

Professor Stuart Rees, former director of the Sydney Peace Foundation, calls for Assange's liberty

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Professor Stuart Rees, is a retired academic, author and defender of human rights and civil liberties. He founded the Sydney Peace Foundation at the University of Sydney in 1998. In 2011, the Foundation bestowed its highest honour, its Gold Medal for Peace and Justice, to WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange.

Announcing the award, Professor Rees said: "Assange's work is in the Tom Paine Rights of Man and Daniel Ellsberg Pentagon Papers tradition—challenging the old order of power in politics and in journalism. Assange has championed people's right to know and has challenged the centuries-old tradition that governments are entitled to keep the public in a state of ignorance. In the Paine, Ellsberg and Assange cases, those in power moved quickly to silence their critics even by perverting the course of justice."

Professor Rees has issued the following statement endorsing the demonstrations and vigils that have been called to demand Assange's freedom.

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Statement by Professor Stuart Rees

Julian Assange has worked tirelessly to support free speech and to expose abuses of power by governments such as America's and by state institutions such as those representing British and Swedish "justice."

By contrast, the unashamed abusers of power have seen fit to guarantee that there would be no liberty for Julian if he leaves his refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy in London. Cowardly governments, such as Australia's, have also colluded in their indifference to one of their citizen's basic human rights.

The campaign to give liberty to Julian Assange is long overdue but deserves to be quickly successful. Unless that happens, it will look as though an inhuman

political culture will continue to live with the violent, bullying, militaristic power of nations which don't like their abuse to be exposed.

I am grateful to the organisers of this campaign and unreservedly endorse it.

Dr. Stuart Rees AM

Professor Emeritus University of Sydney
Former Director Sydney Peace Foundation



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