



pirateparty.org.au

PO Box Q1715 Queen Victoria
Building NSW 1230

Fax: +61 2 8088 1346

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Pirate Party Defends Wikileaks

The Obama Administration is calling for its allies, including our own government, to investigate and charge Australian Wikileaks founder Julian Assange for leaking the Afghan War Diaries.¹ Pirate Party Australia calls for the Federal government to reject this attempt to silence one of the greatest defenders of freedom and democracy this country has produced.

Pirate Party activist Simon Frew said "It is unfortunate that a nation such as the United States, with such a pretense for defending freedom has fallen so far as to be calling for a global man-hunt of Mr. Assange for leaking information about the conduct of the war in Afghanistan. The leak shows a systematic attempt to cover up every bad turn in the war and to keep the citizens of the countries involved in the dark about what is happening."

"The media have not held any allied government to proper account when it comes to the war in Afghanistan, generally reporting what they have been told to report, making the need for Wikileaks stronger than ever. Democracy requires that the people can see what our government is doing. If the traditional media will not do its task, then it falls on organisations like Wikileaks to pick up the ball and shed light on the activities of governments and corporations" he said.

"Instead of pursuing Wikileaks at the behest of the US Government, the Australian Government must move to protect Wikileaks and the important function it provides within the democratic process. Without knowledge of the government's operations, without knowledge of the realities, of the circumstances and the effects of policy, how can electors be expected to make an informed choice on election day? Wikileaks plays an important role in this process. We should instead be moving towards enacting safeguards for the freedom of information and expression, ensuring the protection of journalistic sources within the law and encouraging and protecting legitimate disclosures." said Party Secretary, Rodney Serkowski

¹ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2010-08-10/a-western-crackdown-on-wikileaks/>

He continued "Anna Troberg from the Swedish Piratpartiet has already said that their Party would offer to safeguard Wikileaks and provide hosting should the Government ever move to target or disable the organisation.²³ We completely support the Piratpartiet in this move. Indeed, we demand that the Parliament investigate the enactment of legislation similar to the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative that would provide safeguards for the freedom of information and expression."⁴

We welcome the publication of the 90,000 documents for various reasons. It highlights that journalism does not require a monopoly on information and how important network freedom is.

"Journalists do not require a monopoly on information — free availability of information promotes journalistic competition and is something that underpins the function of democracy. Journalistic inquiry is the understanding, filtering and conveyance of this information. The greatest value from Wikileaks is the provision of original source materials — as we see from the way the three organisations, The SPIEGEL, The Guardian and The New York Times which had first access to the Afghan War Diaries, had different approaches and focal points for their analysis. Subsequently other media have turned their focus to other issues. Organisations like Wikileaks are part of the new model for journalism." said the Party Secretary.

"The Australian Labor Party's persistence in pursuing the construction of censorship infrastructure, and its admission that Wikileaks is on ACMA's so called 'blacklist', shows how dangerous such an architecture can be. It is important we vote for Parties with clear and unequivocal rejections of any level of Internet censorship. Token statements during an election from politicians on the campaign trail mean very little."

"Wikileaks espouses the same principles that Pirate Parties across the world have since their inception — the free access to information, network freedom and government transparency. Rather than persecuting whistleblowers, we believe the government needs to legislate to protect those who speak out against what they see as injustice. It is completely outrageous that the US administration is now trying to suppress this information and target an Australian citizen. The story here is not that Assange and Wikileaks have released these documents, but the secrecy of the military and the culture of cover-up, and what appears to be a long string of potential war crimes." concluded Simon Frew.

For further comment please contact:

Rodney Serkowski, Party Secretary
rodneyserkowski@pirateparty.org.au
+61 409 159 904

Brendan Molloy
brendanmolloy@pirateparty.org.au
+61 434 069 776

Simon Frew
simonfrew@pirateparty.org.au
+61 439 408 314

² <http://www.itnews.com.au/News/221289.pirate-party-offers-wikileaks-hosting.aspx>

³ <http://www.newsmill.se/artikel/2010/07/27/piratpartiet-erbjuder-wikileaks-serverplats-och-bandbredd>

⁴ <http://immi.is/>