

What Should People of Conscience Do to Protect Julian Assange?

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Several headlines have blared “Julian Assange Arrested.” This is misleading because Assange has been under de facto arrest ever since the Swedish authorities sought his extradition regarding sex-related allegations.

Assange always stated that he was amenable to going to Sweden with a guarantee of no-further extradition to the United States. Sweden refused to accede to such a guarantee. Assange was also open to being interviewed in England. Finally, after having interviewed Assange in England, half-a-year later Sweden dropped its case against the man who has never been charged with any crimes.

Nonetheless, the United Kingdom behaved as any obedient lapdog would to its master, it stated that it would arrest Assange. Why? Because of the relatively benign charge of having breached bail. Note that this breach of bail for something that he was never charged. That should put to rest any patina of legitimacy to the UK’s legal posturing. Will Assange get a fair trial in the UK, something he has said he did not receive previously. The [remarks](#) of the district judge Michael Snow foreshadow blatant partiality. Snow said of Assange:

“His assertion that he has not had a fair hearing is laughable. And his behavior is that of a narcissist who cannot get beyond his own selfish interests.”

So what is the Assange case really about? It’s about power: the power to wage wars, the power to kill, the power to commit war crimes, and the power to silence or control narratives. The video “[Collateral Murder](#)” exposed the US power structure’s killing, warring, and monstrous criminality. Is it not a morbid hypocrisy that the people (Assange and Chelsea Manning) who expose the grotesquerie of killing are targeted for retribution through the so-called justice system while the killers go unpunished.¹

WikiLeaks, however, is a publisher not controlled or cowed by the power structure.

Now that Assange has had his asylum revoked by Ecuadorian president Lenin Moreno (something that is held to be illegal, including by former Ecuadorian foreign minister [Guillaume Long](#)) that casts great shame on himself and his nation. Former president Rafael Correa [called](#) Moreno corrupt and “a traitor.”

So the question is what now? What do people who care about the right-to-know do? What do people who care about exposing war crimes and government corruption do? What do people

who care about protecting whistleblowers do?

This is not just about protecting Julian Assange, the person. There are many political prisoners and persons unjustly persecuted in the world. Assange is one of too many victims of the Establishment. But Assange has garnered prominence, and this is because he and WikiLeaks had the skill, courage, and audacity to bring to light the nefarious deeds of the power structure that it intended to keep in the dark.

Protecting Julian Assange means not just preventing the extradition of the Australian citizen (shame also to Australia) to the US, but freeing Assange. As a strict elementary principle, people should not be arrested, persecuted, or denigrated for having the moral integrity to expose criminality. Instead they deserve plaudits and should be regarded as great role models for others.

What can be done?

1. Western state/corporate media needs to reverse its path and step to the forefront of protecting the public's right-to-know. It seems highly unlikely, as it would be a massive [reversal for a media](#) that has thoroughly discredited itself. It is in the self-interest of the monopoly media. It would be self-preservation of its publishers and journalists who would now be subject to legal reproach when the power structure is dissatisfied with the news.² Although the monopoly media would be coming extremely late to the game, protecting the right-to-publish (and the First Amendment in the US) would be pure self-interest.

Expecting a new tune in the monopoly media, however, is not about to happen because the monopoly media is part of the power structure seeking to make an example through Assange of the maltreatment that other potential whistleblowers would face.

Abusing law to prosecute Assange, even in secret (as would be expected given the power structure's aversion to transparency) should cast an even brighter spotlight on what Assange and WikiLeaks are about, and why the US is seeking to silence the publisher.

2. Award Assange and WikiLeaks the Nobel Peace Prize. While the Nobel Peace Prize may still hold luster for some people, given its [questionable awards](#) to dubious recipients, its image has become quite tarnished. Awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to a whistleblower who exposed the malignancy of war would be right in line with the [sentiments and intention of Alfred Nobel](#). People should make their views known to the Nobel Committee. It would be much more difficult to extradite a current Nobel peace laureate, wouldn't it? It would be a reversal for the Nobel Committee in Norway.

3. The United Nations. Given that UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that Assange's detention was arbitrary and called on the UK to allow Assange to leave the Ecuadorian embassy without fear of arrest or extradition, the latest arrest in the UK is the UK further thumbing its nose at the world. What if the UN panel along with other diplomats and dignitaries were to hold vigils outside the [British Gitmo](#) where Assange is being held?

4. People power. The force to challenge the establishment power structure is people power — the power of the masses. This should take on many forms. The obvious one is masses taking to the streets. Unless this is of enormous size and sustained, it will only be a resistance blip on the radar. Depending on how much people value their right-to-know; how

much they are opposed to killing people living far away who have never lifted a finger against them, their family, their neighbors, their countrymen and women; how much they are dedicated to justice for all humans ... they will be willing to engage in further sacrifice: general strike. This will hurt corporations and send a signal to politicians who fear losing political influence. And as an additional measure, people should consider abandoning reader- and viewer-ship of monopoly media, hurting the bottom line and spooking investors.

This is another fight people must not lose. The protection of Assange would be a victory for all those who are unjustly incarcerated everywhere; a victory for people's right-to-know and empowerment of the people (knowledge, they say, is power); a victory for the anti-war crowd; a victory for freedom of the press; and, of course, a victory-of-sorts for Assange and WikiLeaks.

Most importantly, it would be a victory for humanity.

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Notes

1. Indeed, they were exculpated in a book as *The Good Soldiers* by *Washington Post* writer David Finkel. As [interpreted](#) in *The New Yorker*: "The soldiers are callous, as you would expect young men caught up in a particularly ugly and confusing kind of war to be. Callous and angry—and also, in other moments, hopeful, generous, capable of friendliness toward Iraqis." *The New Yorker* article proffers as excuse, "bad judgement" and that such acts are "absolutely inevitable in wars": "Does it reveal a war crime? I don't think so. This isn't Abu Ghraib, or the rape atrocity in the Triangle of Death, or the Haditha massacre. The Apache crews make a series of bad judgments—some of them understandable, like mistaking the photographer's long lens as it pokes around the corner of a building for an RPG; others much less defensible, like firing repeatedly at a van that has stopped to pick up a wounded man—but they aren't shooting indiscriminately like in a free-fire zone. The video is important because it shows the kind of tragedy that is absolutely inevitable in wars like the ones America has been fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan..."

2. As an aside, the attempt to belittle Assange's credentials as a journalist or publisher are risible given the flawless publication record of WikiLeaks, which stands as the envy of every publishing entity.

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