

Roger Waters to perform in London Monday in defense of Julian Assange

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31 August 2019

The world-renowned bassist, singer and songwriter Roger Waters will perform his iconic Pink Floyd song “Wish You Were Here” in London on September 2 in solidarity with Julian Assange.

The performance will take place at 6pm on Monday in front of the office of British Home Secretary Priti Patel on Marsham Street in the heart of London. The event includes the demands “Defend Freedom of Speech” and “Don’t Extradite Assange.”

Also speaking at the event will be John Pilger, the award-winning investigative journalist and documentary film maker. Pilger announced via Twitter that he will be participating with Roger Waters and stated that the event is “in solidarity with Britain’s political prisoner” Julian Assange.

Both Waters and Pilger have been steadfast defenders of Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks founder and editor who has been held in the notorious Belmarsh Prison in London since May 1. Assange was convicted on a bogus bail violation by the Westminster Magistrate’s Court and sentenced to 50 weeks in jail.

Assange had been arrested on April 11 by British authorities following his eviction from the Ecuadorian embassy where he had sought asylum for nearly seven years. He now faces extradition to the US and on numerous charges concocted by a secret grand jury that stem from his record of having exposed to the world’s population the war crimes of American imperialism in the Middle East and elsewhere.

During his worldwide “US + Them 2018” music tour, Roger Waters persistently called for international action to secure the freedom of Assange. On July 12, Waters took to Facebook to denounce Twitter for shutting down the account of Unity4J, an organization dedicated to sharing information about the campaign to free Assange.

Waters said in his Facebook video that Julian Assange was “the great hero of freedom of the press and freedom, freedom, freedom of any kind who has been disgustingly and roundly turned upon by the United State, the United Kingdom and all the other purveyors of imperialism around the world. This is a very important journalist ... and of us have to defend him as best we can and in every and any which way we can.” He also accused Twitter of being “Big Brother” and “an arm of the forces of oppression.”

John Pilger has also spoken out forcefully in defense of the WikiLeaks journalist, including a Twitter post on August 9 where he reminded everyone that people “must not forget Julian Assange.” Pilger explained that Assange’s health was deteriorating and the draconian conditions in Belmarsh prison were posing grave physical and psychological danger for the courageous fighter for the truth.

In a radio interview on August 16, Assange’s father John Shipton also issued a warning that Julian “is emaciated and not in tip-top order or health” and that he “is suffering anxiety. He is still in fighting spirits, but his well-being is declining rapidly.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Committee of the Fourth International call for the widest possible participation and support for the concert and rally to defend freedom of speech and stop the extradition of Julian Assange to the US. Every effort must be mounted by the international working class and youth to assist efforts to unite all defenders of freedom of speech and demand the immediate release of Julian Assange.



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