

The Rt Hon Priti Patel  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Dear Secretary of State for the Home Department,

We, the undersigned men and women from the political, journalistic and academic worlds, are addressing you with regard to the crucial decision you have to make in relation to the extradition request presented by the US concerning the publisher and journalist Julian Assange.

We urge you not to accept this request. We believe that the decision will represent a critical moment in the history of the right to know and the rule of law as well as in the life of the defendant.

Julian Assange has been held in pre-trial detention in a maximum-security prison for three years without any final sentence passed on him by any court.

On 7 December 2010, he voluntarily presented himself to Scotland Yard following a European warrant issued by the Swedish judiciary, later dismissed. Since then, Assange has been subject to uninterrupted detention.

The founder of WikiLeaks has contributed to the general understanding of the reasons why a democratic state cannot and must not be the source of serious human rights violations against hundreds of thousands of civilians already oppressed by the arrogance of despots and the absence of fundamental rights.

The leading international institutions and organisations dedicated to defending and promoting human rights have spoken out in favour of Julian Assange's release. These are the same democratic institutions founded in the aftermath of the devastation of the Second World War; we consider them trustworthy, and we join and renew their call for the end of Julian Assange's detention.

On 4 December 2015, the UN Panel of Experts on Arbitrary Detention stated that "the adequate remedy would be to ensure the right of free movement of Mr Assange and accord him an enforceable right to compensation, in accordance with Article 9(5) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

On 21 December 2018, the same Group clarified that the "States that are based upon and promote the rule of law do not like to be confronted with their own violations of the law, that is understandable. But when they honestly admit these violations, they do honour the very spirit of the rule of law, earn enhanced respect for doing so, and set worldwide commendable examples."

On 5 April 2019, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Nils Melzer, said he was alarmed at the possible extradition as the defendant could be exposed to a real risk of serious violations of his human rights, including cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the loss of freedom of expression and the deprivation of the right to a fair trial. On 9 May of the same year, Melzer visited Assange and found symptoms of "prolonged exposure to psychological torture".

On 11 April 2019, the UN Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial executions, Agnes Callamard, tweeted that "expelling Assange from the Embassy" and allowing his arrest had taken Mr Assange

“one step closer to extradition”. She added that the UK had now arbitrarily detained the controversial publisher of secret documents and campaigner, “possibly endangering his life”. This statement has been endorsed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst.

On 20 February 2020, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatovic, said: "Julian Assange's potential extradition has human rights implications that reach far beyond his individual case. The indictment raises important questions about the protection of those that publish classified information in the public interest, including those that expose human rights violations. (...) Furthermore, any extradition to a situation in which the person involved would be at real risk of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment would be contrary to Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights."

Finally, on 10 December 2021, the Secretary-General of Reporters Without Borders, Christophe Deloire, stated: "We condemn today's decision, which will prove historic for all the wrong reasons. We fully believe that Julian Assange has been targeted for his contributions to journalism, and we defend this case because of its dangerous implications for the future of journalism and press freedom around the world. It is time to put a stop to this more than decade-long persecution once and for all. It is time to free Assange."

Our concern is twofold. On the one hand, the consequences of the prolongation of Assange's detention could prove fatal for the defendant; on the other hand, his extradition could represent a warning to the press to refrain from collecting and disseminating information even if it is released in the public interest.

We are convinced that it is possible to allow the public to know the reasons behind crucial political and military decisions without conflicting with the security needs of citizens. For these reasons, we appeal to you, State Secretary Patel, not to give the green light to the extradition of Julian Assange.

Yours sincerely,

Gianni Marilotti, Italian MP

Andrea Marcucci, Italian MP

Riccardo Nencini, Italian MP

Roberto Rampi, Italian MP

Elvira Evangelista, Italian MP

Luciano D'Alfonso, Italian MP

Tatiana Rojc, Italian MP

Sandro Ruotolo, Italian MP

Maurizio Buccarella, Italian MP

Luisa Angrisani, Italian MP

Danila De Lucia, Italian MP

Francesco Verducci, Italian MP  
Mino Taricco, Italian MP  
Monica Cirinnà, Italian MP  
Nicola Morra, Italian MP  
Paola Boldrini, Italian MP  
Primo Di Nicola, Italian MP  
Silvana Giannuzzi, Italian MP  
Giuseppe Pisani, Italian MP  
Gisella Naturale, Italian MP  
Francesco Giacobbe, Italian MP  
Luigi Di Marzio, Italian MP  
Elena Botto, Italian MP  
Fabrizio Ortis, Italian MP  
Margherita Corrado, Italian MP  
Fabrizio Trentacoste, Italian MP  
Simona Nocerino, Italian MP  
Marco Croatti, Italian MP  
Sabrina Pignedoli, Italian MEP  
Vincenzo Vita, former Italian MP and Undersecretary of State for Communications  
Alberto Maritati, former Italian MP and Undersecretary of State for Justice  
Gian Giacomo Migone, former Italian MP  
Luciana Castellina, former Italian MP  
Aldo Tortorella, former Italian MP  
Alfonso Gianni, former Italian MP  
Beppe Giulietti, FNSI President  
Tommaso Di Francesco, co-editor at Il Manifesto  
Giovanni Terzi, journalist  
Elisa Marincola, spokesperson for Articolo 21

Stefania Maurizi, journalist

Pier Virgilio Dastoli, professor of EU Law

Marino Bisso, journalist, Rete NoBavaglio

Daniele Lorenzi, ARCI President

Danilo De Biasio, Director Human Rights Festival