



Friday 3 May 2024

On World Press Freedom Day, we write as a group of Australian Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum seeking the freedom of Julian Assange.

We write in the hope that Mr Assange, who has endured maximum security imprisonment in the United Kingdom's Belmarsh Prison for more than five years without conviction on any substantial charge, can go free, can go home, can be reunited with his wife, children, and family.

We were heartened by President Bidens's recent acknowledgement that the United States is considering Australia's request to end the prosecution of Julian Assange. We respectfully urge the United States to discontinue the long, expensive, and punishing extradition process that prevents Mr Assange from returning to his family in Australia.

We note that the Australian government has argued that the pursuit and prosecution of Mr Assange should come to an end.

The Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said, "there is nothing to be served by his ongoing incarceration."

The Leader of the Opposition Peter Dutton has said, "I think it's gone on for too long".

On 14 February 2024, the House of Representatives in the Australian Parliament passed a motion that called for Julian Assange to go free, emphasising "the importance of the UK and the USA bringing the matter to a close so that Mr Assange can return home to his family in Australia."

In September last year, 61 Australian Parliamentarians signed an open letter that was published in the *Washington Post* stating, among other things: "We note with gratitude the considerable support in the United States for an end to the legal pursuit of Mr Assange from members of Congress, human rights advocates, academics, and civil society, and from within the US media in defence of free speech and independent journalism."

While we believe the prosecution of Julian Assange is wrong as a matter of principle, we say in any case that there is no justice, compassion, or reasonable purpose in the further persecution of Mr Assange when one considers the duration and harsh conditions of the detention he has already suffered.

Co-Convenors of the Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Friendship Group

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