

What Julian Assange Really Represents

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Julian Assange is facing extradition to the United States after he was forcibly dragged from the Ecuadorian embassy in London by police mid-April this year. On the 1st May, he was imprisoned for breaching bail conditions. His sentence is now done and Julian Assange now represents something else other than just a political prisoner.

In mitigation, Mark Summers QC said his client was “gripped” by fears of rendition to the US over the years because of his work with whistle-blowing website Wikileaks.

Sentencing him, Judge Deborah Taylor told Assange it was difficult to envisage a more serious example of the offence. In reality, his ‘offence’ was nothing more than publishing embarrassing documents that rightly framed America for their actions in foreign lands – of war crimes.

As of 22nd September, Julian Assange had officially finished his jail sentence. There is no Swedish charge or request for his extradition from Sweden, as those flimsy sexual allegations are no longer required to capture Assange. They now have him.

We should not forget what the continued imprisonment of Julian Assange means. And we should not forget that it adds another piece of information about the British state and its so-called legal system.

While the mainstream media are captivated by Boris Johnson’s philandering and abuse of public office while Brexit rages on, Assange is a political prisoner – nothing more, nothing less.

Assange’s crime is publishing secrets of the US state, revealing war crimes. The judge was entirely wrong to assert that Assange was somehow escaping justice by hiding in an embassy – he was on the run from a state with about as much integrity as China or Russia when it comes to such matters. Assange is in a maximum-security prison full of terrorists, murderers and worse – but from what is understood – in solitary confinement, without access to his legal team or medical assistance. This breaks the norms of international law.

In the meantime, we should also not forget that Britain simply rejected an International Court of Justice ruling where British occupation of the Chagos Islands was found unlawful by a majority of 13 to 1, with all the judges from EU countries amongst those finding against the UK.

We should not forget, that the Lords international relations committee said that British weapons were “highly likely to be the cause of significant civilian casualties” in various countries where illegal wars, acts of genocide and war crimes are being committed. It said

[Britain was breaking international laws](#) in so doing – and yet it continues.

The [Institute for Government](#) has determined that a no-deal Brexit would also represent a breach of international law –

“To do so would undermine the UK’s [long-held commitment](#) to the rule of international law and undermine the UK’s credibility as a negotiating partner. As the UK sets about negotiating new agreements with partners – including the EU – those partners need to believe that the Government’s commitments are worth the paper they are written on. Setting up the UK for abrogation would also increase the likelihood of a political, diplomatic and administrative crisis.” And it has.

In May this year, [The Times](#) ran a piece on how the government has been accused of developing a secret policy on torture that allows ministers to sign off intelligence-sharing that could lead to the abuse of detainees. This is another flagrant breach of international law.

More recently, Boris Johnson [breached the EU Common Foreign Policy](#) to join Donald Trump in denouncing the Iran nuclear treaty. As the UK has not actually left the EU yet, that was bad faith and an illegal act against an EU treaty obligation.

What Julian Assange really represents is this. Far from ‘taking back control’ – Britain is proving itself yet again to be an American sycophant, the groupie of a bully, just a bootlicker.

As Brexit day draws closer, Britain is unable to stand on its own two feet. It needs the assistance of America to do that. That’s what Assange shows us, that Britain is too weak to stand up to a bully.

Brexit will drag us closer to Trump’s America. Their leader seriously thinks a ‘[4,000-mile moat full of crocodiles and snakes](#)’ is the best way of stopping illegal immigrants from breaching the Mexican border. If that doesn’t work – ‘[shooting them in the legs to slow them down](#)’ seems perfectly in order. Seriously. Trump is unhinged.

And as Boris Johnson and his band of right-wing Brexit fundamentalists has demonstrated recently with proroguing parliament, lying to the Queen and the people, the government of the day doesn’t care too much for the law or the rules. It’s inconvenient.

It’s embarrassing being British today, not that the government cares for its citizens. Look at those left in limbo in the EU as a result of Brexit. Look at Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, abandoned by her government and a Prime Minister who deliberately worsened her situation for a soundbite. There are thousands of examples of how our government has abandoned its people today.

Perhaps one day, we’ll be governed by people with real backbone. Then and only then, does the country have a chance of being what it seeks to be in the future. Today, it’s a laughing stock.

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