e) the continuing incarceration of Mr Assange, and any extradition to the US, would not only be a grave injustice but a severe threat to his health and life; and

(2) calls on the Prime Minister to:

(a) speak directly with his counterparts in the US and UK to bring an end to this madness, including the US dropping all charges against Mr Assange and the UK allowing his immediate release; and

(b) commit to not allow the extradition of Mr Assange to the US from Australia.

How you can help

Contact your MP and ask his/her to use his/her voice in Parliament this coming week commencing Monday 11 February 2024 to support Julian Assange. Ask Andrew Wilkie and other members of the Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Support Group to try to put the above motion to Parliament.

(Adapted from article at <https://candobetter.net/james-sinamon/blog/6797/support-group-says-no-extradition-protest-tuesday-canberra-julian-assange>)