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23 May 2023

The detention of Julian Assange and its chilling effects on human rights

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Þórhildur Sunna ÆVARSDÓTTIR and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The Parliamentary Assembly adopted [Resolution 2317 \(2020\)](#) on the “Threats to media freedom and journalists’ security in Europe”, and [Resolution 2454 \(2022\)](#) on “The control of online communication: a threat to media pluralism, freedom of information and human dignity”. These resolutions recognised that the criminal prosecution and detention of Julian Assange sets a dangerous precedent for journalists, called for his extradition to the United States to be barred, and his prompt release.

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, has, on 20 February 2020 and on 19 May 2022, called upon the United Kingdom to end the arbitrary detention of Julian Assange and prevent his extradition based on concerns that his extradition could have a global chilling effect on media. The Commissioner also raised concerns about ill-treatment of Julian Assange in the event of his extradition.

The Assembly’s General Rapporteur on the Protection of Whistleblowers, Pieter Omtzigt, has published two statements in support of Julian Assange on 28 September 2021 and on 25 January 2021.

Nevertheless, Julian Assange remains in Belmarsh prison, in the United Kingdom, nearly four years after his arrest, and risks extradition to the United States. His harsh treatment risks deterring others who wish to report truthful information pertaining to armed conflicts, as the WikiLeaks publications did. This issue is of particular concern in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Consequently, the Assembly should consider whether the circumstances of Mr Assange’s detention fulfill the criteria set out in Assembly [Resolution 1900 \(2012\)](#) on “The definition of political prisoner” and whether he should therefore be released without further delay. Furthermore, the Assembly should examine Mr Assange’s case in the context of the growing threat against media freedom and retaliation against whistleblowers throughout Europe.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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