

Dr. Lissa Johnson calls for workers and young people to rally in defence of Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning

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The following statement was written by clinical psychologist Dr Lissa Johnson, who will be one of the speakers at the Socialist Equality Party-organised rally at Parramatta Town Hall in Sydney's west on Saturday, February 22 at 12p.m.. Along with rallies in Melbourne, Brisbane and Wellington, New Zealand, the demonstrations will fight for the mobilisation of the working class in defence of imprisoned WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange and whistleblower Chelsea Manning.

The Trump administration has charged Assange with espionage for publishing documents leaked by Manning that exposed American government war crimes and diplomatic conspiracies. He faces a life sentence of up to 175 years for the courageous journalism carried out by WikiLeaks. The extradition hearing in the UK begins on February 24 in London. Demonstrations are being called around the world to demand that the British government reject the extradition and for the immediate and unconditional freedom of both Assange and Manning.

In 2018, Dr Johnson authored a five-part series "The Psychology of Getting Julian Assange," which was published by New Matilda and indicted the protracted persecution of the WikiLeaks founder. In November 2019, she was one of the signatories to the Open Letter, issued by doctors and health professionals from around the world, that documented the medical threat to Julian Assange's life due to his mistreatment. The Open Letter called on the British government to move the courageous journalist from Belmarsh Prison to a properly equipped and expertly staffed university teaching hospital. In a subsequent letter, Doctors4Assange demanded that the Australian government intervene on Assange's behalf.

Dr Johnson will also be one of the speakers at a rally in Sydney's Martin Place at 12p.m. on Monday, February 24, organised by PeopleForAssange.

Rally Against False Imprisonment, Trumped-up Charges and Abuse!

Statement by Dr. Lissa Johnson, BA BSc(Hons, Psych) MPsych(Clin) PhD Clinical Psychologist

Julian Assange's upcoming extradition hearing is a political litmus test for us all.

The question ahead of Julian Assange's February 24th extradition hearing in London is this: will we stand silently by, at our own risk, while a journalist and publisher is persecuted, possibly to death, for exposing war crimes? Will we watch quietly and obediently as 100-plus medical doctors warn that Julian Assange could die in prison, from politically-motivated torture?

Will we protest this abuse of the law, human rights and institutional power, knowing that if we do not, more abuse will come? Or are we too blinkered to see that our own rights and freedoms, and those of our children, are next in line?

Everyone who recognises the need, before it is too late to take a stand against gross injustice and for fundamental democratic rights should attend the rallies in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Wellington, New Zealand, and support the demonstrations and protests being organised around the world.



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