

# Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges endorses June 17 Sydney demonstration in defense of Julian Assange

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*Internationally acclaimed journalist, author, lecturer and former New York Times correspondent Chris Hedges has issued the following statement endorsing the June 17 demonstration at Sydney's Town Hall Square to demand that the Australian government immediately act to secure Julian Assange's unconditional freedom and return to Australia.*

Julian Assange's life is in danger. In violation of his fundamental human rights, the Ecuadorean government has transformed his asylum in its London embassy into a form of brutal incarceration. It has cut off his access to the Internet, thus depriving Julian of the ability to communicate with his supporters or even follow world events. The transparent aim of this inhuman treatment is to force Julian to leave the Ecuadorean embassy, so that he can be seized by London police, thrown into a British jail, and endure deportation proceedings which will be rigged to ensure a predetermined outcome. Julian Assange will be turned over to the United States and delivered into the hands of Donald Trump, Mike Pompeo, John Bolton and the CIA's expert torturer-in-chief Gina Haspel.

Julian Assange is a courageous journalist. He has been victimized because he exposed the real crimes of imperialism. The conspiracy against Julian must be stopped. His defense is the cutting edge of the fight against government suppression of the most fundamental democratic rights. I therefore support the June 17 demonstration in Sydney, called by the Australian Socialist Equality Party, which is demanding that the Australian government afford Julian the protection to which he is entitled as a citizen of Australia. The Turnbull government must take action to stop Julian's illegal persecution by the British, American and Ecuadorean governments, and secure his

safe return to Australia.



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