



President Joe Biden
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20500
USA

2nd July 2021

Dear Mr President,

We are addressing you as Members of Greece's Parliament to congratulate you for your recent comments in defence of media freedom.

As President Obama's Vice President, you played an important role in the decision not to prosecute Julian Assange over publications relating to the Afghan and Iraq wars and conditions in Guantanamo Bay. You, like us, must have been disappointed when your predecessor launched a prosecution carrying a 175-year sentence against a globally renowned publisher and free press campaigner for his 2010 award-winning publishing work, which was carried out in the United Kingdom.

Civil liberties groups and top newsrooms alike view the government's prosecution against this publisher with alarm. The Washington Post's Executive Editor writes that the indictment is "criminalizing common practices in journalism that have long served the public interest". The New York Times Editorial Board considers it to be "aimed straight at the heart of the First Amendment", and for Amnesty International, "the charges against him should never have been brought in the first place" because it is "putting media freedom and freedom of expression on trial".

Earlier this year Westminster Magistrates Court, in the United Kingdom, refused the US application to extradite Julian Assange to the US. The Guardian Editorial Board noted that your incoming administration "can, and should, let Mr. Assange walk free". We had hoped that this might be the occasion to draw a line under this prosecution.

Unfortunately, the US Department of Justice is still pursuing this case, leaving Julian Assange facing a third year of incarceration in Belmarsh High-Security prison.

Mr. Assange, an Australian member of the press who had been invited to this country by The Guardian in 2010 to work on these publications in concert with the UK's free press traditions, is the subject of a US criminal case. The effect of your predecessor's decision to take a criminal case against a member of the press working in our country is to restrict the scope of permissible press activities anywhere around the world, and set a precedent that others will no doubt exploit.

The case against Mr. Assange weakens the right to publish important information that a government finds uncomfortable. Indeed, this value is central to a free and open society. The case against Mr. Assange also undermines public confidence in our legal systems. Our countries are also increasingly confronted with the contradiction of advocating for press freedom abroad while holding Mr. Assange for years in the UK's most notorious prison at the request of the US government.

We appeal to you to drop this prosecution, an act that would be a clarion call for freedom that would echo around the globe.

Sincerely

The Members of the Parliamentary Groups of MeRA25 and SYRIZA in Greece's Parliament