

*Reporters Without Borders
launches global campaign
highlighting danger of Julian
Assange's prosecution*

“As Julian Assange’s fate hangs in the balance, it is more crucial than ever for media organisations and journalists around the world to speak out in support of the principles at stake. If the US government succeeds in extraditing Assange and prosecuting him under the Espionage Act, anyone who publishes stories based on leaked classified information could be next - and the resulting impact will ultimately be on all of our right to know. It’s time for global solidarity in support of journalism and press freedom, before it’s too late.

The campaign tagline “Collateral Damage” refers to the danger that the U.S. government’s prosecution of Assange poses to media around the world, as well as the public’s right to information. It is also a reminder of the “Collateral Murder” video that was among the leaked materials published by WikiLeaks in 2010, exposing an air-to-ground attack by a US military Apache helicopter in a Baghdad suburb, which killed at least a dozen civilians, including two Reuters journalists.

The campaign is supported by Le Monde (France) and The Guardian (UK), who were among the original media partners that worked with WikiLeaks in 2010 on the “Cablegate” documents - a tranche of more than 250,000 leaked diplomatic cables. The campaign has also been supported by other media around the world.

RSF has launched this campaign less than a week before Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese’s state visit to Washington DC, from 23 to 26 October, where he will be hosted by US President Joe Biden. The two leaders have been urged to use this opportunity to find a diplomatic solution to the Assange case. RSF will also be launching a global tweetstorm targeting President Biden and Prime Minister Albanese the weekend leading up to the state visit, from 20 to 22 October.

The campaign launch also takes place in the run-up to the final stage of legal proceedings in the UK, where a hearing is expected to be called at any point – a date being referred to as “Day X.” This hearing will mark the final stage of domestic proceedings, leaving only the possibility of an application to the European Court of Human Rights if the UK court rejects Assange’s appeal against the extradition order.

The U.S. and UK are respectively ranked 45th and 26th out of 180 countries in RSF’s 2023 World Press Freedom Index.

For media organisations that would like to support this communications campaign by running the content in print or online, please contact RSF’s Director of Communications and Engagement Emilie Poirrier on epoirrier@rsf.org.

For interviews on the case of Julian Assange, please contact RSF’s Director of Campaigns Rebecca Vincent on rvincent@rsf.org.

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