What did Julian Assange do and why?

• 2006: creation of the online platform WIKILEAKS, to publish classified documents, concerning different states and companies.

• «Intelligence agencies keep things secret because they often violate the rule of law or of good behavior».

• «Wikileaks is a mechanism to maximize the flow of information to maximize the amount of action leading to just reform». 
How does WIKILEAKS work?

• WIKILEAKS works as publisher, which aims to diffuse («leak») classified documents of relevant public interest.
• WIKILEAKS receives the documents mainly by sources that are directly involved in the army or government or intelligence agency («whistleblowers») and who *spontaneously* decide to reveal violations of civil and human rights.
• WIKILEAKS puts the documents under careful examination and selects what is to be published, not to put anyone’s life at risk.
• WIKILEAKS transfers the documents to selected journalists so that they can verify them and provide accurate news.
In which way WIKILEAKS is anarchist?

- WIKILEAKS = state-less organization
- Multiple servers in unknown locations
- Website constantly «mirrored» (=replicated)
- Cryptography (=system of protection of the documents) as warranty of the anonymity of the sources
- Anonymity of the members of WIKILEAKS except the founder and the spokesperson
- Aim to reveal the way in which states, governments, companies really operate
What did WIKILEAKS publish?

• 2007 Guantanamo’s operating manual: intimidating techniques
• 2009 Oil trading company Trafigura’s report: toxic waste
• 2010 Video «Collateral murder»: fire on civilians in Baghdad
• 2010 CIA’s memorandum: techniques of persuasion on European society
• 2010 Afghan war logs: killing of civilians in Afghanistan
• 2010 Iraq war logs: torture in Abu Ghraib prison
• 2010 US diplomacy’s correspondence: CIA spying on UN general secretary
• 2011 Prisoners’ files at Guantanamo: detention and torture of innocents
• 2017 VAULT 7: CIA cyber-guns reaching private spaces around the world
• .....and much more
How did the US governments destroy WIKILEAKS?

- Cutting bank and social accounts
- Hacking WIKILEAKS’ website
- Discovering the identity of the sources and persecuting them (see: Chelsea Manning)
- Destroying Julian Assange
How did they destroy Julian Assange?

• Strategy aimed at **creating a controversial image** of Assange, in order to cut off the empathy and support of the public opinion. Pression on the media to deliver this image (narcissist, irresponsible, unsatisfied, etc.) and spread fake news about him.

• Strategy aimed at **accusing and incriminating** Julian Assange. Pression on the courts inside and outside the USA (Sweden, UK) to prosecute him for, among others: minor rape, terrorism, espionage.
What is this case all about?

• It’s about the fight between authoritarianism and the freedom of the press, which has always been considered by western society as one of the pillars of democracy.

• USA and its partners are prosecuting Assange and his sources with all the possible means in order to send a clear message: “don’t you dare revealing in public the truth about our misdeeds and our wars”.
Violations of civil rights

According to the “US Freedom of information act” (1966):

• Documents and evidences published by journalists and proving crimes cannot be censored, even if the crime is committed by the state.

• A journalist cannot be accused of publishing the truth.

• A journalist cannot be accused of using anonymous sources.
What has Assange already paid?

• over 9 years under the accuse of minor rape, with no interrogation and no process (2010-2020)
• 2 years home arrest in England (2010-2012)
• 7 years as «political refugee» in the embassy of Ecuador in London (2012-2019), in 20 square metres, without ever going out, under 24 hours surveillance by the English police and the American intelligence (illegal).
• 4 years of isolation at the maximum-security prison of Belmarsh, England, also called «The British Guantanamo» (2019-present)
Violation of human rights

• The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention considered that:
  2015: “Assange is arbitrarily detained by the governments of Sweden and the UK”.
  2019: “The treatment imposed to Assange contravenes the principles of necessity and proportionality envisaged by the human rights standards”

• Nils Melzer, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, denounced constant psychological torture and spoke of political persecution.
What does Assange risk now?

• **Extradition to the US**, where he is accused of 17 different crimes including terrorism and espionage; the final verdict of the British Court is expected soon.

• Arrest and imprisonment in a maximal security prison for up to **175 years**.

• 500,000 signatures against his extradition have been collected by **Amnesty International**, as he “faces a high risk of prolonged solitary confinement, which constitutes a violation of human rights”.
Why is this case so important for all of us?

• **Censorship** has been applied within the «democratic world», where every constitution guarantees the freedom of the press, so that the citizens know about the operation of their governments.

• States, in cooperation among them, have used **legal and illegal ways** to destroy an organization and discredit a person who was revealing the truth in the interest of the public.

• Civil and human rights have been violated **within the European Union**, and no government has risen any question.

• An Australian citizen is kept in prison in Europe to please the will of the USA government. This is a **dangerous precedent** of global persecution within the western world, which aims at discouraging activism.
Further references


• [www.wikileaks.org](http://www.wikileaks.org)

• [www.assangedefense.org](http://www.assangedefense.org)

• [www.assangecampaign.org.au](http://www.assangecampaign.org.au)

• [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)
“If wars can be started by lies, peace can be started by truth”

Julian Assange
Presentation by
Luisa de Bellis

Comitato per la liberazione di
Julian Assange - Italia