



OFF *FESTIVAL INTERNAZIONALE DEL GIORNALISMO DI PERUGIA 2024*

Is Julian Assange a journalist?

Some say he is, since he reported newsworthy stories based on authentic, vetted documents received from Whistleblowers – and that’s journalism. Others say he isn’t because he self-published on his site WikiLeaks and was not part of an established outlet run by an editor/publisher. But this second definition is too narrow (and self-serving). Here’s why.

Due to cross-ownership, most mainstream media today are dominated by a handful of publishers: 6 in the U.S. (while there were 50 in 1983). In Italy, just 4 billionaire families dictate the editorial policy of most mainstream media. Thus, defining journalists as only those subjected to the control – and editorial policies – of a handful of billionaire entrepreneurs means regimenting mass media and leveling public discourse. Whereas defining Julian Assange as a journalist, specifically a freelance one, means defending journalism that is **truly independent** and public discourse that is **truly pluralistic**.

Assange’s judicial persecution is an attempt to crush independent journalism and, with it, a free press. It aims at criminalizing the revelation of secret documents – even if in the public interest. It does so by invoking the old Espionage Act (1917), thus sidestepping the rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court (1971) and the European Court of Human Rights **subordinating secrecy** to public interest. Doesn’t that endanger national security? Not necessarily – even the Pentagon testified, during the Manning trial, that no real harm ever ensued from WikiLeaks revelations, so their journalistic value remains unscathed.

We therefore ask newspeople everywhere to demand the freedom of Julian Assange in the name of truly independent journalism and a truly free press!

Find out more at: www.bit.ly/ja-04 and www.bit.ly/ja-05

Activists for Assange at #IJF24 – info@freeassangeroma.it – cell 328 069 5861