**Quaker Peace & Legislation Committee**

**ACTION ALERT 23-3 World Whistleblower Day 23 June**

**Update: Julian Assange**

Friends are aware that Julian Assange, an Australian citizen, founded the not-for-profit media organization, WikiLeaks. Between 2010 and 2011, in partnership with five newspapers, WikiLeaks published a series of documents provided by a US Army Intelligence analyst. The analyst was charged with 22 offenses, mostly under the US federal *Espionage Act*, including aiding the enemy, which could have led to a death sentence. She was eventually acquitted of aiding the enemy and was sentenced to 35 years in maximum security at Fort Leavenworth. She was imprisoned from 2010 until 2017 when her sentence was commuted by then US President Obama. Julian Assange is currently being held on remand in Belmarsh prison in the UK.

In June 2023, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that the FBI has reopened its investigation around Assange (<https://theintercept.com/2023/06/01/fbi-julian-assange-prosecution-australia/>) . This has led to renewed concerns that, despite high-level discussions between Australian lawmakers and the US Ambassador, Assange is closer to being extradited from the UK to the US where he could face 175 years in prison.

Independent global news hour Democracy Now! video of 7 June 2023: ‘Enough is Enough: Australian PM throws support behind movement to free Julian Assange’ includes interviews with the PM and Australian human rights attorney Jennifer Robinson, who has been advising Assange since 2010. Ms Robinson points out that support for Assange has bipartisan support in the Australian Parliament (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gshumy2FMC4>).

A May 2023 poll by the *Sydney Morning Herald* showed that 79% of respondents wanted the Biden administration to stop its pursuit of Assange. (<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2023/05/16/dqct-m16.html>) . The International Federation of Journalists argues that the US pursuit of Assange is against the public’s right to know poses a threat to the fundamental tenets of democracy.

In May 2019, the then Presiding Clerk of Australia Yearly Meeting wrote a letter to the PM stating that Friends did not want Assange to be extradited to the US. <https://www.quakersaustralia.info/sites/aym-members/files/pages/files/Julian%20Assange%20Letter_PM.pdf>

**QPLC encourages Friends** to access the Assange Campaign Australia website and take action via: the user-friendly Parliamentary Mailer, signing the online petition to the US Ambassador or arrange to meet with your MP through the supportive Meet your MP for Assange Program <https://www.assangecampaign.org.au/get-involved/>

If you’d like to share a message to him, please take a few moments to do it here  [https://www.action.assangecampaign.org.au/happybirthday](https://click.actionnetwork.org/ss/c/atcYNHk4Eh2YdGnwBh-YDD16r78qdNQ0iiqObCFLcOvQX2Fa37Bq8TL_Av7Ddatp48_U-qKEpA4FaF_Q4kK_Mx55xHCjTxMvHkK4TqQtABKUkL3R1C0EReB9qQAnL9cJnH1AS-lDdbs6CLg8dCF1b3MkW9sPq0lVcHmw4XSg_NXZcBBxFXiY6o8ORxyXVFpswavbQM3GILlbrst3tEvRumm5k88iqJlmZvt1QjQ3THORxNpbQ4vaQFYGx-afoV3qzM9ukWzt4R34mfgCfE9c0GICW7YgU9uPNvjxhmoEtjV3YV_i2z_GwhMPIXEvaAn7a3RMWfxIoGU7k4nFdnENr702Bqlw5FqyYgc-rhymg27_ehEbMtT1T_zPK4wi-TwoqC6IXMLDRp5b7N7Rxx9Gn9dTx3ozm3bcX8n5kzlIV1w/3x9/1eiixM6eRwm2NzHrtw2eEw/h0/-l5u_d35LiVsuT9FMOcqyW6K75KQM08W0fC2kf79c0w).

Sources:

* Assange Campaign Australia <https://www.assangecampaign.org.au/>
* Democracy Now! Launched in 1996, this independent news organization is audience-supported and broadcasts on Pacifica, National Public Radio, community stations across the US, Canada, Central & South America and Europe. <https://www.democracynow.org/>
* International Federation of Journalists <https://www.ifj.org/>
* Reporters Without Borders <https://rsf.org/en>
* The Intercept (award-winning news organization launched in 2014 by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar) <https://theintercept.com/>
* World Socialist Website www.wsws.org/en