

# *Documentary film calls for release of Julian Assange*

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Buenos Aires, September 20 (RHC)-- The Press Union of Buenos Aires (Sipreba) and the movement Libertad Assange Argentina have reiterated the demand that Juian Assange be freed. At the screening of the film "The war against journalism", a meeting included the participation of journalist and writer of ArgenLeaks, Santiago O'Donnell.

The presentation of the documentary, directed by Juan Pasarelli, is part of the film series to call for the release of the journalist currently imprisoned in the United Kingdom and who could be extradited to the United States, where he would be sentenced to 175 years in prison for the dissemination of documents on U.S. military and diplomatic activities, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Part of the documents leaked by Assange are shown in the film, and his defense and different interviewees argued that if he is convicted, it would generate a precedent to "persecute journalists".

"Assange's detention affects our right to information, which since the Constitution of '94 is incorporated with constitutional rank," said O'Donnell during the event held at the Argentine Federation of Press Workers (Fatpren), in the city of Buenos Aires.

The journalist and writer, who has interviewed Assange on several occasions, said that his conviction would mean that "the U.S. government will be able to decide whether or not one can speak". "All the laws that defend journalists are outdated, they should be enlarged and address the entire public. It should not only protect journalism, but the right to freedom of expression," he remarked.

O'Donnell described information leaks as "the last refuge of journalism" and questioned - citing the PanamaPapers case - why some journalists "are given an award" and why others "are put in jail". "The U.S. government wants all tax havens to be disseminated except their own, such as Delaware. There is a very important geological element", he highlighted.

In a dialogue with Télam, O'Donnell defined leaking as "obtaining information that someone wants to hide from you". "It is a tool for access to information, which at this moment is fundamental for the survival of democracy", he stressed.

The meeting, which was moderated by journalist Javier "El Profe" Romero, was attended by the president of Sipleba, Agustín Lecchi; the ex-interventor of the Federal Intelligence Agency (AFI) Cristina Caamaño; the leader of the CTA, Leonor Cruz, and members of the "Malón de la Paz", who have been in the Plaza Lavalle since August 1 in protest of "the unconstitutional reform" proposed by the governor of Jujuy, Gerardo Morales.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Assange helped an analyst named Chelsea Manning (who in 2013 was sentenced to 35 years in prison and pardoned four years later by former President Barak Obama) to crack a password needed to enter Defense Department computers connected to a U.S. government network used for classified documents and communications.

U.S. authorities argue that Assange and Manning's actions compromised U.S. security and endangered the lives of its soldiers, agents and collaborators. In contrast, both Assange and his portal, WikiLeaks, insist that this is a case of free speech and that the leak ultimately helped expose war crimes.

Assange founded the WikiLeaks platform in 2006, which anonymously publishes sensitive documents of public interest. Starting in 2010, the platform published more than 700,000 confidential documents on U.S. military and diplomatic activities, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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