

Dear Prime Minister Johnson,

History has shown us that one of the answers to the end of wars and the preservation of peace is democracy. We value democratic institutions as well as our right to guard, control and criticize them. This distinguishes democracy from the authoritarian regimes of concealment and silencing. Democracy protects journalists, publishers and whistleblowers so that they can make known information that is in the public interest.

As citizen of the Czech Republic, I watch with deep respect how the British Government actively helps Ukraine to face the criminal invasion of Putin's Russia. Our government is also setting an example in helping Ukraine in many ways, spending enormous resources both on strengthening Ukraine's defenses and on integrating the hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing from hell, which was unleashed in their country by soldiers of the Russian Federation.

As Members of the European Parliament, we watched Britain's departure from the EU with regret. However, the dramatic circumstances of the Russian invasion also fill us with the hope that the key shared values between mainland Europe and the British Isles have not broken with this "divorce". Russia's criminal war and the Allied response to it show us that Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States of America remain on the same board when it comes to the values of freedom, peace and justice.

If we want to win in a tough information war with Putin's Russia, we must insist on the values for which the citizens of Ukraine are bleeding these days. Therefore, we must be careful to honour these values in our own internal crises. Because if we dishonour these values in front of ourselves, they will lose their immense weight in the fight against the evil that bases its identity on trampling on them.

If your government now extradites Julian Assange to the United States, it will inflict a heavy blow to the credibility of our proclamations that there is a struggle between freedom and tyranny in Ukraine. Such developments play into the hands of Putin's long-term disinformation strategy: to weaken the value predominance of the West, to warn of its transgressions against its own claims, and to destabilize Western democracies.

Millions of decent and democracy- and freedom-loving people around the world stand behind Julian Assange, not only as the publisher of WikiLeaks, but also as a free-spirited man at risk of death. Despite these eminent threats, the possible extradition of Assange threatens to weaken confidence in the justice and free will of Western institutions. They will receive a signal that they, too, citizens of free states, should be afraid of what they will publish, just as the people of the Russian Federation are afraid today.

By putting Assange in the hands of his declared enemies (recalling numerous defamation campaigns against him from the top of the US administration, or false allegations in court), the British government would greatly dampen these people's enthusiasm for a united and freedom-loving West which can unite in the fight against forces that hate freedom and attack it with heavy weapons: they will see two Western powers uniting against an individual who has exercised his freedom of expression in matters of public interest; who wants to know the skeletons in the closet of his own democratic governments. It is our democracy for which is today being waged perhaps one of the most dramatic battles of our era.

If Assange's findings on WikiLeaks served Putin's propaganda, it was a side effect of fulfilling the public interest – also Donald Trump in the White House was Putin's victory, but Trump's victory itself was democratically legitimate. Assange's extradition will undoubtedly play into Putin's hands, but this time without fulfilling the public interest. If anyone called Assange a "useful idiot of the Kremlin": today there is a danger that the British and American administrations themselves will become such "useful idiots of the Kremlin".

On the verge of this threat, we humbly ask you not to send Julian Assange somewhere where he is in danger of death.

Yours sincerely,

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