

“His freedom is a political question”—Australian SEP supporters demand Assange’s release

Our correspondents
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Socialist Equality Party (SEP) supporters are speaking out to denounce the persecution of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange in the lead-up to an emergency public meeting called by the party next Wednesday night to discuss how to take forward the fight for his release.

Assange’s life hangs in the balance following last week’s British High Court ruling, approving his extradition to the United States to face espionage charges that are likely to see him imprisoned for life for exposing the atrocities and diplomatic conspiracies of the US and its allies.

His more than decade-long detention at the behest of the Australian, British, Swedish and US governments has left his health in a terrible state. As UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Nils Melzer warned last week, the UK government is literally torturing him to death.

There is widespread outrage among ordinary people at the treatment of Assange, but no confidence can be placed in the courts or the political elites. To carry this fight forward it must be linked to the broader movement of the working class against the soaring social inequality and the criminal official response to the COVID-19 pandemic which is letting the virus rip throughout the world, causing mass infections and deaths.

We urge all defenders of democratic rights and opponents of imperialist war to participate in our online public meeting on Wednesday evening to discuss how to develop this struggle. Register here to attend.

William, an electoral member of the SEP, said: “I joined the SEP as it was the only party at the 2019 election that specifically had a policy on the freedom of

Julian Assange. Assange has put his life on the line so that we may know the truth about war crimes and corruption. That is the reason that he has been kidnapped and incarcerated in inhumane conditions with the intention of putting him into even more inhumane conditions.

“Julia Gillard [former Australian Labor Party prime minister] shoved Julian into the path of the ‘deep state’ bus, claiming that Assange committed criminal offences... No-one has died because of WikiLeaks’s publications. In December 2010, the Australian Federal Police said Julian Assange and Wikileaks had breached no Australian laws, yet Gillard never apologised for making false accusations against them.”

William commented: “The Labor Party and Coalition are barely distinguishable... Our party is the only party that’s consistently stood with a policy in relation to Julian Assange and the public right to know about corruption and war crimes.”

Keith, a new SEP electoral member who works in the school sector, sent this message: “I’m appalled by the UK’s high court decision in allowing the extradition of Julian Assange to the US. He is being given a completely unfair trial. Even more disappointing is the response from a number of Australian politicians who support this decision. The class war continues, and the truth is buried amongst lies and false allegations.”

Jenny, a long-standing electoral member, wrote a statement. “Like millions of others, I want to see Assange released from prison. The prospect of seeing him extradited to the barbaric US penal system is terrifying. His freedom is a political question, which requires a political answer, but one can’t escape the emotional impact of this court ruling. Anger, rage, pain,

empathy, and compassion are words I'd use to describe my reaction.

"How was the judgment possible? The Swedish case against him, launched to smear his principled character, was long established as a stitch-up; multiple CIA plots aimed at silencing him forever have been exposed; his status as a political prisoner has ostensibly been acknowledged. Then why isn't justice being given to Julian Assange?

"Of all the undemocratic actions the ruling class has meted out against the world's people, the travesty against Julian Assange is one of the starkest. It tells us that 'democracy' and free speech are well and truly in the grave. Julian's legal team have exhausted every argument they had and it's now glaringly obvious he won't get justice from capitalism's thoroughly corrupt judicial process.

"The capitalist class is punishing Julian Assange because he exposed their criminal activities at home and abroad. Assange's treatment is to warn anyone who dares to leak or who publishes those leaks, or even simply writes an objective appraisal of events, that they could be next.

"The US, UK and Australian governments are all implicated in the crimes revealed by WikiLeaks. As a result, they are all playing a role in destroying an award-winning journalist right before the world's eyes.

"His health is declining to the point that he has now had a minor stroke. It is widely known in the medical world that a minor stroke is often the precursor to a major one. The British judiciary refuse to send him to hospital for the care he needs. They perpetrate upon him a slow, tortuous murder.

"The Australian government has done nothing to free Julian Assange, even though it could. No amount of petitioning or letter writing has moved them an inch."

Jenny condemned the Australian government for saying "Australia is not party to the case." She pointed out: "In the last six years, Australia has diplomatically intervened in three cases of persecution of Australian citizens abroad and succeeded in having them all released. One of those citizens, journalist Peter Greste, thanked the government upon his return to Australia by adding to the mountain of lies and slurs when he said Julian Assange was 'Not a journalist.' He has chosen his side.

"They want him dead, and we want him alive,

recovered and living his life with his partner and children. It is impossible not to draw the conclusion that it's up to us, and the millions of people who followed and admired his exposures of crimes against humanity. WikiLeaks is an inspiration, but it needs its founder back. The intransigent persecution of Julian Assange is a declaration of class war against the pursuit of objective truth."



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