

British Government Arrests WikiLeaks Founder Julian Assange on Behalf of the American Empire

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Global Research, April 12, 2019

Region: [Europe](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

Today the UK government broke international law by arresting Julian Assange in the embassy of Ecuador at the behest of the United States. The British government has been ignoring for years demands from [UN human rights experts to release Assange](#) made back in December 2015 and December 2018.

Assange now faces extradition to the U.S. where the Department of Justice (DOJ) has indicted Assange today with a federal charge of conspiracy with Chelsea Manning to gain access to classified government records i.e. the Iraq and Afghanistan War logs. The [DOJ's press release](#) states that Assange faces a maximum of 5 years in prison if convicted of, "conspiracy to commit computer intrusion."

Ecuador's president recently visited Washington and caved in to American demands to withdraw its asylum status from Assange. The former president of [Ecuador Rafael Correa](#), who granted Assange asylum 6 years ago has castigated the current president of his country declaring on twitter:

"The greatest traitor in Ecuadorian and Latin American history, Lenin Moreno, allowed the British police to enter our embassy in London to arrest Assange. Moreno is a corrupt man, but what he has done is a crime that humanity will never forget."

The Trump regime with its grave concern for the human rights of people in Venezuela has now decided to step up its war against democracy by attacking the freedom of the press which is protected by the first amendment of the U.S. constitution.

The [American Civil Liberties Union responded to news of Assange's arrest](#) with the following comment:

"Any prosecution by the United States of Mr. Assange for Wikileaks' publishing operations would be unprecedented and unconstitutional, and would open the door to criminal investigations of other news organisations. Moreover, prosecuting a foreign publisher for violating U.S. secrecy laws would set an especially dangerous precedent for U.S. journalists, who routinely violate foreign secrecy laws to deliver information vital to the public's interest."

We should not forget that President Obama, who had no problems with declaring that Chelsea Manning was guilty before her trial even started and whose government convened a grand jury to indict Assange back in 2010, backed off from prosecuting Assange in 2013.

The [DOJ concluded](#) that if it prosecuted Assange then it would also have to prosecute the New York Times, The Washington Post and the Guardian for publishing classified material from Wikileaks.

Not surprisingly, the actions of Washington's puppet ally in London have been greeted with a furious response.

London based human rights campaigner [Peter Tatchell](#) accused Ecuador of failing to protect Assange:

"The decision of the Ecuadorean government to hand over Assange to the UK police is a clear violation of his Ecuadorean citizenship and asylum rights.

"Assange's arrest will put him at risk of extradition to the US, where he will very likely face charges that could see him jailed for 30 or more years. A secret grand jury has been convened to prepare an indictment against Assange and key Trump officials have said that prosecuting Assange is a priority.

"Assange did not leak anything. He published the leaks of Chelsea Manning, as did the Guardian and New York Times. Why is he being signalled out?

"Assange published evidence of American war crimes. He's a hero, not a criminal.

"The British government should refuse to do the bidding of the Trump administration. It should give public assurances that Assange will not be handed over to the US authorities. His extradition to the US is not in the public interest."

The leader of Spain's Podemos party, [Pablo Iglesias](#), has called for Assange to be released. On twitter he lambasted the actions of the UK government:

"Exploitation, injustice and the privileges of the powerful are only possible because they are built on lies. That's why if there's something that power fears – in Spain and elsewhere in the world – it's the truth. Free Julian Assange."

Time will tell if UK courts cave into American pressure and allow the extradition of Assange to the United States. In early February the High Court in London [blocked the extradition of computer hacker Laurie Love](#) to the United States on the grounds that conditions in American jails would have left him at a high risk of suicide. This case together with international pressure may yet save Assange from extradition to the U.S.

Regardless, this case is all about American imperialism seeking revenge upon a journalist who had the temerity to expose its war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Pulitzer prize winner [Glenn Greenwald](#), who exposed U.S. and UK global surveillance programmes based upon classified documents supplied by Edward Snowden, makes the same point in a comment directed at those elements lauding the illegal actions of the British government:

"If you're cheering Assange's arrest based on a US extradition request, your allies in your celebration are the most extremist elements of the Trump

administration, whose primary and explicit goal is to criminalize reporting on classified docs & punish WL for exposing war crimes.”

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