



Senator the Hon Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
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cc. Her Excellency Mrs Vicki Treadell
High Commissioner for the United Kingdom
British High Commission
Commonwealth Avenue,
Yarralumla, ACT 2600
Australia.enquiries@fco.gov.uk

June 4, 2019

Dear Foreign Minister,

Re: extradition of Julian Assange to the US

Congratulations on your re-election and reappointment as Minister.

Further to our letter of April 12 2019, we write again to convey our strong concern about the possible extradition of Julian Assange to the United States and urge the Australian and UK governments to oppose extradition to that country.

Assange is an Australian citizen and is WikiLeaks' founder and publisher. He has been a member of MEAA Media – the union and professional association for Australian media workers – since 2007.

The US Department of Justice charges against Assange relating to the alleged violation of the Espionage Act contain a real threat to press freedom for journalists and media outlets around the world. Respected leaders of the journalism profession have condemned the US indictment:

- Alan Rusbridger, former editor of *The Guardian* says: "... the attempt to lock [Assange] up under the Espionage Act is a deeply troubling move that should serve as a wake-up call to all journalists."
- *The Washington Post's* executive editor Martin Baron, a winner of the Pulitzer Prize, says: "The [Trump] administration has gone from denigrating journalists as 'enemies of the people' to now criminalising common practices in journalism that have long served the public interest."
- Joe Simon, executive director of the Committee to Protect journalists, says: "Equating the publication of classified information with espionage also strengthens the hand of repressive governments who routinely jail journalists for publishing information they wish to keep secret."

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- The International Federation of Journalists, representing more than 600,000 media professionals in more than 140 countries, says: "... this indictment would criminalise journalistic inquiry by setting a dangerous precedent that can be abused to prosecute journalists for their role in revealing information in the public interest. By following this logic, anyone who publishes information that the US government deems to be classified could be prosecuted for espionage."

As we said in our previous letter, the extradition of Assange and prosecution by the United States for what are widely considered to be acts of journalism would set a disturbing global precedent for the suppression of press freedom.

We urge you as Foreign Minister to use all resources available to convince the UK Government to oppose the extradition of Assange to the United States in relation to his role as publisher of WikiLeaks and to publicly call on the US Government to refrain from this attack on global press freedom.

As a courtesy, we inform you that we intend to make this letter public.

Yours Sincerely,



Marcus Strom
federal president
MEAA Media



Paul Murphy
chief executive
MEAA