

Sri Lanka: Colombo University students call for release of Julian Assange

Our reporters
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Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) members have won important support from Colombo University students for jailed WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange.

Since the April 21 suicide bombings by Islamic terrorists in Sri Lanka the government has banned all political parties campaigning on university campuses. Colombo University security officers have even refused to allow banners about Assange on the university's external fence.

Despite these anti-democratic restrictions, SEP and IYSSE supporters and members have won strong important backing from students and distributed hundreds of copies of the *World Socialist Web Site* statement calling for a global defence campaign to secure the release of Assange.

While most students were attending semester exams, many stopped to hear about the ongoing persecution of Assange and Manning and the WSWS's international campaign. Several students spoke to WSWS reporters and more than a dozen students signed forms indicating their support. One international relations student described the WSWS's defence campaign as an "eye-opener."

Buddhima, another student, told campaigners that he backed Assange because the WikiLeaks publisher had released information that governments want kept from the masses: "What Assange exposed is the truth. Exposure of the truth is not an offence but is vital. His exposures have stripped naked the American ruling class's democratic utterances.

"American imperialism is now seeking its revenge against Assange because he told the truth. Therefore, no one should have any reason to oppose the campaign to release Assange."

Lakmal said that the US administration was out to destroy whistleblowers. He discussed the difficult situation now facing Edward Snowden, stating: "America employs its state power and diplomatic relations to hound them [Assange and Snowden]... If the US is able to hunt down Assange, then the ruling classes all over the world will utilise the same methods to tighten repressive laws. This is a threat to our lives. That is why an international movement has to be developed against these anti-democratic moves."

Chanaka, a medical student, said: "Truth is the thing most difficult to find and the most powerful as well because it helps open the eyes of people about what kind of a world they live in.

"The limit of popular patience goes over the line when people see videos on the torturous methods at Guantanamo Bay and the Collateral Murders in Iraq. The British, Ecuadorian and Swedish ruling classes are conspiring because this kind of popular hatred is pointing toward American imperialism."

The same anti-democratic attacks, he continued, were occurring in every country. He pointed to the repressive conditions in Sri Lanka, including allowing the police and military on campuses after the April 21 terrorist bombings.



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