

Supporters oppose eviction of Julian Assange outside London's Ecuadorian embassy

Paul Mitchell
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Defenders of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange gathered outside the Ecuadorian embassy in central London yesterday, after a warning that he faces eviction from the building where he sought political asylum in 2012 “within hours to days.”

An advertising truck displaying a billboard with photos of Assange and Chelsea Manning with US flag gags across their mouths and the words “#Freespeech ... except for war crimes” was briefly parked in front of the embassy but was told to move on by police. The truck continued to circle past the embassy at regular intervals.

Scores of journalists and photographers lined the street opposite the embassy.

Ecuador's foreign ministry declared that it “doesn't comment on rumours, theories or conjectures that don't have any documented backing.” Later, a senior Ecuadorian official claimed no decision had been made.

A spokesman for Prime Minister Theresa May said, “It's obviously a matter for the Ecuadorian government. You'll know that there has been official contact between the UK government and the Ecuadorian government for a period of time now to try to seek a resolution to this.”

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said with undisguised cynicism that Assange is a “free man” and “can leave that embassy whenever he wants to, so we want the situation resolved as quickly as possible.” Asked whether he thought Assange would leave, Hunt replied, “That's up to him.”

A statement from London's Metropolitan Police force showed Assange is not a “free man” and that very little is “up to him.” It said there is an active warrant for Assange's arrest and that they are “obliged to execute that warrant should he leave the embassy.”

What they don't say is that the trumped-up minor bail

charges Assange is accused of are effectively null and void, given that he forfeited the bail money and has been illegally detained since 2012—far surpass any sentence he might receive.

Once “the warrant is executed” Assange would be thrown into jail as proceedings for his extradition to the United States are expedited where he would be hauled before a secret grand jury hearing over WikiLeaks' exposure of mass civilian casualties and extrajudicial assassinations in Iraq and Afghanistan and US diplomatic intrigues affecting virtually every country in the world. Assange faces possible conspiracy or espionage charges carrying a sentence of life imprisonment or the death penalty.

Emmy Butlin of the Julian Assange Defence Committee said, “I am very grateful to WSWs readers for their continuous support and I appeal to you to please get behind this international movement in freeing Julian Assange and supporting him in this dreadful time when he is facing possible expulsion.

“He was protected by the Ecuadorian government for a very long time, but the government has changed and his political asylum is under threat. We're very concerned that if this expulsion goes ahead he will then be arrested by the UK government.

“He will be put incommunicado without bail in a British prison pending a possible bail violation court hearing. But the moment that he is under police custody here in the UK the United States will unseal the charges that they have laid against him produced by the Wikileaks grand jury in America.

“We are very concerned because we, in the last few weeks, we know that Chelsea Manning, an alleged Wikileaks source, has been imprisoned as a strategy to force her to speak against Julian Assange in the grand jury.

“They’ve got espionage charges against Julian over publications that revealed war crimes. The publications go back to 2010. The pressure they have been applying over the years to various countries including the UK to hand over Julian Assange is immense and increasing.

“We are facing a crisis and I appeal to you to stand in solidarity with Julian Assange.”

Clara Campos of the defence Campaign added, “This is a message for the WWS. We are here today to support Mr. Assange because there have been a lot of rumours.

“Mr. Moreno, the president of Ecuador is holding hands with the US. He has threatened to get him out of the embassy.”

Clara explained the “dirty dealings” surrounding Moreno, who is embroiled in charges of fraud, corruption and perjury and that he now accuses Assange of hacking his emails and mobile phone and passing information to an opposition politician. Moreno ordered Assange’s internet access to be shut down in March last year and his right to receive visitors severely curtailed. He was forced to keep silent on all political issues, including his own plight, or face his right to asylum being reversed.

Clara added, “The only good thing is that Julian is an Ecuadorian citizen and it will not be so easy for Mr. Moreno,” as Wikileaks legal representatives will bitterly contest the validity of any possible extradition.



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