

**Senator the Hon Marise Payne,
Minister for Foreign Affairs**

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27 May 2020

Dear Minister,

We the undersigned journalists, publishers and writers are seeking your urgent intervention to have Julian Assange immediately released on bail.

Mr Assange is facing life in prison for publications in partnership with the Guardian, the New York Times, Le Monde, Der Spiegel and other major media partners in 2010 and 2011.

You will be aware that Australia's Walkley Foundation recognised WikiLeaks with its 2011 "Most outstanding contribution to journalism" award, for breaking the stories for which Mr Assange is now facing 175 years in prison. For anyone who cares about freedom of the press as a cornerstone of democracy, this is completely unacceptable.

There is no doubt these extradition proceedings are intended to send a message to other publishing organisations large and small, independent and institutional, that reporting of unapproved national security stories will not be tolerated.

We hear this message, and we reject it. The use of espionage charges against people publishing materials provided by whistleblowers is deeply alarming, and runs directly against the foundational principles of free and fearless reporting.

Now, in the midst of a pandemic, court proceedings have been thrown into chaos. The UK prison system is no place for a publisher at the best of times, and these are not the best of times.

Before the court reconvenes on 1 June we request of you the following:

1. To make representation on Mr Assange's behalf that he be released on bail immediately
2. To relay to us the outcome of this representation.

We represent a wide cross-section of Australian journalists and publishers, having worked in public and private broadcasting, print, radio and online media. We are determined to raise our voices to free one of our own, and we ask that you raise your voice with us.

in trust,

Jeff Sparrow
Wendy Bacon
Mary Kostakidis

Andrew Fowler
Quentin Dempster
Valerie Krips
Antony Loewenstein
Dylan Welch
Dr Alison Broinowski
Jon Altman
Paddy Manning
Phillip Adams AO
George Burchett
Giordano Nanni
Cathy Vogan
Alison Caddick
Sarah Bailey
Jordan Brown
James Ricketson
Curtis Levy
Richard Broinowski AO
Timothy Erik Ström
Stefan Moore
Simon Cooper, Aren
Peter Cronau
Michael Williams
Michael Rubbo
Guy Rundle
David Bradbury
Chas Licciardello
Bernard Keane
Helen Razer
Benedetta Brevini
Julian Morrow
Rohan Connolly