

Jailed Sri Lankan writer Shakthika Sathkumara defends Julian Assange

Our reporters
6 August 2019

Imprisoned Sri Lankan writer, Shakthika Sathkumara spoke out last week in defence of jailed WikiLeaks publisher and journalist Julian Assange.

Sathkumara has been held in remand for five months after being arrested by local police at Polgahawela on April 1 on the basis of false allegations by Buddhist extremists who claimed that the award-winning writer defamed Buddhism in a short story posted on his Facebook page.

Sathkumara, who also writes poetry and other literary work, won the National Youth Services Council's "Best Short Story" prize in 2010 and 2014 and was also awarded the Vayamba (North-western) Literature prize on two occasions.

The arrest of the 33-year-old father of two is a direct assault on freedom of expression. The Socialist Equality Party in Sri Lanka is campaigning against this attack on democratic rights and demanding his immediate release.

Sathkumara's statement endorsing the World Socialist Web Site's campaign to free Assange is published below.

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Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, has revealed US war crimes in Iraq and elsewhere. He is a brave journalist who because of his revelations is now jailed in the UK and facing possible extradition to the US. This is a great danger to freedom of expression and journalism and, as you have explained, is happening in many countries.

The system that has put Assange behind bars is the same system responsible for putting me behind bars in Sri Lanka. These attacks are an expression of the crisis of capitalist rule. The only answer to protect our rights is to fight for socialism. No reforms of the existing system can solve this problem.

People everywhere should raise their voices to protect Assange and to demand his immediate release. I support the *World Socialist Web Site's* international campaign to win his freedom and for all charges dropped against him. I also salute the Socialist Equality Party for fighting for my release.



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