

The Rt Hon Robert Buckland MP,
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice

Cc The Hon Bob Neill MP
UK Commons Justice Committee Chair

REQUEST FOR COMPASSIONATE RELEASE
OF JULIAN ASSANGE

Dear Sir,

As current and former elected representatives in democracies committed to human rights, presumption of innocence and rule of law, we wish to support the urgent appeal sent to you by Australian MPs Andrew Wilkie and George Christensen, who write:

“We ask that you urgently reconsider providing Mr Assange with release from Belmarsh Prison to monitored home detention, as he fits all of the grounds noted for such early release by leading organisations as the World Health Organisation, the United Nations and the UK Prison Officers Association. These organisations have been unanimous in calling for the release of all non-violent COVID-19 prisoners, and we ask that you give compassionate consideration to the following:

- Mr Assange is a non-violent remand prisoner with no history of harm to the community. He is not convicted and is thus entitled to the presumption of innocence.
- Doctors of Mr Assange warn he is at high risk from dying if he contracts COVID-19 as he has a pre-existing chronic lung condition.
- We are advised that COVID-19 is rapidly spreading throughout UK prisons, and that there are infections [and at least one death] at Belmarsh Prison.
- We understand that the prison is short staffed and normal activity regimes are suspended.
- Mr Assange is in poor mental health due to spending so much time in solitary confinement over recent years, and prison COVID-19 lockdown measures are further undermining his mental health.

We ask that you give further consideration to the very reasonable request by Mr Assange’s lawyers that this non-violent Australian prisoner be released into home detention with a 24-hour ankle monitor.”

With the director of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention now warning of a second wave of coronavirus during influenza season, we stress that even those vulnerable prisoners, such as Julian Assange, who survive the current crisis remain at risk.

Yours Sincerely,

Yanis Varoufakis, Member of the Greek Parliament

Ron Paul, former US Congressman, Texas

Ogmundur Jonasson, former Interior Minister, Iceland

Chris Williamson, former MP, UK

Clare Daly, Member of the European Parliament

Mick Wallace, Member of the European Parliament, Ireland South

Andrew Feinstein, former ANC MP, South Africa

Heike Hänsel, Member of German Parliament, Deutscher Bundestag

Eva Joly, former Member of the European Parliament

Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans, former NSW State MP, Australia