

Wife of Julian Assange speak out before the EU Parliament

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Stella Assange: Firstly, I'd like to express both on behalf of Julian and myself, our full and unqualified support for the award of the Sakharov Prize to the people of Ukraine who have shown great courage in the face of this dreadful war. I know that Julian wanted to say some more, and I'm hoping he can call at some point during the day. There's a further press conference at 5:00 in the Daphne Caruana Galizia room, and I hope to be able to convey some more words from him on that occasion if I manage to speak to him. Because as you know, Julian is in Belmarsh High Security Prison in London, where he has been since he was arrested on the 11th of April 2019. That's over three and a half years. He is under administrative detention. He is not serving a sentence. He is fighting extradition to the United States, which is bringing an outrageous, regressive, politically motivated case against him for publishing the truth. Which brings me to my second point. I am very honoured to share this panel with Francisco De Roux and the Colombian Truth Commission, for their incredible work. Julian and WikiLeaks have, Julian has dedicated his life to defending human rights and doing it through publishing the truth. Julian, one of his most famous quotes is that: "If lies can start wars, the truce can start peace."

The best way to achieve justice is by exposing injustice. Julian is facing a politically motivated case in the United States for WikiLeaks publications about wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. And what WikiLeaks exposed was the truth of the barbarity and the brutality of war. And the fact that victims of war are- the ultimate injustice against the victims of war is their victimhood not being known and recognised. So when WikiLeaks published the Iraq War Logs, 15,000 individual civilian deaths were brought to light. And the fact that these deaths had occurred had been hidden away by the Pentagon for PR reasons, for finance reasons, for whatever reasons. But these 15,000 civilian killings had not been known until Julian and WikiLeaks published the truth. WikiLeaks also published evidence of a war crime in a video called Collateral Murder in Baghdad, where at least 12 civilians were gunned down by a helicopter. It's a video that shows a perspective from the helicopter as these people are killed. Two of them were Reuters journalists. And when a van came to the rescue of one of

the dying journalists, that van was also gunned down and the rescuers were killed. And the only survivors were two children who survived because their father, who had come to the rescue of this dying journalist, threw his body over them. And they were severely injured. He died, but he blocked the bullets from killing them.

I'd like to thank the European Parliament for the recognition of Julian this year as a finalist for its peak Freedom of Thought and Human Rights Prize. It comes at a time where the urgency and importance of this case could not be clearer. There is a growing clamour for Julian's freedom. Just in the last three weeks, we've had a joint statement by The New York Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, El Pais and DER SPIEGEL calling for Julian's immediate release, saying that this case is a grave threat to press freedom globally. Julian is not being prosecuted as a source or as a whistleblower. He is being prosecuted as a publisher. He is being prosecuted, he is charged with receiving, possessing and communicating to the public true information of the utmost public importance. It is a regressive case that is dangerous politically and legally. It is extraterritorial in its reach. Julian is not a U.S. citizen. He was not in the United States. He was, in fact, in the United Kingdom. And he was publishing in partnership with European publications. The activities that are being criminalised, the activities for which he's being prosecuted could be equally brought against any journalist in the European Union. This cannot be tolerated. Amnesty International has called this case a politically motivated case. They called the United Kingdom's high court decision, the latest high court decision, a travesty of justice. The Australian Prime Minister, also in the past three weeks has said: "Enough is enough." That he has made representations to the US Government calling for this case to be brought to an end and for charges to be dropped.

You asked how Julian is doing? He's suffering profoundly. He has no reason to be in a prison cell where he has remained for almost four years without charge in the U.K.. And the charges that have been laid against him in the United States are charges for activities that we, as democracies say, are of the highest importance. Of having an open and accountable society where government crimes in excess and corruption can be exposed without fear of reprisal and certainly without fear of imprisonment. Julian is in a small prison cell for over 20 hours a day. Just imagine that for years. We have two children. They're three and five years old. They get to see their father about one hour a week. Our children need their father and this incredible injustice has to end. Thank you.

Davide D'Antoni: Welcome, everyone, to this press conference entitled The Julian Assange Case: Publishing is not a Crime. I am Davide D'Antoni, I'm the press officer of the five star delegation in the European Parliament. And before presenting our guest, I would like to thank all the journalists connected online with the interaction. And of course, if you would like to ask a question, push the button, raise your hand, and I will give you the floor after the first round. I would like to recall that Julian Assange is a finalist of the Sakharov Prize 2020 and tomorrow at the ceremony will not attend the ceremony because he's actually in jail in the UK.

[Question by Journalist]

Stella Assange: Julian is currently awaiting a decision by the UK High Court about whether the High Court will hear his appeal. It is not an automatic right. The application has been several months pending and the decision by the High Court about whether there will be an appeal is expected at any moment. There is an application before the European Court of Human Rights, but that is not, let's say it's not live. We need to finish the process in the United Kingdom. And hopefully it won't lead to a European court of human rights case because the UK courts have the power and definitely should do the obvious thing, which is to stop this extradition, especially after news reports, investigations that the US government was planning to assassinate Julian while he was inside the embassy. It is clear that the United Kingdom should not be extraditing Julian Assange, a publisher, to the United States. But regardless of all the press freedom arguments and the political motivations of this case, just a single fact that the Trump administration was elaborating plans to assassinate Julian should be sufficient to stop this extradition. And if the UK courts allow Julian's extradition, in spite of this information being known, they are really putting their credibility on the line.

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