



.@ecotricity "responds" to concerns about their support for Julian Assange

ADMIN: Following legal discussions with legal representatives of Ecotricity, we are publishing this statement: *"Ecotricity's tweet regarding Julian Assange on 5 February 2016 mistakenly gave the impression that Ecotricity appeared to support rape culture, which it does not. Ecotricity were unaware of the legal circumstances of Julian Assange's various court appearances in the UK or that he had not claimed to fear extradition to the US in his appeal to the Supreme Court."*

We first raised our concerns about Ecotricity's tweets in support of Julian Assange [here](#). It's worth pointing out that these "responses", which demonstrate a complete refusal to recognise international law, have been published only on [Facebook](#) in response to criticisms of a post supporting Julian Assange.

This is the post made on Facebook by Ecotricity:

If only Sweden had promised not to extradite him to the US, this could have been over a long time ago. And another thing, it's odd to see Phillip Hammond talking about the need for JA to comply with the law, while refusing himself to accept this ruling of international law. Classic case of say one thing do another.

The first response to challenges on Facebook:

[Ecotricity](#) We sometimes post stuff on social media that has little to do with renewable energy... Orang-utans, Hen Harriers and Veganism are a few recent examples. We also posted a link to a BBC article about Julian Assange on the day the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that the various forms of confinement he has endured violate his human rights. We expect some flak on social media, not just from people who don't like wind turbines but also from followers or customers who don't agree with what we are posting about or how we are saying it. This was no different, but we did receive a few enquires and accusations in particular about this that we want to address.

What do we support as a company? In addition to supporting renewable energy, action on climate change and room for nature, we also support freedom of speech, legal protection for whistleblowers, protection of political dissidents from persecution and human rights abuses. We *do not* support 'victim blaming' or 'rape culture' both of which are among the spurious accusations that have been made as a result of the above post.

For more info on the point we made about Philip Hammond, this has been expanded on in more detail by people and organisations who specialise in investigating and exposing human rights abuses such as journalist Jonathan

Cook: http://www.theecologist.org/.../lies_about_assange_and_un...



And Dinah PoKempner from Human Rights

Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/.../assange-following-rules-or...>

We hope that after reading this and those two articles you understand a little more about where we are coming from.

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Comparing a man hiding out in the Ecuadorian embassy so as not to be questioned over rape to veganism is taking the piss. Obviously, we're the ones responsible for the 'spurious' accusations of victim blaming and rape culture. We stand by our point that discussing Julian Assange without mentioning WHY he is currently wanted by the Swedish government is rape culture in action. Equally, the conflation of Julian Assange with all discussions of free speech imply that only Assange's right to free speech matters. And, it ignores the fact that the Swedish government, who do not extradite people to countries with the death penalty, aren't wanting to question Assange as a political dissident. They want to question him about rape. The women aren't a concern of Ecotricity. After all, Ecotricity has not spoken about their right to free speech or their persecution by supporters of Assange who have harassed and threatened them for years now.

Why is Assange more important than the right of these women to live without fear of rape and harassment?

The second response to questions raised by Ecotricity customers:

Our original post was about justice for all parties, of course we support Assange being questioned and (if necessary) being prosecuted. There is a stalemate due to the unique circumstances and the best resolution for all parties involved must surely be for the legal proceedings to be carried out ASAP. Allowing statute of limitations to expire is not fair. The UN Working Group was critical of this and we agree. Given that the Swedish government cannot or will not give assurances regarding extradition to the US, perhaps the best approach for justice to be done would be to carry out the questioning 'in absentia'. Just to be clear, we believe there are no circumstances in which anyone should be able to avoid facing up to rape allegations.

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"Justice for all partners" requires mentioning the victims. This is double speak: " we believe there are no circumstances in which anyone should be able to avoid facing up to rape allegations". If Ecotricity's social media and public relations employees actually cared about rape allegations, they would have done some research into Swedish law and extradition before posting in support of Assange's right to hide out in an Ecuadorian embassy until the statute of limitations runs out. They've certainly not spoken out in favour of a change in law which ends the statute of limitations on crimes of sexual violence - limitations that benefit only the perpetrator.



Third response:

[Ecotricity](#) We tweeted (and shared on here) a link to a BBC story on Julian Assange last Friday with the comment "if only Sweden had promised not to extradite him to the US, this could have been over a long time ago."

We didn't expect that to be controversial, but it was to some people and it's clear that our position has been misinterpreted and in some cases severely misrepresented - we'd like to clear that up.

We believe that Julian Assange should face questioning by the Swedish Authorities regarding the sexual assault allegations made against him in that country, and if charges follow we believe he should face those charges - there is no question of that.

At the same time we believe he is right to seek to avoid falling into the hands of the US legal system, for his work at Wikileaks.

Unfortunately these issues have become entangled.

Julian Assange faces the very real threat of extradition to the US if he travels to Sweden for questioning, he has sought assurances that this would not happen, to no avail and sought to have the interview in London - to no avail.

We believe that he has a right to political asylum to protect himself from those that would persecute him for his role at Wikileaks - this has nothing to do with the allegations made against him in Sweden - which we believe he should face. The problem is he can't currently do both.

Looking back at our original post we may have appeared to treat this issue lightly with our comment (it merits more than that) and we could have been more clear on our stance - to anyone offended due to a genuine misunderstanding of our position we apologise and we hope our position is now clear. We respect the positions and opinions of other people on this issue and ask simply for the same.

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"Misrepresentation" is the go-to excuse for those willing to prevent men from being held accountable for their crimes. Either you believe that Assange should be investigated for rape or you don't. There is no in-between space in which the rule of law should be suspended for one man because of a cult of personality. (And, can we all please recognise that Julian Assange is not WikiLeaks. One is a person. The other is a conglomerate of activists and whistleblowers).

Prioritising Assange's right to free speech over the rights of women to live without fear of rape, harassment and abuse is rape culture. It doesn't get much more obvious than this.

There is a response to a customer email on [this thread on Mumsnet](#).



Everyday Victim Blaming

challenging institutional disbelief around domestic & sexual violence and abuse

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