

“Truth ultimately is all we have:” Julian Assange appeals for public support

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In his first publicly-released comments to supporters since his arrest, WikiLeaks founder and publisher Julian Assange has detailed the repressive conditions he faces in Britain’s Belmarsh prison and called for a campaign against his threatened extradition to the United States.

“I am defenceless and am counting on you and others of good character to save my life,” Assange wrote, adding, “Truth ultimately is all we have.”

Assange’s comments were made in a letter addressed to independent British journalist Gordon Dimmack, who decided to make it public following last Thursday’s announcement by the US Justice Department of additional charges against Assange under the Espionage Act. The WSWs is republishing the letter, with Dimmack’s permission, in full below.

Assange explained that since he was convicted on trumped-up bail charges shortly after his arrest on April 11, he has been “isolated from all ability to prepare to defend myself, no laptop, no internet, no computer, no library so far, but even if I do get access it will be just for half an hour with everyone else once a week.”

The WikiLeaks founder stated that he is allowed “Just two visits a month and it takes weeks to get someone on the call list.”

All of his calls, except those to his lawyers, are monitored and limited to a maximum of ten minutes. There is a window of just 30 minutes per day for phone calls to be made “in which all prisoners compete for the phone.” Assange receives only a few pounds of phone credit per week and is not allowed to receive inbound calls.

The WikiLeaks founder declared that, despite these onerous conditions, he is “unbroken albeit literally surrounded by murderers. But the days when I could read and speak and organise to defend myself, my ideals and my people are over until I am free. Everyone else must take my place.”

The WikiLeaks founder stated that he faced “A superpower” that has “been preparing for 9 years with hundreds of people and untold millions spent” on the case against him.

He warned that “The US government or rather those regrettable elements in it that hate truth liberty and justice want to cheat their way into my extradition and death rather than letting the public hear the truth for which I have won the

highest awards in journalism and have been nominated seven times for the Nobel Peace Prize.”

The unveiling of the US charges is a vindication of Assange’s warnings, in the letter and over the past nine years, that he faces a politically-motivated US prosecution for his role in WikiLeaks’ exposures of war crimes, mass surveillance operations and global diplomatic conspiracies.

The 17 counts against Assange carry a combined maximum prison sentence of 175 years. They are an unprecedented attempt to criminalise investigative journalism, and abolish the free press protections of the US Constitution’s First Amendment.

The charges centre on WikiLeaks’ receipt and publication of classified US government documents. These core journalistic practices are presented as criminal activities which “risked serious harm to United States national security to the benefit of our adversaries.”

The documents covered include the Afghan war logs, which exposed the extrajudicial killing of civilians by US-led forces, and other violations of international law.

Assange’s letter further exposes the ongoing political conspiracy against him, which included his illegal expulsion from Ecuador’s London embassy and detention by the British authorities.

The WikiLeaks founder was convicted, within hours of his arrest, on the British charges. The judge dismissed the fact that the offenses were effectively resolved years ago as a result of Assange’s forfeiture of bail monies, his years of arbitrary detention in the small embassy building and his United Nations-upheld status as a political refugee.

Despite the minor character of the bail conviction, Assange has been held in virtual isolation in a maximum security prison. This is a clear attempt to hinder his defence against the Trump administration’s extradition request, and the revived Swedish investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct, which is aimed at blackening his name and creating an alternate route for him to be dispatched to a US prison.

Assange’s call for a campaign in his defence coincides with growing opposition to his persecution and to the Espionage Act charges against him.

In a Tweet shared almost 5,000 times, investigative journalist

John Pilger warned that “The war on Julian #Assange is now a war on all. Eighteen absurd charges including espionage send a burning message to every journalist, every publisher... Modern fascism is breaking cover.”

The American Civil Liberties Union branded the charges “an extraordinary escalation of the Trump administration’s attacks on journalism, establishing a dangerous precedent that can be used to target all news organizations that hold the government accountable by publishing its secrets.”

The Freedom of the Press Foundation described them as “the most significant and terrifying threat to the First Amendment in the 21st century.”

In Australia, there are mounting calls for the government to fulfil its obligations to Assange as an Australian citizen and journalist. Former Labor politician Bob Carr yesterday cynically warned that Foreign Minister Marise Payne “needs to protect herself from the charge that she’s failed in her duty to protect the life of an Australian citizen”

Greg Barns, an Australian-based advisor to Assange, declared “Australia does have a role to play here and our view is that the Australian government needs to intervene.” He said the US prosecution of the WikiLeaks founder was aimed at applying US domestic law extraterritorially. This meant that “anyone who publishes information the US deems to be classified anywhere in the world” could be targeted by the US government.

Over the past 18 months, the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Parties (SEP) around the world have played a prominent role in the struggle against the stepped-up persecution of Assange.

The SEP (Australia) has held a series of rallies, demanding that the Australian government secure Assange’s release from Britain and return to Australia, with a guarantee against extradition to the US.

The events, addressed by SEP national secretary James Cogan, and well-known fighters for civil liberties, including Pilger, *Consortium News* editor-in-chief Joe Lauria and Professor Stuart Rees, have been attended by hundreds of workers, students and young people.

The SEP (Britain) held a powerful public meeting in London on May 12, which brought together 150 defenders of Assange, and featured speakers from around the world. It was streamed live on Dimmack’s YouTube page to an audience of thousands.

On May 18, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei held a rally in Berlin, attended by 300 people, under the banner “freedom for Julian Assange.”

Over the coming weeks, the WSWS and the SEP’s will intensify the struggle against Assange’s extradition to the US, and for his complete freedom. We appeal to all supporters of civil liberties to join us in this crucial fight, which is the spearhead of the defence of democratic rights and against imperialist war.

Assange’s next hearing is set for Thursday May 30 at

Westminster Magistrates Court in London. We urge all readers of the WSWS in the UK to attend.

Below is the full text of Assange’s letter to Gordon Dimmack:

I have been isolated from all ability to prepare to defend myself, no laptop, no internet, no computer, no library so far, but even if I do get access it will be just for half an hour with everyone else once a week. Just two visits a month and it takes weeks to get someone on the call list and the Catch-22 in getting their details to be security screened. Then all calls except lawyer are recorded and are a maximum 10 minutes and in a limited 30 minutes each day in which all prisoners compete for the phone. And credit? Just a few pounds a week and no one can call in.

A superpower that has been preparing for 9 years with hundreds of people and untold millions spent on the case. I am defenceless and am counting on you and others of good character to save my life

I am unbroken albeit literally surrounded by murderers. But the days when I could read and speak and organise to defend myself, my ideals and my people are over until I am free. Everyone else must take my place.

The US government or rather those regrettable elements in it that hate truth liberty and justice want to cheat their way into my extradition and death rather than letting the public hear the truth for which I have won the highest awards in journalism and have been nominated seven times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Truth ultimately is all we have.



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