

Grenfell Fire Forum endorses vigils to demand freedom for Julian Assange

Our reporters
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The Grenfell Fire Forum, initiated by the Socialist Equality Party, held its monthly meeting Sunday, just three days after commemorations to mark the first anniversary of the inferno.

Seventy-two people died as a result of the fire at Grenfell Tower, West London on June 14, 2017—the worst high-rise fire in British history.

The entirely preventable tragedy was the outcome of the deregulatory policies carried out by successive Labour and Conservative-led governments, which left residents living in a death trap. Yet, still no one has been charged, let alone prosecuted.

As a statement by the SEP on the anniversary pointed out, “The refusal of the ruling elite to pursue the real criminals guilty of the Grenfell atrocity is also in stark contrast to their determination to silence anyone fighting to establish the truth about events.” Those speaking out about responsibility for the fire have been subjected to hysterical witch-hunts. The aim is to silence the truth and shield the guilty.

The statement drew the connection between this campaign and the vindictive persecution of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange by the US and British governments. Tomorrow marks six years since Assange was forced to take shelter in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London to prevent efforts to extradite him to the US on espionage charges, which carry the death penalty.

The embassy lies just four miles from Grenfell Tower and in the same Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

For almost three months now, Assange has been denied contact with the outside world, save his lawyers. He cannot speak to his family and is unable to receive visitors, make phone calls or access the Internet.

There is the real and imminent danger that this is the prelude to his expulsion from the embassy as part of

Ecuador’s attempted rapprochement with Washington.

The forum discussed the imminent dangers facing Assange and passed the following resolution endorsing the campaign to demand his freedom:

The Grenfell Fire forum endorses the campaign to free Julian Assange and support vigils being held around the world on June 19 and the public demonstration in Sydney on June 17, organised by the Socialist Equality Party.

Assange is a courageous journalist who has been persecuted and forced to seek shelter in the Ecuadorian Embassy because he and WikiLeaks exposed the war crimes of the United States and its allies in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria and their conspiracies against the people of the world.

We condemn the involvement of the British authorities in his persecution including threats of immediate arrest should he try to leave the embassy.

We note that Assange is being effectively held captive, and incommunicado, just four miles from Grenfell Tower, in the same Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea where 72 people died as the result of an entirely preventable fire on June 14, 2017. To this day, no one has been held accountable for their deaths.

While those responsible for commissioning illegal wars of aggression and condemning working people to live in death traps walk free, their victims and those who speak in their name are smeared, persecuted and abandoned.

As an important political step in challenging this anti-democratic situation, this meeting calls on the British government to immediately end Assange’s involuntary confinement and guarantee him safe passage to a place of his choosing.



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