

Assange's Extradition Hearing Begins: Truth-Telling Journalism on Trial

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Imprisoned in London at the behest of the Trump regime,

Assange's extradition hearing is all about silencing truth-telling journalism.

What's going on affects all truth-telling journalists. We're all Julian Assange on trial. His fate is ours. Who's next on the US/UK hit list to silence?

In an Orwellian age, speech, media and academic freedoms are threatened on the phony pretext of protecting national security — at a time when alleged threats are invented, not real.

Censorship in the West already is the new normal. Extraditing Assange to the US for kangaroo court proceedings to convict is all about criminalizing journalism its ruling regime finds objectionable — the hallmark of totalitarian rule.

WikiLeaks presented an overview of USA v. Julian Assange at his extradition hearing.

Part 1 is scheduled from Feb. 24 - 28, Part 2 from May 18 - June 5.

Proceedings are at Woolwich Crown Court/Belmarsh Magistrate's Court — adjacent to the high-security Belmarsh prison where Assange is held.

Attorneys representing him include Gareth Peirce, Edward Fitzgerald, and Mark Summers. Magistrate Vanessa Baraitser is presiding.

The Trump regime wants Assange extradited to the US, tried, convicted, and imprisoned for exposing Bush/Cheney state terrorism, specifically the following:

Collateral Murder video and Iraq Rules of Engagement, authorizing the murder of all military-aged Iraqis, the Afghan War Diaries, the Iraq War Logs, Cablegate (referring to State Department cables), and the Guantanamo Files.

Assange faces a spurious 18-count indictment under the long ago outdated 1917 Espionage Act, relating to WW I, what should have been rescinded at war's end.

After he was brutally dragged from Ecuador's London embassy last April and imprisoned, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) called what happened to him "an attack on press freedom," a flagrant First Amendment breach, leaving all independent journalists vulnerable to similar actions against them.

At the time, ACLU speech, privacy, and technology project director Ben Wizner said the

following:

“For the first time in the history of our country, the government has brought criminal charges against a publisher for the publication of truthful information,” adding:

“This is an extraordinary escalation of the Trump (regime’s) attacks on journalism, and a direct assault on the First Amendment.”

“It establishes a dangerous precedent that can be used to target all news organizations that hold the government accountable by publishing its secrets.”

Each charge against Assange carries a potential 10-year sentence.

Trump regime hardliners want him either imprisoned longterm or eliminated by slow torture before arrival.

WikiLeaks called his indictment “madness”...representing “the end of national security journalism and the first amendment.”

USA v. Assange is the first time that the Espionage Act is being used to indict a publisher and journalist for doing his job — in his case, applying the law extraterritorially.

If extradited to the US, he’ll be held under harsh Special Administrative Measures (SAMs) in solitary confinement with no outside contacts other than his lawyers who’ll be prohibited from transmitting messages from him to others.

There’s virtually no possibility that he’ll be afforded due process and judicial fairness in US kangaroo court proceedings, considered guilty by accusation pre-trial.

If convicted, other truth-telling investigative journalists will be at risk — unprotected by First Amendment rights without which all others are threatened.

Former UK ambassador, historian, and human rights activist [Craig Murray explained](#) that proceedings against Assange will “impose the power of state” to assure the planned outcome.

“Woolwich is a ‘counter-terrorism court’ to limit public access and to impose the fear of the power of the state,” said Murray, adding:

Denied permission to sit beside his legal team, “Assange is confined at the back of the court...in a massive bulletproof glass box...designed to restrain extremely physically violent terrorists.”

Magistrate Baraitser is a Boris Johnson regime “puppet,” proceedings against Assange “corrupt(ed).”

Murray witnessed Monday’s proceedings inside a modern version of a centuries earlier UK Star Chamber, convened to convict, not acquit, saying:

“I followed the arguments very clearly every minute of the day, and not a single one of the most important facts and arguments today has been reported anywhere in the mainstream media,” adding:

“The mere act of being an honest witness is suddenly extremely important, when the entire media has abandoned that role.”

What happened on Monday and will continue ahead “is a political show trial...Baraitser is complicit” in proceedings no legitimate tribunal would tolerate.

She made “zero pretense of being anything other than in thrall to the Crown, and by extension to the” Trump regime.

If Assange survives his ordeal in Britain, which is very much in doubt, extradition to the US is virtually certain unless the ruling against him in London is overturned on appeal to the European Court of Human Rights or European Court of Justice, the highest EU court.

The alternative is imprisonment and torture in the US similar to what Chelsea Manning endured for nearly seven years.

More of the same continues now, imprisoned indefinitely in the US for invoking her constitutional right to remain silent.

Refusing to be part of unconstitutional proceedings against Assange, she declined to give testimony that could be used against him.

At great personal cost, she made clear that her honor, principles, and soul aren't for sale.

The US has a history of honoring its worst and punishing its best, Manning clearly in the latter category.

So is Assange for truth-telling journalism the way it's supposed to be — what establishment media long ago abandoned.

Note: UK law prohibits extradition of individuals to other countries for political reasons.

That's clearly what Trump regime charges are all about, along with wanting truth-telling journalism on sensitive issues silenced.

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Award-winning author Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG)

His new book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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