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**TROY BIRTHISEL- THE FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIAN**

WHY ARE SOME AUSTRALIANS NOT TREATED EQUALLY BY THE GOVERNMENT WHEN THEY ARE JAILED OVERSEAS? Do we only help those with a high profile? Have we lost the ability to care anymore with COVID dominating headlines?

The Australian Government recently said it remained "seriously concerned" about Ms Cheng's detention and welfare in China. Cheng Lei is a high-profile Australian television anchor for the Chinese Government's English news channel, CGTN

"We are particularly concerned that one year into her detention, there remains a lack of transparency about the reasons for Ms Cheng's detention," Foreign Affairs Minister Marise Payne said.

"We expect basic standards of justice, procedural fairness and humane treatment to be met, in accordance with international norms."

Recently, I sent a media release out about an Australian, Troy Birthisel, who is locked up in a Philippines jail, for almost 8 years now, without trial. I mentioned he had been before the court 57 times and each time it has been adjourned or suspended due to lack of evidence and witnesses. The release went to over 1000 media contacts and I had one reply.

How, in this modern-day world of social media dominated pseudo-journalism, do you make the government accountable for a wrong if true believer journalists don’t take an interest and follow it through?

Why is the Foreign Affairs Department not demanding his release like they are for her? How can they say it is a delicate situation at this stage when such a fuss is made over Ms Cheng (not that she doesn’t deserve attention of her government as well), when there have been no charges and he just sits in a crowded cell while we all go on with our comfortable lives and he basically slowly dies from lack of hope?

HE HAS NOT HAD A TRIAL so we cannot judge him. They, the Philippines Public Attorneys, have decided he is guilty, which is the norm in their legal system, and therefore must prove his innocence but he has maintained from day one that he was going about his lawful business when he was arrested. They have not found any witnesses or evidence to convict him.

I cannot believe no one cares anymore. The one reply stated that, “We have covered this story before”. So what? He is still there in this filthy and COVID ridden jail cell after 8 years taking turns to sleep while we just forget him. He is Australian and deserves to be home.

Please help and ask the government why he is still there when he hasn’t been tried? Don’t accept they are doing something as, after all this time, then, whatever they are doing isn’t working. I need to know and so does any Australian because it could be you one day, and we care about each other, don’t we.

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