

Dear Prime Minister Scott Morrison,



I am writing to you concerning the imprisonment, psychological and physical torture, in Britain, of an Australian citizen, Julian Assange, who has committed no crime. So far Julian Assange has endured more than eight and a half years of this, and if the United States' government has its way, this will continue for the rest of his life.



On 11 April 2019, shortly after Julian Assange was taken from the London Ecuadorian Embassy and placed under arrest, Foreign Minister Marise Payne issued a [statement](#):

"I am confident, as the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt publicly confirmed in July 2018, that Mr Assange will receive due process in the legal proceedings he faces in the United Kingdom." [1]

If you, Prime Minister, or Marise Payne, have been able to closely follow the legal proceedings to which Julian Assange has been subjected for over one year now, in Woolwich Crown Court, you will be aware of the following:

- For breaching bail on 19 June 2012 to seek asylum at the Ecuadorian Embassy, which he is entitled to do under Article 14 of United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948 [2], he was sentenced to 50 weeks imprisonment, [3] the absolute maximum sentence for this offence;
- On 13 September 2019, District Judge Vanessa Baraitser further extended Julian Assange's imprisonment when she ruled that Julian Assange would not be released on 22 September because of the United States prosecution's extradition request, the case for which, it had evidently not been able to fully prepare in the seven and a half years that Julian Assange had been imprisoned for at that point in time;
- On every day of the hearing, even before Judge Vanessa Baraitser had listened to any of the testimony or cross-examination, she came into court with *her judgement* for that day *pre-written*! [4]
- From the first day of the trial (25 February 2020) Julian Assange was brought in handcuffed, and "confined at the back of the court behind a bulletproof glass screen ... from which it is very difficult for him to see and hear the proceedings." [5]
- Magistrate Vanessa Baraitser "refused repeated and persistent requests from the defence for Assange to be allowed to sit with his lawyers." [6]
- Reporting on these proceedings, on 22 October 2019, Craig Murray, who, until then, had been skeptical of claims that Julian Assange was being tortured, declared himself, "badly shocked by just how much weight my friend has lost, by the speed his hair has receded and by the appearance of premature and vastly accelerated ageing. He has a pronounced limp I have never seen before. Since his arrest he has lost over 15 kg in weight." [7]
- Craig Murray continued, "But his physical appearance was not as shocking as his mental deterioration. When asked to give his name and date of birth, he struggled visibly over several seconds to recall both. ... his difficulty in making it was very evident; it was a real struggle for him to articulate the words and focus his train of thought." [8]
- On 21 February 2020, during that single day, "Julian had twice been stripped naked and searched, eleven times been handcuffed, and five times been locked up in different holding cells. In addition to this, all of his court documents had been taken from him by the prison authorities, including privileged communications between his lawyers and himself, and *he had been left with no ability to prepare to participate in [that day's] proceedings.*" [9] Julian Assange was subject to this sort of treatment for the duration of the trial.

- "For months, he was denied [physical] exercise and held in solitary confinement [for 23 hours a day] ... At first he was denied his reading glasses, left behind [on 25 February 2020 when he was arrested inside the Ecuadorian Embassy]. He was denied the legal documents with which to prepare his case, and access to the prison library and the use of a basic laptop." [10] [11]

How is this 'due process'? How could this be procedurally fair to Julian Assange?

What I have written above describes only a fraction of the abuse and torture to which Julian Assange has been subjected, just since the court hearings began on 25 February last year. This follows seven years asylum in the Ecuadorian Embassy, whence he fled from injustice and in fear for his life. The constraints of asylum have been described as 'arbitrary confinement' by Nils Melzer, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, after he visited Julian Assange in prison. [12]

In the last two decades alone, the United States, in a rampage of war-crimes leveraged on flagrant lies, has destroyed economies and caused the death of many hundreds of thousands in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Venezuela, Ukraine and elsewhere, apparently with impunity. In contrast, Julian Assange, who revealed many of these crimes to the world, and who himself has no history of violence, has been kept in solitary, stripped of his health, his clothing, his belongings, friends and family, and justice.

This is not 'due process' and certainly not procedurally fair. Unless this situation is rectified, Julian Assange, who is not a U.S. citizen, faces the prospect of being extradited to the United States, where he will face, in secret, a trial in the eastern district of Virginia, before a jury most likely to be made up from employees and the families of the U.S. intelligence agencies based in that area - in other words a rigged trial, hidden from public view.

Under such unfair trial conditions a guilty verdict is the expectation. Julian Assange stands to be sentenced for up to 175 years imprisonment in solitary confinement in the United States - **a fate** which he considers to be **worse than the death penalty**.

Like the many Australians who are well informed about Julian Assange, I consider this treatment of him by the British government an outrage. I would expect your government to act immediately to end this outrage:

If your government truly:

- cares for the welfare of each and every one of its citizens;
- believes in human rights;
- believes in the right to free speech;
- believes in the right of journalists to investigate matters of public concern and
- upholds the rule of law (Australian law, British law, International law and United States' law, including their constitutional right to free speech)

then I would expect of you the following:

To contact British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, advise him that an Australian citizen, Julian Assange, has been illegally imprisoned in Belmarsh prison and request that Julian Assange be released immediately, and assisted to return to Australia or to go to any place he chooses.

To communicate to Boris Johnson that if Mr Assange's detention were to continue, Australia would be raising the matter at the United Nations and, if necessary, at the International Criminal Court.

For footnotes and PDF file from which this document was printed, please visit <https://candobetter.net/node/6080>

Yours sincerely,

James Sinnamon