

Medical Doctors Issue Urgent Australian Appeal to Save Julian Assange

By [Doctors for Assange](#)

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More than 100 medical doctors have issued an urgent appeal to the Australian government to protect the life of its citizen, imprisoned WikiLeaks journalist and publisher Julian Assange.

The doctors' action follows warnings from medical and human rights experts that Mr Assange's health is rapidly deteriorating and that he might die in a UK prison where he is being held pending US extradition hearings that begin in February.

In an open letter to the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs (dated 16/12/2019), the doctors urge Marise Payne to negotiate Julian Assange's safe passage from Belmarsh Prison to an appropriate hospital setting in Australia, "before it is too late."

"It is an extremely serious matter for an Australian citizen's survival to be endangered by a foreign government obstructing his human right to health. It is an even more serious matter for that citizen's own government to refuse to intervene, against historical precedent and numerous converging lines of medical advice," the letter states.

"Should Mr Assange die in a British prison, people will want to know what you, Minister, did to prevent his death."

On November 22, more than 60 medical doctors wrote to the UK Home Secretary urging that Mr Assange be transferred from Belmarsh maximum-security prison to a university teaching hospital for expert medical assessment and care. Despite worldwide media attention, the doctors' urgent advice was ignored.

Signatory and Australian medical practitioner, Arthur Chesterfield-Evans said that sacrificing Mr Assange by aiding and abetting the obstruction of his medical care reflected a chilling example of Australia ceding its sovereignty, freedoms and laws.

"If Australia believes in universal moral values of truth ahead of authoritarian regimes using fear and abusing legal process to silence journalists, it must act to protect Julian Assange, his life, and his health," Dr Chesterfield-Evans said.

Specialist in Diagnostic Radiology (UK and Sweden) and signatory, Stephen Frost said the doctors agreed with the assessment of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Nils Melzer, that Julian Assange had been 'psychologically tortured'.

"That doctors should have to write open letters to the UK and Australian governments to demand appropriate health care for a victim of torture is beyond belief," Dr Frost said.

"The torture must stop now, and Mr Assange must be provided with immediate access to the health care which he so obviously needs before it is too late."

"We appeal to the Australian public to support us in ensuring that the Australian government protects the rights of its citizens, which is its primary duty. There can be no exceptions," he said.

Copies of the letter have also been sent to Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Leader of the Opposition Anthony Albanese and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong.

The [open letter](#) will be publicly accessible online along with an accompanying [addendum](#) explaining the medical basis for the doctors' warnings and concerns.

The full text of the November 22 open letter and list of signatories can also be found [here](#).

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