

'A Giant of Journalism Has Left Us': John Pilger Dead at 84

"He was a fearless challenger of imperialism and colonialism and used his talents behind the camera to expose genocide and war crimes, including the deceit of mainstream media," said one British MP.

By [Jessica Corbett](#)

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Legendary Australian journalist and documentary filmmaker [John Pilger](#) died Saturday at the age of 84—news that was quickly met with a flood of tributes from fellow reporters, friends, and fans of his impactful work.

"It is with great sadness the family of John Pilger announce he died yesterday 30 December 2023 in London aged 84," [says](#) a statement shared on his social media Sunday. "His journalism and documentaries were celebrated around the world, but to his family he was simply the most amazing and loved dad, granddad, and partner. Rest in peace."

His son Sam Pilger said Sunday that "he was my hero."

My Dad died yesterday. I am heartbroken, but also so very proud and grateful to have had such an amazing Dad. He was my hero. <https://t.co/kjNE7DAcME>

— Sam Pilger (@sampilger) [December 31, 2023](#)

As *The Guardian* [detailed](#) Sunday:

Born in Bondi, New South Wales, Pilger relocated to the U.K. in the 1960s, where he went on to work for the Daily Mirror, ITV's former investigative program "World in Action," and Reuters.

He covered conflicts in Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Biafra, and was named journalist of the year in 1967 and 1979. Pilger had a successful career in documentary filmmaking, creating more than 50 films and winning a number of accolades.

"His last film, *The Dirty War on the National Health Service*, was released in 2019 and examined the threat to the NHS from privatization and bureaucracy," the newspaper noted. "It was described by *The Guardian*'s film critic Peter Bradshaw as '[a fierce, necessary film](#).'"

British Member of Parliament Claudia Webbe, an Independent who represents Leicester East, [declared](#) Sunday that

"he was a fearless challenger of imperialism and colonialism and used his talents behind the camera to expose genocide and war crimes, including the deceit of mainstream media. His documentaries are epic and are required viewing for a more civilized world."

Fellow MP Jeremy Corbyn, a former Labour leader who now serves Islington North as an Independent, [said](#):

"I am deeply saddened to hear of the passing of John Pilger. John gave a voice to the unheard and the occupied: in Australia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Chile, Iraq, East Timor, Palestine, and beyond."

"Thank you for your bravery in pursuit of the truth—it will never be forgotten," Corbyn added.

The U.K.-based Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament [said](#) that

"CND is saddened to hear about the death of the great John Pilger. He blazed a trail for so many through his work as a journalist, filmmaker, and anti-war campaigner. Rest in peace."

Legendary political activist, John Pilger, has sadly passed away age 84.

His vast works & campaigning against war and imperialism will be forever remembered in the history of global movements toward justice and liberation. pic.twitter.com/Z5ViVJCZWh

— CODEPINK (@codepink) [December 31, 2023](#)

Attorney and human rights defender Stella Assange—the wife of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who is jailed in the U.K. while battling his extradition to the United States—[called](#) Pilger "one of the greats."

“A consistent ally of the dispossessed, John dedicated his life to telling their stories and awoke the world to the greatest injustices,” she said. “He showed great empathy for the weak and was unflinching with the powerful. John was one of Julian’s most vocal champions but they also became the closest of friends. He fought for Julian’s freedom until the end. “

“‘We are all Spartacus if we want to be,’ he [wrote](#) in his last published piece,” she noted. “This was John, challenging us until the end. Let’s always seek to rise to the challenge. Thank you, dear friend.”

Honoring the veteran journalist as “a ferocious speaker of truth to power, whom in later years tirelessly advocated for the release and vindication of Julian Assange,” WikiLeaks [contended](#) that “our world is poorer for his passing.”

John Pilger (1939-2023): “Julian Assange has become enemy number one...he should be hero number one. Because if we lose Assange and [@Wikileaks](#) then we lose a whole strata of freedom. We stop questioning.”

All of our interviews with John Pilger can be found here:...
pic.twitter.com/FeU0GI2KAe

— Going Underground (@GUnderground_TV) [December 31, 2023](#)

Australian journalist Peter Cronau [proclaimed](#) that “a giant of journalism has left us—John Pilger, a heroic truth-teller. Banned by much of the mainstream media, his amazing work is his great permanent legacy.”

Cronau praised him for “calling to account the intelligence agencies, the generals, and the governments alike that run the world their way” while also “giving voice to the unheard, the Indigenous, the poor, the occupied, the displaced—and giving hope, courage, and solidarity to the international family of activists.”

Pilger was “such a strong role model to so many journalists especially in Australia—a country he loved, but whose media shunned him for his relentless uncompromising stand against imperialism and Australia’s slavish obedience to it,” he added. “Telling the seldom-heard ‘people’s history,’ his books and films inform our democracy, and it was a pleasure to have had the chance to have worked with him.”

British journalist [Johnathan Cook](#) said that “John Pilger was an inspiration to young journalists like myself. For decades, he managed to publish searing reports, even in establishment media, that exposed the lies justifying the brutalities of Western foreign policy. We need his voice now more than ever.”

Mark Curtis, director and co-founder of *Declassified U.K.*, shared a link to Pilger’s [website](#) and [said](#) that “ I cannot believe John has gone. His lifetime’s work is a treasure—look at his filmography and articles to remind yourself. “

“A towering figure. Irreplaceable. Authentic and committed. Someone to look up to. Fearless,” Curtis concluded. “Thank you, John. Farewell, friend.”

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Featured image: Journalist John Pilger addresses a crowd of Julian Assange supporters demanding his release in London on August 11, 2021. (Photo: Guy Smallman/Getty Images)

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