

Breaking development:

Protests being organised against imminent eviction of Julian Assange from Ecuador's London embassy

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Protests are being organised in London and internationally in response to credible sources claiming that the Ecuadorian government is on the verge of reneging on the political asylum it granted to WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange and handing him to British police.

Anonymous Scandinavia, a twitter account believed to be closely linked with WikiLeaks, has published a video announcing a "Condition Red" and stating that the "situation is critical."

This follows a July 20 tweet by *Russia Today* editor Margarita Simonyan, which stated: "My sources say that Assange will be handed over to UK authorities in the coming weeks or even days..."

In a lengthy article published in the *Intercept* on July 21, journalist Glenn Greenwald reported that he also had a source "close to the Ecuadorian Foreign Ministry and the President's office" who had confirmed that Julian Assange will be evicted from Ecuador's London embassy "as early as this week."

The protest in London will be taking place at 10am, Monday, July 23, at the Ecuadorian embassy. Protests in other cities have been called at US embassies and consulates, to take place the day after Assange was evicted. Rallies are organised so far in Melbourne, Australia; Wellington, New Zealand; Paris; and Los Angeles. [Click here for details.](#)

The WSWs endorses all protest action against the persecution of Julian Assange and urges its readers to participate.

Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno arrived in London on July 21 to deliver the keynote speech at the 2018 Global Disability Summit. Greenwald reported in the *Intercept*: "The concealed, actual purpose of the President's trip is to meet with British officials to finalize an agreement under which Ecuador will withdraw its asylum protection of Julian Assange, in place since 2012, eject him from the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, and then hand over the WikiLeaks founder to British authorities."

Assange was granted political asylum in its embassy by Ecuador in 2012 after his legal appeals against extradition to Sweden, to answer "questions" on manufactured allegations of sexual assault, were rejected by the British courts. Assange legitimately feared that he would be rapidly extradited from Sweden to the US to face charges over WikiLeaks' publication of leaks that exposed

American war crimes and diplomatic intrigues around the world.

If Assange leaves the embassy he will be imprisoned by Britain for breaching bail and almost certainly face an application to extradite him to the United States to stand trial on manufactured charges of espionage.

On the Moreno government's orders, the Ecuadorian embassy in London has deprived Assange of all external communication, and all visitors apart from his lawyers, since March 28.

After six years of confinement due to the British threat of immediate arrest if he sets foot outside the small building, Assange's health has been seriously compromised. The deprivation of communication is a vindictive attempt to add immense psychological pressure on him to leave the embassy, as well as to silence him while lurid accusations permeate the American and international media that WikiLeaks was part of a nefarious Russian conspiracy to "interfere" in the 2016 US presidential election.

Ahead of Moreno's visit to London, his national secretary of political management, Paul Granda, asserted on July 19 that "there is no specific meeting planned on Assange." The same day, acting Ecuadorian foreign minister, Andres Teran, claimed that Moreno's government is "not in talks with the United States" over the WikiLeaks editor.

These statements have no credibility. All evidence, reinforced by the *Intercept* report, points to the opposite conclusion: A conspiracy is well advanced, involving the US, British, Ecuadorian and Australian governments, to have Assange hauled before a show trial in the US.

The American intelligence agencies are determined to prosecute Assange as a "spy." The campaign to arrest him was escalated to a "priority" in April 2017, after WikiLeaks began publishing the "Vault 7" leaks that revealed how the CIA had developed malware to hack phones, PCs, servers, smart televisions and vehicle computer systems in every part of the world.

Moreno's government has betrayed Assange as part of its venal attempts, on behalf of the Ecuadorian business elite, to restore economic and political relations with Washington. The London embassy cut off Assange's communications just one day after top-

level meetings in Ecuador with representatives of US Southern Command on re-establishing military cooperation.

Moreno will speak with leading figures in the Conservative government of Prime Minister Theresa May over the coming days.

The UK-Ecuadorian talks will take place amid total hysteria in the American political and media establishment, following Trump's meeting with Vladimir Putin in Helsinki this week, over purported Russian "meddling" and "interference."

At the centre of the allegations is the July 2016 publication by WikiLeaks of a trove of emails sent by the Democratic National Committee (DNC), revealing that ostensibly impartial party officials conspired to undermine Bernie Sanders' campaign against Hillary Clinton in the Democratic Party primaries.

The information outraged millions of Sanders' supporters, especially young people who had voted for the Vermont senator due to his claims to be a "democratic socialist" and to oppose the "billionaires." Top DNC officials were forced to resign in disgrace for their attempt to manipulate and rig the primaries for Clinton's benefit.

History, however, has since been rewritten by the Democratic Party, the American media and the US intelligence agencies. The DNC leaks were instead transformed into purported "evidence" of a Russian-orchestrated attempt to manipulate the 2016 presidential election in favour of Donald Trump. WikiLeaks and Assange were accused of being accomplices of the Putin regime.

On January 6, 2017, the US Office of National Intelligence alleged: "We assess with high confidence that the GRU [Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate] relayed material it acquired from the DNC and senior Democratic officials to WikiLeaks. Moscow most likely chose WikiLeaks because of its self-proclaimed reputation for authenticity."

Claims of Russian "fake news" and "meddling" also have been used to justify the sweeping and ongoing campaign to censor oppositional publications on the Internet, including WikiLeaks and the *World Socialist Web Site*. At the same time, the assertions of Russian "interference" have been used to stoke a frenzy of demands in the American establishment for a stepped-up economic and military confrontation with Russia, threatening to trigger war between nuclear-armed states.

The allegation that Assange is a "Russian agent" is crucial to both the assault on freedom of speech and democratic rights, and to the preparations for war.

A media organisation cannot be prosecuted for publishing leaks. So, in November 2010, Vice President Joe Biden labelled Assange a "high-tech terrorist." In April 2017, CIA director Mike Pompeo, now secretary of state, branded WikiLeaks a "non-state hostile intelligence agency."

If Assange were charged as a Russian spy, it would establish a far-reaching precedent. International media organisations and journalists that publish leaked information could be pursued and prosecuted without recourse to any constitutional and legal protections of freedom of speech.

The slander of Assange as a Russian tool serves definite ideological purposes. It has been seized upon internationally by the ex-liberal and pseudo-left milieu in the media and political establishment to align with US imperialism, the Democratic Party

and the American intelligence agencies and justify their refusal to defend WikiLeaks and democratic rights.

The truth is that, regardless of the source, WikiLeaks published information that was both newsworthy and further clarified people as to the corrupt, militarist and big business character of the Democratic Party and its candidate Clinton. Any genuine media organisation that received such leaks would have published them.

The immense danger Assange faces was underscored on July 20 by comments made during a media conference held by UK Foreign Affairs Secretary Jeremy Hunt and Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, who was in Britain for annual ministerial talks.

Hunt gloated: "Serious charges have been laid against him [Assange] and we want him to face justice for those charges but we are a country of due process. At any time he wants to, he is free to walk out on to the streets of Knightsbridge and the British police will have a warm welcome for him."

Bishop exuded the utter contempt of successive Australian governments for the rights of an Australian citizen and journalist being persecuted by the US. She indifferently responded to Hunt's threats, effectively washing her government's hands of Assange's fate. She told the media: "We understand there are still matters where Mr Assange is subject to British legal proceedings so therefore that would be a matter of British law enforcement authorities and agencies."

In fact, the only "charges" that Assange faces in Britain arise from breaching bail when he sought asylum, a necessary step to avoid the sinister warrant to extradite him to Sweden.

No charges were ever laid by Swedish prosecutors, who finally agreed to question him in London in December 2016. Sweden abandoned the bogus investigation in April 2017, yet the British authorities and courts refused to drop the now-redundant alleged bail offences.

The only "serious charges" against Assange are likely to be espionage-related charges in the United States, which could result in life imprisonment or even the death penalty.

The ongoing motive behind the persecution of Assange is to terrorise and intimidate whistleblowers and independent media organisations into remaining silent on imperialist war crimes and intrigues, corporate abuses and corruption, and US-led war preparations.

All defenders of media freedom and democratic rights must step up the fight to demand the unconditional right of Julian Assange to leave the London embassy and the UK unhindered and return to Australia, if he chooses to do so, with a guarantee against extradition to the US.



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