

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Free Press Under Fire!**

Today Julian Assange was proven right. For years he has warned that he and Wikileaks could be subjected to Espionage Act charges.

The United States Department of Justice has released a superseding indictment with 17 new charges under the Espionage Act of 1917. This is an unprecedented move - an option previously discarded by the Obama administration due to the ramifications for the First Amendment and the principles of free speech - and the first time in US history the Espionage Act has been used against a journalist and publisher.

Julian Assange, a Nobel Peace Prize Nominee and recipient of numerous journalism awards, applied for and received asylum from Ecuador in 2012 because of the real fear of charges under the Espionage Act from the US. This fear has been realized today. Unity4J Spokesperson Christine Dopf stated: "Today is a bleak day for press freedoms, and a day we have been warning would come. Julian Assange was right. It's time we listen to him." Unity4J Co-Founder Suzie Dawson added: "With these indictments, the United States accelerates its freefall down the World Press Freedom rankings, ever more resembling the tinpot dictatorships and repressive regimes to which it claims to be opposed."

Julian Assange had his asylum revoked by Ecuador on April 11, 2019 in exchange for billions in IMF loans and other benefits. He is currently in solitary confinement 23 hours a day, in a UK maximum security prison, for "bail jumping", which occurred as a result of seeking asylum - a basic legal right every person has if they need protection from persecution.

This new indictment means that he now faces a maximum of 175 years in a US prison. All for seeking and publishing newsworthy information of the war crimes committed by the US. The precedent such a prosecution sets would apply to any journalist or publisher anywhere in the world, regardless of nationality or where they were based, and will likely be used against Western-based journalists by other more authoritarian governments embarrassed by publication of their own misdeeds.

Unity4J joins WikiLeaks supporters in opposing the threat this indictment poses to global free speech, a free press as well as journalists and publishers all over the world.

## **Background:**

#Unity4J is a global mass movement in solidarity with Julian Assange, created in response to Ecuador's gagging of the publisher. Unity4J has been endorsed by more than fifty high profile activists, journalists, celebrities, academics and former US intelligence officials including Chris Hedges, Jimmy Dore, Ray McGovern, Bill Binney, John Kiriakou, and Daniel Ellsberg.

## **Take action:**

Movement hashtag: #Unity4J

Official website: <https://unity4j.com>

Official Twitter: [@Unity4J](https://twitter.com/Unity4J)

Defend Assange Campaign: [@DefendAssange](https://twitter.com/DefendAssange)

## **Contribute directly:**

WikiLeaks Legal Defence Fund:

<https://justice4assange.com/donate.html>

WikiLeaks support website:

<https://iamwikileaks.org>

Courage Foundation:

<https://couragefound.org>

## **Media inquiries and interview requests:**

Inquiries and interview requests should be made to Suzie Dawson, via DM on Twitter: [@Suzi3D](https://twitter.com/Suzi3D), or by emailing [info@unity4j.com](mailto:info@unity4j.com)