

# PRESS CONFERENCE AT MONTECITORIO Oct. 26, 2021 4pm ON THE EVE OF THE HEARING IN LONDON TO DECIDE ON JULIAN ASSANGE'S EXTRADITION

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**The conference will illustrate what is at stake in London on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.** If the High Court grants the U.S. extradition request, Julian Assange could be sent to the U.S. to be tried under the Espionage Act of 1917 and possibly imprisoned for 175 years. The charge? Publishing reserved documents attesting to U.S. war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq. Yet Assange is not a U.S. citizen; he is an Australian operating in Europe. **Extraditing him could therefore constitute a dangerous precedent, raising serious questions about the jurisdiction of national courts in the age of the Internet and the political use of the judiciary to intimidate investigative journalists anywhere in the world.**

**Date, time:** October 26, 2021, 4 to 5 pm. The following day, the High Court in London will decide on the U.S. extradition request for Assange, currently jailed in Belmarsh prison, London.

**Place:** Press Room of the Italian lower house of Parliament, piazza Montecitorio. The room was made available for the event by the Parliamentary group *L'Alternativa C'è*. (former members of the Five Star Movement).

## Promoted by:

- [Italiani per Assange](#)
- [U.S. Citizens for Peace & Justice – Rome](#)
- [DiEM25 in Italy](#)

**Moderator** of the Press Conference: **Riccardo Iacona**, RAI (State television) journalist and author of a recent TV Special on Assange which can be [viewed on RaiPlay](#)

**Panelists** present in the Press Room (two are allowed in addition to the Moderator):

- **Pino Cabras**, MP
- **Antonio Ingroia**, former magistrate

## Remote panelists:

- **Daniel Ellsberg**, the famous whistleblower of the "Pentagon Papers" (from California, USA).
- **Gabriel Shipton**, Julian Assange's brother (from Australia)
- **Deepa Driver**, trade unionist (NEC of UCU), academic at the University of Reading (from the UK)
- **Paul Jay**, journalist (theAnalysis.news) and documentary filmmaker (from Canada)
- **Stefania Maurizi**, journalist (*Il Fatto Quotidiano*) and author of "Il Potere Segreto. Perché vogliono distruggere Julian Assange e WikiLeaks" (from Rome)

## Videotaped or written contributions from:

- **Yanis Varoufakis**, DiEM25 founder, parliamentarian and former Greek Finance Minister (video)
- **Daide Dormino**, Italian artist, sculptor of [Anything to Say?](#) (video)
- **Noam Chomsky**, academic (University of Arizona) and political activist (written statement)

### Background articles:

- [UK: High Court begins consideration of Assange extradition appeal](#)
- [Why is Biden Prosecuting Assange for Telling the Truth about Afghanistan?](#)
- [International Jurists' Letter in support of Julian Assange](#)
- [Open Letter to the UK Government from Lawyers for Assange](#) (186 lawyers, jurists)
- [Assange Arrested for Exposing U.S. War Crimes](#)
- [International journalists' statement in defence of Julian Assange](#)

## What is at stake

by Stefania Maurizi

On the eve of Julian Assange's next extradition hearing, on 26 October 2021, from 4 to 5 pm in the Press Room of Montecitorio, the parliamentary group L'Alternativa C'é, in collaboration with Italians for Assange, U.S. Citizens for Peace & Justice, DiEM25 in Italy and PeaceLink, is organising a press conference to urge all political forces and the media to demand the immediate release of Assange and to prevent his extradition. Dozens of press freedom and human rights organisations have made the same demands, from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).

Since 2010, when he first revealed secret documents attesting to U.S. war crimes, torture and extrajudicial executions by drones, Julian Assange has never known a day of freedom. Eleven years have passed and now, for having revealed these crimes, he faces a 175 year sentence in the toughest prison in the United States. This is the first time in U.S. history that a journalist has been imprisoned for revealing facts that are true and absolutely in the public interest. Other WikiLeaks journalists risk ending up like him. A fortnight ago it emerged that the CIA had drawn up plans to kill Assange and other journalists in his organisation.

While Assange is being viciously punished, the war criminals he denounced have not spent a single day in jail and are enjoying their family life as usual.

This case must be a wake-up call: either public opinion manages to stop Assange's extradition or this topsy turvy world, where criminals sleep soundly and those who dare to denounce them end up in prison for life, will become normality. A monstrous normality.