



Why has so little been said in the Australian Parliament about Julian Assange?

Julian Assange, the multiple award-winning Australian journalist, has been imprisoned in solitary confinement for 23 hours per day in London's Belmarsh prison since April 2019 - almost four years ago.

This followed almost seven years in which, to avoid extradition to the United States, Assange had to remain confined to within the small spaces of the Equadorian Embassy where he had been granted asylum.

In all, Julian Assange has been confined for almost 11 years, when he has broken no Australian law and no British law and, as has been admitted by the US military, no life has ever been endangered as a consequence of any of his Wikileaks' publications.

Now, Assange is subject to a ruling that he be extradited to the United States, to face trial for his supposed breach of the 1917 Espionage act when he is not even a citizen of the US nor has ever been there. There is no way that any fairly selected jury, nor any judge with integrity, would have made any of these rulings. Only a thoroughly corrupt judge under direct orders from the British government would have been capable.

In the US, Assange is to face trial, not before the Supreme court, nor before any of the US district courts, but before a kangaroo court, otherwise known as the Grand Jury of the eastern district of Virginia. Due to demographics, jurors there tend to be comprised of either employees of the CIA, the NSA and other intelligence agencies which have their national headquarters nearby, or their relatives.

The Grand Jury has, on nearly every occasion, found the accused guilty. The chance of Assange not being found guilty of "endangering US national security" by this court is nil. Once convicted, he will be sentenced to imprisonment in solitary confinement in conditions even worse than the worst he has been made to endure at Belmarsh, for the rest of his life. Julian Assange has said himself that he would consider such a fate worse than death.

How could any capable person of good-will not be outraged and disgusted by this? How could any good person not be resolved to use means available to them to free Julian Assange from this?

In fact, as Australian PM Anthony Albanese surely realises, this treatment of Assange is clearly in violation of both UK law and international law, and the plans by the Grand Jury to convict Assange clearly violate the First Amendment to the United States' Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech.



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Albanese chooses not to act

Albanese surely knows that if he demanded of either US President Joe Biden or UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak that they desist from their monstrous and illegal conduct, Julian Assange would be free today to come home to Australia to be with his wife Stella and their two children. Yet, Albanese has chosen to stay silent.

Furthermore, as has been revealed in Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, contrary to what he told Independent MP Dr. Monique Ryan during Parliamentary Question Time on 30 November last year, he has not even approached either Joe Biden or Rishi Sunak to ask (or beg) them to free Assange. When Dr. Ryan learned of this she expressed outrage and vowed to demand an explanation from him (although this has yet to occur in 2023).

Make Parliament end its silence on Assange next week

A Parliament in a Parliamentary democracy should hold to account the government of the day for its actions or failures to act. In the case of Julian Assange, members of Parliament and their constituents are at least entitled to a proper explanation for why the Australian government has failed to act, in any way, on behalf of Julian Assange.

Membership of the *Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Support Group*, numbers 40. This should surely be more than enough to give a sufficiently high profile to the cause of Julian Assange to be able to, at least, get answers from the Government. Yet, despite the grim urgency of his situation, Julian Assange's name has been raised only once so far this year in either of our two houses of Parliament - on Thursday 16 February in the Senate. On that day, Greens Senator Peter Whish-Wilson made a statement in support of Assange, but *got no response from the government*.

This must change. Those of us who want to to end the illegal imprisonment and torture of Assange must contact our Parliamentary Representatives, particularly members of the *Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Support Group* and urge them to speak much more loudly and much more forcefully for Julian Assange when Parliament resumes sitting from Monday 20 March next week. - James Sinnamon, 17/23/2023

How you can help: Attend the *Protest against the AUKUS War Alliance and to free Assange* at the State Library, 1pm Sat 18 Mar 2023; Attend the weekly vigil for Julian Assange from 5pm Friday outside Melbourne's Flinders Street Station

For more information: <https://candobetter.net>

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