

Pamela Anderson defends Julian Assange: “Journalism is not a crime!”

By Oscar Grenfell
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Actress Pamela Anderson says imprisoned journalist Julian Assange is “depending on all of us to save him,” declaring, he “cannot die in prison!”

In an interview with the *World Socialist Web Site* this week, Anderson explained that Assange, who she has known for years, “created WikiLeaks so that people could find a way to be informed,” and to “end these awful wars and bring us all closer together.”

Anderson said that the US government’s attempt to prosecute Assange is a fundamental attack on democratic rights.

She warned: “Freedom of the press is at stake. Julian is being used to scare publishers and journalists. He’s in the same boat as all the great whistleblowers—he will be in the history books. But we must fight to be on the right side of history. He cannot die in prison. He cannot be extradited to the US where he will not be treated fairly.”

Anderson stated: “It’s this simple, don’t extradite Assange. Journalism is not a crime!”

She also condemned the refusal of the Australian government to defend Assange, despite the fact that he is an Australian citizen and journalist facing persecution by US authorities.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has previously rejected Anderson’s calls for his government to take action to secure Assange’s freedom. Anderson told the WSWS: “It’s disgusting to me that Australia cares more about being a friend to the American government than to the people. It’s unforgivable.”

Anderson was among the first visitors to Assange in Britain’s maximum-security Belmarsh Prison, meeting with him for two hours in May. She stated: “When I saw him, he was thin. But his eyes were clear and focused. His hair was combed. He was clean shaven. He was ready. Like a soldier... He has sacrificed so

much and is vulnerable now. He’s depending on all of us to save him and he knows we will prevail if we stay focused and unrelenting.”

It is five months since Assange was illegally expelled from Ecuador’s London embassy, where he was granted asylum in 2012, and brutally arrested by the British police. He has been held in Belmarsh, a facility designed to hold the most serious prisoners, despite being convicted only of a minor bail offense. The British authorities have ignored warnings from UN experts, doctors and WikiLeaks’ supporters that Assange’s health is rapidly deteriorating.

The Trump administration is seeking to extradite Assange to the US, so he can be prosecuted on 18 charges, carrying a maximum sentence of 175 years imprisonment. Assange is being targeted because WikiLeaks, the publication he founded in 2006, exposed American war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, and US government intrigues around the world.

Amid a media blackout on Assange’s plight, Anderson and other principled artists and intellectuals, including Roger Waters, John Pilger and Vivienne Westwood, have courageously spoken-out in his defence.

Anderson is a prominent international figure, having appeared in over 20 films and a host of television series. She has been nominated for, and has received a number of awards, and has been widely described as an “icon” of the US film and television industry. Over recent years, Anderson has spoken-out on a range of social issues, including defending persecuted “Yellow Vest” protests in France.

The WSWS contacted Anderson after she powerfully defended Assange on the popular US-talk show program “The View” last Friday. Anderson refuted hysterical accusations from other panelists, including

Meghan McCain, daughter of the late Senator John McCain, who claimed that Assange is a “cyber-terrorist.” Anderson insisted that he is being pursued by the US government for exposing war crimes.

The WSWS asked Anderson about the experience of appearing on “The View.” She replied: “I’m always up for a robust conversation and I’ve heard it all. But I watched in amazement as five intelligent women, who I have a lot of respect for, had so many different, negative, ill-informed and propagandised points of view.”

She noted that this was bound up with a protracted smear campaign against Assange: “I hear the same things from many people: ‘He’s just bad,’ ‘He’s hurt people’ etc. But when you ask why or who, they don’t know! And it usually takes time, hours, or links to facts, to make people realize they have been stung by the smear campaign. That unfortunately worked, and left Julian with less support.”

During the program, McCain repeatedly asserted that Assange had “endangered US national security.”

The WSWS asked Anderson to elaborate on her refutation of these lies. She stated: “It’s been researched and proven that nothing exposed led to the harm of anyone except the egos of those being exposed, and this is the only reason Julian is in jail. The wars that are the focus of the 2010 publications are now deemed ‘forever wars’ and are still causing suffering in Iraq and Afghanistan, and ‘here at home.’ WikiLeaks was right!”

Anderson explained that Assange “created WikiLeaks so that people could find a way to be informed. It was risky, it hasn’t been done before, it’s new, it’s needed, it’s fair. The goal is to help people, save people, to end these awful wars and bring us all closer together.”

The actress stressed the importance of a global campaign to free Assange. She explained that despite the media and government smears, Assange still had widespread public support, but she warned it was “not enough.”

“Public opinion is democracy,” Anderson stated. “We can’t forget that civil disobedience, rising up, being brave and speaking to power is what democracy is.”

Assange, Anderson declared, has “endured a lot. He

is resilient. He’s worth fighting for.”

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