

Criminalizing Speech and Press Freedoms. Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning

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The persecution of Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning is all about waging war on truth-telling.

Chelsea Manning remains imprisoned for invoking her constitutional right to remain silent — for refusing to testify against Assange.

Her First, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eight Amendment rights were violated.

Since her ordeal began in 2010, she was imprisoned for courageously revealing US high crimes of war and against humanity in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Subjecting her to unreasonable searches and seizures violated her Fourth Amendment rights.

Her Fifth Amendment rights of due process, protection from self-incrimination, and possible double jeopardy were violated.

So was her Sixth Amendment right of a public trial represented by counsel, an impartial jury, and evidence explaining charges against her.

Subjecting her to cruel and unusual punishments, including the threat to her freedom and well-being by demanding she testify before a grand jury in secret without counsel violated her Fifth, Sixth, and Eight Amendment rights.

Instead of being a shield against oppressive, arbitrary authority, the US grand jury system is a sword against fundamental constitutional rights because of its manipulative practices, prosecutors doing whatever it takes to get indictments.

Wrongfully imprisoned in London at the behest of the Trump regime, Assange faces extradition to the US for the “crime” of truth-telling journalism the way it’s supposed to be — putting other independent journalists at risk in the West and elsewhere.

Weeks earlier, Assange’s father John Shipton said his son is “subjected to every kind of torment” imaginable by UK authorities in London’s high-security Belmarsh prison.

His physical and emotional health fast-deteriorating, he’s being slowly assassinated.

“The only people who are breaking the law are the UK government and the Crown Prosecution Service,” said Shipton — in cahoots with the Trump regime,

adding:

The intensity of his mistreatment increased since forcefully dragged from London's Ecuadorian embassy in April.

UN special rapporteur on torture Nils Melzer earlier said

“(i)n 20 years of work with victims of war, violence and political persecution, I have never seen a group of (so-called) democratic states ganging up to deliberately isolate, demonize and abuse a single individual for such a long time and with so little regard for human dignity and the rule of law.”

We're all Julian Assange. His fate is ours. At stake is the fate of speech, media and academic freedoms. Losing them jeopardizes all other fundamental rights.

What's happening to Assange and Chelsea Manning puts everyone publicly expressing views that differ from the official narrative at risk — fascism triumphing over freedom, the rule of law rendered null and void.

Candidate Trump said “I love WikiLeaks.” Calling its site “amazing,” he added “I love reading those WikiLeaks.”

As president, he called Assange “disgraceful,” adding he deserves the “death penalty.” Following his April arrest, DJT turned truth on its head, saying “I know nothing about Wikileaks. It's not my thing.”

Exposing government wrongdoing, truth-telling journalism, dissent, doing the right things despite risk of great personal harm are the highest forms of patriotism.

When whistleblowers and journalists are criminalized for exposing government wrongdoing on the phony pretext of protecting national security or other fabricated reasons, fundamental freedoms no longer exist.

Thomas Jefferson once said speech “cannot be limited without being lost” — the fundamental right upheld by Supreme Court rulings.

WikiLeaks earlier published an open letter to Trump, saying the following:

“We are journalists, activists and citizens from the United States and around the world who care about press freedom and are writing to you in response to the latest threat of prosecution against WikiLeaks for its journalistic work.”

“We ask you to immediately close the grand jury investigation into WikiLeaks and drop any charges against Julian Assange and other Wikileaks staff members...”

“This threat to WikiLeaks escalates a long-running war of attrition against the great virtue of the United States — free speech.”

Obama “prosecuted more whistleblowers than all (former US) presidents combined and opened a grand jury investigation into WikiLeaks that had no precedent.”

“It now appears the US is preparing to take the next step — prosecuting publishers who provide the ‘currency’ of free speech, to paraphrase Thomas Jefferson.”

Wrongful “charges (against Assange), including conspiracy, theft of government property and violating the Espionage Act” were fabricated to frame him.

“A threat to WikiLeaks’ work — which is publishing information protected under the First Amendment — is a threat to all free journalism. If the DOJ is able to convict a publisher for its journalistic work, all free journalism can be criminalized.”

“We call on you as president of the United States to close the Grand Jury investigation into WikiLeaks and drop” all charges against Assange and WikiLeaks.

“It was a free and robust press that provided you with a platform on which to run for president.”

“Defending a truly free press requires freedom from fear and favor and the support of journalists and citizens everywhere; for the kind of threat now facing WikiLeaks — and all publishers and journalists — is a step into the darkness.”

At a November 24 UK launch of the book titled “In Defense of Julian Assange,” John Pilger said the following:

Assange’s revelations represent “(a)ll the people whose lives were devastated in Iraq, the people whose lives were devastated in Afghanistan, and Yemen, all over the world that WikiLeaks had told us so much about.”

His unjust persecution is all about robbing people of their freedom and other fundamental rights.

“If they can come for Julian they can come for the rest of us, unless we stand up, speak, make sure our voices are heard,” Pilger stressed.

Assange is a political prisoner, “guilty” of truth-telling investigative journalism the way it’s supposed to be.

In 2015, life-sized bronze statues of Assange, Chelsea Manning, and Edward Snowden were unveiled in Berlin’s Alexanderplatz.

Their sculptor Davide Dormino said he wanted to “represent three contemporary heroes who have lost their freedom for the truth,” adding: “Their work is reminder of “how important it is to know the truth.”

On Thursday at a large gathering in London for Assange, Australian journalist Kerry O’Brien warned that he’s unjustly “mouldering in a British prison awaiting extradition to the United States.”

Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance head Paul Murphy slammed Western media for failing to support Assange, siding with his persecutors.

Historian, former UK ambassador, human rights activist Craig Murray explained that “(d)espite the lack of coverage or biased coverage in mainstream media, there is now an

understanding that Julian is being extradited to the United States for nothing except for publishing the truth,” adding:

He believes “we will see one of the largest campaigns (in support of Assange) of our time” next year.

UN special rapporteur on torture Nils Melzer warned that “(i)f Assange gets extradited to the United States and if he gets punished for exposing the truth, then essentially what’s happening is that telling the truth becomes a crime,” adding:

“He’s going to be sentenced by the same judge that sentences all of these whistleblowers in a closed court in East Virginia, and he’ll disappear in a high security prison in inhumane conditions for the rest of his life...if he makes it that far.”

Assange faces either longterm US gulag hell imprisonment or death before arrival from UK brutal mistreatment designed to kill him.

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