



Why won't your Australian Labor government use the powers vested in it to end the illegal imprisonment and torture of Julian Assange?



Yesterday, on Friday 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, four members of the Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Support Group (Assange Support Group) - Andrew Wilkie, Josh Wilson, David Shoebridge and Bridget Archer - issued a press release [1] in which they “urge[d] the United States to discontinue the long, expensive and punishing process that prevents Mr Assange from returning home to his family in Australia.” The press release concluded “there is no justice, compassion, or reasonable purpose in the further persecution of Julian Assange when one considers the harsh conditions of detention he has already endured.”

Were they hoping that the same US government, which for 7 months, since October 7 last year, had been supplying Israel with weapons, munitions and intelligence, with which over 34,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been murdered [2] would be moved to act with ‘compassion’ towards Assange?

The same government of US President Joe Biden has for weeks been beating and arresting students and staff, who were expressing their disgust at the murder of so many Palestinians in Gaza.

The fact remains, Julian Assange has been imprisoned in solitary confinement for over five years in Belmarsh Prison. Had Assange been tried before a judge with any integrity or before a fairly selected jury, there is no way he would have been imprisoned even for one night, but, instead, he was tried before a succession of thoroughly crooked judges who have denied him due process.

If this can be done to someone who has broken no British law, [3] then any Australian revealing information to which powerful figures in the US administration may object, could also face this treatment. The treatment of Assange, even thus far, poses a threat



How could the same US government, which has enabled this, possibly feel compassion towards Assange?

to every Australian citizen's freedom, particularly to those who may have reason to travel abroad. So, how well has the Albanese government upheld its duty of care towards this Australian citizen?

Has the Albanese government upheld its duty of care towards Julian Assange?

Prior to 24 February 2024, for 21 months since the Albanese government was inaugurated on Monday, 23 May 2022, nothing of any consequence was done for Julian Assange. On 24 February 2024 a short motion which “underlin[ed] the importance of the UK and USA bringing the matter to a close so that Mr Assange can return home to his family in Australia,” was put to the House of Representatives by Andrew Wilkie and carried 86 votes to 42.

Since that day, both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister Penny Wong have spoken to both US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak about Assange, but this has had no noticeable impact. Assange remains behind bars.

The fact that Assange's arrival in the US in chains could harm Biden's prospects to be re-elected in November may have caused the UK High Court to not order Assange's immediate extradition. Instead he is to remain imprisoned in solitary confinement at least for many more months as the arcane legal processes around his appeal against the extradition order proceed.

Proper debate on Julian Assange urgently needed in the Australian Parliament

The Australian Parliament resumes on Tuesday 14 May 2024. Supporters of Assange should, as a matter of utmost urgency, contact the four MPs listed above, and other members of the Assange Support Group, and urge them to put to Parliament a motion that instructs the government to use the powers vested in it as a government of a sovereign nation, to demand of the UK government that they end the illegal imprisonment of Assange.

Footnotes

[1] The image of the press release can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/839556946246928/posts/2332118490324092/>

[2] This figure does not include many thousands of ‘missing’ Palestinians buried beneath the rubble of Gaza. Tens of thousands more have been wounded or maimed.

[3] In July 2012, whilst powerful figures, in the US, the UK and Sweden, many of whom were guilty of facilitating war crimes, were conspiring to take away his freedom, Julian Assange supposedly committed the ‘misdemeanor’ of ‘skipping bail’ to avoid extradition to the United States. For this, the crooked UK judge Vanessa Barraitser outrageously sentenced Assange to 50 weeks imprisonment which was served in solitary confinement. This sentence concluded in April 2020 – 4 years ago, but Assange still remains behind bars.

The PDF of this leaflet with printing instructions can be found attached to <https://candobetter.net/admin/blog/6839/proper-debate-julian-assange-urgently-needed-parliament>