

Australian PM Tells US to Drop Charges Against Julian Assange

Anthony Albanese's comments came after five major news organizations finally spoke out for Assange

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Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Wednesday [said that he has personally asked the US government](#) to drop its case against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who is an Australian citizen.

Albanese, who [previously rejected public pressure](#) to push for Assange's release, said that he raised the issue with US officials in recent meetings.

"The government will continue to act in a diplomatic way, but can I assure the member ... that I have raised this personally with representatives of the United States government," Albanese said.

"My position is clear and has been made clear to the US administration - that it is time that this matter be brought to a close," the Australian leader added.

Assange has been held in London's Belmarsh Prison since April 2019 as the US is trying to extradite him for exposing government secrets and war crimes. The US Department of Justice has indicted Assange using the Espionage Act for receiving and publishing leaks from whistleblower Chelsea Manning, a standard journalistic practice.

If extradited to the US, Assange could face a sentence of up to 175 years in a maximum security prison for his journalism. Albanese's comments came after *The New York Times* and four major European news outlets [finally spoke out for Assange in a letter to the US government](#).

In the letter, the five news organizations said that "publishing is not a crime" and that it was time for the US "to end its prosecution of Julian Assange for publishing secrets." The letter

acknowledged that Assange's work "in the public interest is a core part of the daily work of journalists."

The DOJ declined to comment when asked by Antiwar.com if dropping the charges against Assange was being considered.

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