

British police arrest Julian Assange in Ecuadorian embassy

By Oscar Grenfell
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On Thursday Morning, the regime of Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno illegally terminated Julian Assange's political asylum, inviting British police into the country's London embassy to arrest him.

Assange was dragged out of the Ecuadorian Embassy by a group of British police officers. "Even as he was being brutally manhandled into a police van, Assange challenged his persecutors, 'The UK must resist this attempt by the Trump administration... The UK must resist!'"

"Assange's expulsion from the embassy and his arrest are unprecedented crimes," said James Cogan, the national-secretary of the SEP (Australia). "A journalist and publisher, who has committed no crime, has had his asylum terminated and has been dragged off to prison in violation of repeated UN rulings upholding his status as a political refugee."

"The attack on Assange is directed against the democratic rights of the working class. It is aimed at creating a precedent for the suppression of mass opposition to war, austerity and dictatorship," Cogan added.

"The arrest of Julian Assange by a Metropolitan Police snatch squad is a political crime for which the Conservative government of Theresa May and the Ecuadorian government of Lenin Moreno are politically responsible," said Chris Marsden, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in Britain.

"The arrest took place after police were invited into the Ecuadorian embassy by the ambassador and following what UK foreign minister Sir Alan Duncan said was 'extensive dialogue between our two countries.' Behind the scenes the Trump administration in the United States is orchestrating events.

"The Socialist Equality Party denounces this conspiracy. We will do everything in our power to

mobilise the broadest protest movement by workers and youth against what are preparatory moves to extradite the Wikileaks founder to the US in clear violation of international law."

At around 5:37am, US Eastern time, WikiLeaks confirmed Assange's arrest, tweeting: "URGENT: Ecuador has illegally terminated Assange political asylum in violation of international law. He was arrested by the British police inside the Ecuadorian embassy minutes ago."

Several minutes later, WikiLeaks tweeted: "URGENT: Julian Assange did not 'walk out of the embassy.' The Ecuadorian ambassador invited British police into the embassy and he was immediately arrested."

The British Home Secretary Sajid Javid immediately took to Twitter to declare: "Nearly seven years after entering the Ecuadorian embassy, I can confirm Julian Assange is now in police custody and rightly facing justice in the UK. I would like to thank Ecuador for its cooperation & @metpoliceuk for its professionalism. No one is above the law."

Assange's arrest has triggered widespread popular revulsion and condemnation from leading journalists.

"The action of the British police in literally dragging Julian Assange from the Ecuadorean embassy and the smashing of international law by the Ecuadorean regime in permitting this barbarity are crimes against the most basic natural justice," Wrote Australian journalist John Pilger on Twitter. "This is a warning to all journalists."

The bail charges against Assange are politically-motivated, and were resolved years ago.

The transparent purpose of the WikiLeaks founder's detention by the British authorities is to facilitate his extradition to the US. This was confirmed by

Assange's lawyer, Jennifer Robinson, who tweeted that Assange had been arrested, not only for the bogus bail violations, but also after an extradition request from the US.

The Trump administration, with the support of the Democrats, is seeking to prosecute Assange for his role in WikiLeaks' exposure of war crimes, mass surveillance and illegal diplomatic intrigues.

The Moreno regime has declared that it terminated Assange's asylum, because he had violated an arbitrary "protocol" that it imposed in October last year. In violation of international law, the protocol banned Assange from making any political statements, including about his own plight.

As WikiLeaks has repeatedly stated, the protocol was a transparent pretext for violating Assange's asylum. Moreno's government has functioned as a vassal of the Trump administration, subjecting Ecuadorian diplomats to interrogation by the US Department of Justice, and spying on Assange on behalf of the CIA.

SEP Australia National Secretary James Cogan concluded: "The Moreno regime, the British government of Prime Minister Theresa May and all those involved in the conspiracy to force Assange from the embassy have committed a violation of international law that will brand them forever as criminals and gangsters."

"The SEP will do everything it can to mobilise the immense support that exists for Assange. We condemn the Australian government and the entire political establishment for abandoning Assange, an Australian citizen, and collaborating in the attacks on his fundamental rights.

"Now more than ever, the SEP will fight to build a mass movement to force the Australian government to fulfil its obligations to Assange. It must compel the British government to allow Assange to leave the country and return to Australia, with a guarantee against extradition to the US."

The SEP (Australia) will hold a rallies at 1pm at the Martin Place Amphitheatre in Sydney, and at 4pm, outside the Victorian state library in Melbourne, to demand that the Australian government take immediate action to defend Assange. We appeal to all workers, young people and defenders of democratic rights to attend.

To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>