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IAB PRESS RELEASE ON ARBITRARY PROCEDURES AGAINST ATEL TV FROM VENEZUELA

The International Association of Broadcasting – IAB – alerts with deep concern about arbitrary and illegal proceedings undertaken by officers of the National Telecommunication Commission of Venezuela, to restrict the free exercise of the Right to Freedom of Expression and Information in that country.

By means of undue pressure, CONATEL officials have threatened cable companies by forcing them to remove the signal of American Television (ATEL TV) from their program schedule.

This occurred while Venezuelan journalist Leocenis García, President of the communication Group “6to poder”, was carrying out negotiations, still not fulfilled, for the purchase of ATEL TV, with the aim to administrate the brand “Sexto Visión”, which would become a 24-hour news channel.

These actions on cable operators are not new and they violate both the Venezuelan Constitution and the American Convention on Human Rights, among other international instruments.

IAB urges the authorities of CONATEL to act under the existing law, abstaining from unlawful actions, so that the different cable companies immediately restore ATEL TV signal, reestablishing the rights of the current owners and public to access the content of their choice.

We also draw the attention of the international community that in Venezuela procedures are still being carried out, seeking to impose the thesis of the "official communication hegemony" and to prevent the free flow of ideas, to the detriment not only of the media mentioned, but also of the right of citizens to be informed.

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