

U. S. Embassy in Austria
To the personal attention of
Att. H. E. Ambassador Victoria Reggie Kennedy
Boltzmannngasse 16
1090 Vienna

Vienna, 16 February 2024

Subject: Open letter regarding Mr. Julian Assange, a matter of life and death!

Your Excellency,

We are writing to you regarding the upcoming hearing at the High Courts of Justice in London on 20 and 21 February 2024, where two judges will determine Mr. Assange's right to appeal. We, concerned citizens from Austria, firmly believe in democratic principles, the rule of law, human rights, freedom of information, free speech, and a free press.

We, the undersigned, represent the Austrian Journalists Club, the biggest independent journalist association and communication platform for media-people in Austria. Since its foundation in 1977, the Austrian Journalist Club holds high the right of the freedom of the press and the right of true information for everybody, free of political or economic influences whatsoever. Undersigning with us are also representatives of Candles4Assange, a group in Vienna holding weekly vigils for Julian Assange's freedom since January 9, 2020. We share the concern that his prosecution sets a dangerous precedent of extra-territoriality that jeopardizes journalists and publishers globally.

In our opinion, Mr. Assange, a journalist and publisher, is not a spy, and his work with WikiLeaks has been crucial in raising public awareness to corporate and governmental actions and misconduct worldwide. His prosecution under the Espionage Act violates the rights to Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press.

We have previously written letters to the UK Home Secretary and Prime Minister, attached for reference, urging for Mr. Assange's release. Now, we seek your assistance in conveying our concerns to the relevant decision-makers in the United States.

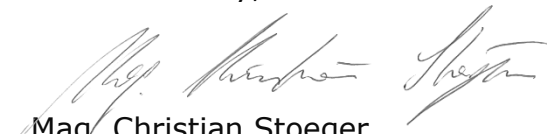
In our perspective, the charges against Mr. Assange are politically motivated, punishing him for exposing US military war crimes. His arbitrary detention in Belmarsh, without charge, is unjust, and we question the UK courts' acceptance of the diplomatic assurances presented. We are troubled by the violation of legal privilege through CIA involvement, and we believe that the outcome of the trial in the Eastern District of Virginia with a jury pool drawn from people connected to US Government national security agencies and contractors will likely be prejudicial to Julian Assange. Furthermore, his probable incarceration under special administrative measures, which were not excluded from the assurances, would be cruel and inhumane, especially due to his health situation.

We highlight House Resolution 934, expressing that journalistic activities are protected under the First Amendment, urging the United States to drop all charges against Julian Assange.

In conclusion, we implore you to urgently convey this letter to the appropriate authorities, requesting the dismissal of the case against Mr. Assange and advocating for his release. We emphasize the global impact on journalism and press freedom, urging a halt to all avenues of persecution.

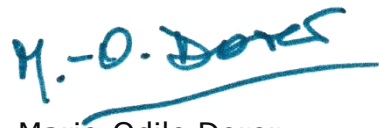
Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Yours faithfully,



Mag. Christian Stoeger

Vice-President Austrian Journalists Club
on behalf of the Austrian Journalists Club



Marie-Odile Dorer

on behalf of Candles4Assange Vienna

This open letter is also signed by:

Werner Brix, Actor
Gerhard Ehegartner, Teacher and author
Gerhard Fischer, Common Good Lobby
Ing. Mag. Ludwig Fliesser, Communication manager, social anthropologist
Marc Friedrich, Financial expert and bestselling author
Dr. Daniele Ganser, Historian and peace researcher
Ao. Univ. Prof. Dr. Fritz Hausjell, President "Reporters without Borders" Austria
Daphne Hruby, BA, Journalist, ORF/OE1
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Michael Karjalainen-Dräger, Editor-in-chief "Idealism Prevails"
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Thomas Lohninger, Executive director epicenter.works
Mag. Daniela Lupp, Sociologist and editor-in-chief "Zeitenwende"
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Dr. Alexander Mejstrik, Historian and editor
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Manfred Nowak, Secretary General of the Global Campus of Human Rights; Wiener Forum für Demokratie und Menschenrechte
Mag. Ortwin Rosner, Philosopher and germanist
Mag.^a Renata Schmidtkunz, Journalist ORF/OE1
Martin Steiner, MA, Journalist
P.A. Straubinger, Journalist ORF OE3, film-maker, speaker, author
Mag. Liza Ullitzka, Investigative journalist, writer and publisher
Dr. Gudula Walterskirchen, Historian, journalist and author
Mag. Christian Wehrschütz, Foreign correspondent ORF
Dr. Marion Wisinger, Vice-President PEN-Club Austria



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Österreichischer PEN-Club

Reporter ohne Grenzen, Österreich (Reporters Without Borders, Austria)

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Wiener Forum für Demokratie und Menschenrechte