



MEDIA RELEASE

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Five years is too long: Albanese government must call on the US to drop Assange charges

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance has written to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong urging them to publicly call upon the US government drop its charges against Julian Assange

Coinciding with the fifth anniversary of Assange's detention in the UK, the letter comes after the WikiLeaks' founder was granted a conditional right to appeal against extradition orders last month.

"We are writing to urge you in the strongest possible terms to take immediate public action to demand the United States government drop the charges against Julian Assange so he can resume life as a free man in Australia," says MEAA Media Federal President Karen Percy.

"This week marks five years since Mr Assange's detention in Belmarsh Prison began. In those five years his health has significantly deteriorated and his prospects for living a free life have declined.

"The recent decision by the United Kingdom High Court to conditionally grant Assange leave to appeal against the 2022 extradition order is a small and unsatisfactory reprieve.

"The only certainty that can ensure Julian Assange's freedom is a decision by the United States government to drop the charges.

MEAA welcomed the recent decision by the Albanese government to support Andrew Wilkie's motion calling on the House of Representatives to recognise the importance of bringing Julian Assange's extradition to an end and allowing him to return home, and acknowledged the advocacy of the Prime Minister and government ministers in raising the case with their US counterparts.

"However, as we draw closer the US Presidential election, the opportunity for a satisfactory resolution to this case diminish," Ms Percy said.

"Even if he is given leave to appeal, he would remain in prison for many more months, further worsening his health and wellbeing.

"Beyond our immediate and urgent concerns for Julian Assange, his extradition and prosecution by the United States would set a disturbing global precedent for the suppression of press freedom and would constitute an assault on the public's right to know.

"It would mean that any journalist, anywhere in the world, could be charged and extradited for handling any information that the US government classifies as 'secret'."

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