

Analysis IPYS Venezuela

## Judicial proceedings threaten freedom of expression in Venezuela

The Instituto Prensa y Sociedad de Venezuela (IPYS Venezuela) has evidenced a disproportionate use of the state's power, by means of legal mechanisms, criminalizing the work of journalists and private and independent media, in several of the nation's states in the past few months of 2013. Some of the complaints filed by various executive representatives have been backed by actions by the District Attorney's office, evidencing a possible articulation among the public powers in restricting the exercise of the freedom of expression and information of media employees as well as society at large.

Under a panorama of high socio-political conflictivity, there is a preponderance in Venezuelan media activity of gag orders, criminal lawsuits, accusations of alleged destabilization charges, and restrictive economic measures against the media.

The line of action of national courts takes place after journalists and the printed media -which maintain critical lines against the current government's performance- broadcast complaints on acts of corruption in public management, or have published information on violent actions resulting from the reigning insecurity in the streets, which are deemed to run counter to the protection of the rights of children.

It is also worrisome to see the amount of criminal lawsuits seeking to silence the voices of journalists who divulged complaints on the violent actions and irregularities which took place after the April presidential elections, when the National Elections Council proclaimed Nicolás Maduro, backed by the official party Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV), as the winner.

Venezuelan justice-dispensing institutions -as the organs responsible for investigating and determining the responsibilities whenever any infraction to the national legislation is incurred- have started investigations against journalists and the media in several of the nation's states. Nevertheless, through prior censorship measures and a priori opinions, these legal instances have breached the right to due process, as per article 49 of the constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which guarantees the presumption of innocence until proved guilty.

Some of the cases registered with sundry legal measures during this period have been gag orders affecting the newspapers el Correo del Caroní in Bolívar state and La Mañana, in Falcón state. Several journalists have been signaled out for criminal proceedings, including Horacio Contreras, radio show host and the director of Studio 102.7 FM, in Mérida; Leonardo León, radio show host at ULA FM 107.7 and correspondent for the El Nacional newspaper; Nelson Bocaranda, radio show host at Circuito Unión Radio and the director of web portal [Run.run.es](http://Run.run.es); Miguel Enrique Otero, the editor of El Nacional and Leocenis García, president of 6to Poder weekly newspaper.

Gag orders have been undertaken which affect the freedom of expression in social networks, such as the case of judge María Lourdes Afiuni, who is currently under parole, after having been tried as a result of a juridical decision she took during her duties in the Venezuelan judiciary system.

## THE CRIMINALIZATION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

These incidents represent breaches which could affect the freedom and plurality of information in Venezuela. This was affirmed during a conversation between IPYS Venezuela and Héctor Faúndez Ledesma, attorney and specialist in freedom of expression, who also considered that in Venezuela the criminalization of freedom of expression and the right to information has been institutionalized, all of which run counter to the international standards for exercising these rights. “Punitive measures are applied, for exercising a fundamental freedom: the freedom of expression”, Faúndez commented.

Despite the provisions in the national constitution, Faúndez emphasized that the application of judiciary measures to criminalize freedom of expression represents a trend which has become institutionalized in Venezuela in the past 12 years. He explained that this situation confirms the discomfort the government authorities feel regarding “any information which might affect their sensitivities”.

Meanwhile, the “direct and indirect pressures aimed at silencing the labor of informing by the social communicators are incompatible with freedom of expression”, as set forth in the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression promoted by the Special Raconteur for Freedom of Expression of the Organization of American States.

Article 57 of the constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela guarantees the right to freedom of expression and information, and prohibits all manner of censorship attempting to inhibit the plural debate of ideas.

In spite of this constitutional provision, Faúndez described that the government instances are using mechanisms to “restrict and limit and censor the journalists and the media”, especially those which are private and independent, which to some extent seek to distract them and keep them away from their job of informing.

For the jurist, this framework of actions is coupled to the thrusting forward of a government policy aimed at “restricting the information so that it is at the hands of the state”, through direct and indirect means.

In the opinion of Faúndez, these actions not only impair the work of the journalists and the media. They also “affect the exercise of the freedom of expression of society as a whole, insofar as freedom of expression encompasses the right to search for and receive information of any kind and from any source”.

Based on these prospects, IPYS Venezuela henceforth presents a detailed analysis on the criminalization of the media and the journalists in the past few months.

## CORRUPTION DENUNCIATIONS CENSORED

Since November 2012, el Correo del Caroní, a private newspaper based in Ciudad Guayana, Bolívar state, has conducted an information follow-up on denunciations related to acts of corruption in the management of Ferrominera del Orinoco –a state-owned company which is part of the basic

industries in Guayana. These were being revealed by official institutions and spokespersons who were well-known by the public opinion, who had pointed out the possible link of the company's workers to state security corps officials and businessmen of the region.

These actions were the basis for the first court of common pleas of Bolívar state to order a gag order on July 23, 2013 against el Correo del Caroní, on the case involving Yamal Mustafá, a businessman who was arrested and charged days prior by the public prosecutor, for his alleged link in acts of corruption at Ferrominera del Orinoco.

The court ordered David Natera, the media's president and the board of directors of Correo del Caroní to "abstain from publishing or permitting the publication of, subjective or prejudicial information issued directly or indirectly, in a simulated or figurative manner, connected to citizen Yamal Mustafá, as well as all matters referring to any other criminal proceeding that may be instituted against his person, which could be construed as damaging to his constitutional rights, such as due process, the presumption of innocence, his right to his honor and reputation and the right to the integrity of persons and their family members, and proceed to publish information that is objective and as per journalistic ethics" (<http://www.correodelcaroni.com/images/stories/dia250713/A6DOCUMENTO2.jpg>).

The court's measure was based on a request filed by Yamal Mustafá -also the owner of the Primicia local newspaper - on July 15, 2013. In the complaint, the businessman also sued David Natera, president of the Correo del Caroní, for the alleged crimes of slander and injury. Mustafá simultaneously filed a civil lawsuit adding charges for damages and prejudice against el Correo del Caroní and its maximum authority, which contemplated a considerable monetary fine which, if approved, would force the newspaper to close down. At the time of drafting this report, the two lawsuits had been admitted by the court and the affected parties presented their allegations, as per their right to defend themselves.

The issuing of the gag order and the civil and criminal complaints prospered, even though Yamal Mustafá was imputed by the Venezuelan justice for his alleged link to the corruption charges at Ferrominera del Orinoco, which were reported by the Correo del Caroní.

It is to be noted that the gag order requested and admitted by the court ordered el Correo del Caroní to silence the denunciations and statements exclusively against Yamal Mustafá. Nevertheless, the order was not extended to veto corruption cases in which 6 other persons are presumably involved, who were also arrested and charged for the same crimes.

Oscar Murillo, the head editor of the Correo del Caroní, explained to IPYS Venezuela that this case has been qualified as a personal dispute between Yamal Mustafá and David Natera, media owners and businessmen in that region, thus attempting to placate public reactions to the corruption charges which have been admitted and processed by the nation's executive and judicial authorities (<http://ipys.org.ve/search.aspx?search=correo+del+caron%C3%AD+julio+2013>).

Meanwhile, on July 23, 2013, Robinson Lizano, director of Primicia, a private newspaper based in Ciudad Guayana, Bolívar state, denounced that the media he Works for has been subjected to a smear campaign in the framework of these events (<http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=3542&y=2013&m=07>).

## Precedents

In the past 8 years, similar measures against journalistic activities have been adopted by the judiciary power to silence the corruption charges. In 2011, precisely in Bolívar state there was a gag order on the investigation of an alleged corruption case involving the governor of that state.

Between 2005 and 2006, vetoes were issued and judicial proceedings were started on journalists on the case of the assassination of district attorney Danilo Anderson who, at the time of his demise was spearheading investigations on extortion charges and was in charge of investigations on violent events which transpired in Venezuela in April 2002.

Date	Case	Source
08/22/2011	<b>Court issued gag order against private newspaper</b> The court of Bolívar stated declared the constitutional guarantee for the protection of civil rights requested by Francisco Rangel Escobar against sociedad Mercantil Editorial Aguilar C.A and Orlando Aguilar Guevara, editor of the El Venezolano newspaper according to law. The measure prohibited the publishing of topics affecting the interests of Rangel's family group. Rangel is the son of the state's governor. The decision was issued by the first court of the first instance on trials regarding the protection of boys, girls and adolescents and was due to information published in the newspaper on a process opened by the governor's son on the alleged corruption in the manufacture of iron rods at Siderúrgica del Orinoco.	<b>IPYS</b> <b>Venezuela:</b> <a href="http://www.ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2169&amp;y=2011&amp;m=08">http://www.ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2169&amp;y=2011&amp;m=08</a>
01/23/2006	<b>Court prohibited the media from publishing information on the trial of the Anderson case</b> The sixth court of control, run by judge Florencio Silano, decided to forbid social media from publishing, divulging or exposing the minutes of the file on the homicide of district attorney Danilo Anderson, which happened in November 2004, as per article 304 of the Organic Procedural Criminal Code, which sets forth that all investigation actions shall be withheld from third parties.	<b>IPYS</b> <b>Venezuela:</b> <a href="http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2583&amp;y=2006&amp;m=01">http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2583&amp;y=2006&amp;m=01</a>
01/18/2006	<b>The Attorney General's office started an investigation against the media regarding the Anderson case</b> Isaías Rodríguez, the attorney general of the republic, announced the opening of an investigation on several media for the alleged use of intimidation and fraud to disqualify the work of the public prosecutor, involving TV channels Globovisión, Venevisión, Televen, RCTV, CMT, Venezolana de Televisión (a state-owned channel) and the newspapers that circulate nationwide El Nacional, El Universal, Últimas Noticias and El Nuevo País.	<b>IPYS</b> <b>Venezuela:</b> <a href="http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2582&amp;y=2006&amp;m=01">http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2582&amp;y=2006&amp;m=01</a>
01/28/2005	<b>Residence of journalist Patricia Poleo raided</b> Eight officers of the Scientific, Penal and Criminalistic Investigations Corps (CICPC) raided the residence of journalist Patricia Poleo, director of the "El Nuevo País" newspaper in Caracas. Poleo denounced in the media that the officers arrived with an order to search for documents related to a journalistic investigation, known as "the Anderson case", in which she denounced the existence of an extortion network in which several district attorneys of the public prosecutor's office would be allegedly involved.	<b>IPYS</b> <b>Venezuela:</b> <a href="http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2721&amp;y=2005&amp;m=01">http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2721&amp;y=2005&amp;m=01</a>

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF VIOLENT EVENTS VETOED

Alleging the defense and safeguarding of children's rights, on July 12, 2013, the court for the protection of boys, girls and adolescents of Falcón state -based in the city of Coro- issued a gag order against La Mañana, a privately managed newspaper. This order prohibited the publication of photographs of violent events in its pages.

The judiciary instance decided that the veto must be complied with until the end of the trial faced by the newspaper on account of a lawsuit filed by the ombudsman, an organ of citizen power, against the media on the alleged violation of the integrity of children and adolescents, after the publication of several photographs in the newspaper in the course of 2012, regarding homicides and traffic accidents in that state.

The reason was based on the alleged violation of the rights of minors after the publication in the La Mañana newspaper of images of a violent nature which supposedly go against "the physical, psychical and moral integrity" of children and adolescents.

The Organic Law for the Protection of Boys, Girls and Adolescents sets forth the right to freedom of expression and information of infancy. Article 68 stipulates the warranties for minors to receive "plural and adequate information for their development". Articles 75 and 92 prohibit the divulgation of information and "images which promote or incite violence".

Zoremil Chirinos, the ombudsman representative in Falcón state, declared to the media that the lawsuit was issued because the newspaper's representatives did not attend two reunions they were subpoenaed to attend by the citizen power organism to talk about this case.

Atilio Yáñez, the newspaper's editor, considered that this action has political motivations seeking to affect the media. He informed that, if this lawsuit proceeds, La Mañana would have to cancel a fine equivalent to 2% of the newspaper's gross revenues, which he qualifies as a violation to the freedom of expression and an intention of breaking the media "for telling the truth of what is going on in Falcón".

In turn, Héctor Faúndez explained that administrative sanctions are contemplated in international jurisprudence on freedom of expression, but he referred that "when the fines are disproportionate they are deemed abusive and incompatible to the exercise of freedom of expression".

### Precedents

The discussions on the right to the protection of childhood and freedom of expression in Venezuela have a background, which have affected the media and non-governmental organizations. Since 2006, gag orders have been issued, supposedly to protect the rights of boys, girls and adolescents but have affected the citizens' right to freedom of expression and the right to information.

Date	Case	Source
02/07/2013	<b>NGO charged for broadcasting information on an indigenous protest</b> On February 7, 2013 a trial started at the eight court of mediation of	<b>Source: IPYS Venezuela</b> <a href="http://www.ipys">http://www.ipys</a>

	<p>boys, girls and adolescents of the judicial circuit of the metropolitan area of Caracas against Programa Venezolano de Educación Acción en Derechos Humanos (Provea), and Sociedad Homo et Natura, based in Zulia state, which work on the situation of indigenous peoples. These organizations were charged with backing and broadcasting information in their web portals on a protest on July 22, 2010 by representatives of Yukpa communities (settled in Sierra de Perijá, Zulia state) in front of the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ), the maximum organ of the judiciary power located in Caracas.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=3292&amp;y=2013&amp;m=01">.org.ve/alerta?id=3292&amp;y=2013&amp;m=01</a></p>
03/30/2012	<p><b>Court condemned regional newspaper</b> The first court of the first instance in trials for the protection of boys, girls and adolescents of the judicial circuit of Barinas state accepted the lawsuit filed by the ombudsman against "Editorial Sabana" and "Diario La Prensa" for the publication of photographs of events considered to violate the rights of minors.</p>	<p><b>IPYS Venezuela:</b> <a href="http://www.ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2685&amp;y=2012&amp;m=03">http://www.ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2685&amp;y=2012&amp;m=03</a></p>
08/17/2010	<p><b>Court prohibits the publication of images that affects the integrity of boys, girls and adolescents</b> A court of the judicial circuit for the protection of boys, girls and adolescents of the metropolitan area of Caracas started a lawsuit against El Nacional and Tal Cual newspapers prohibiting them from publishing not only images, but also information and advertising with bloody content on deaths and deceased persons, which could alter the psychological wellbeing of children. Later it ordered all printed media to abstain from publishing images of a "violent" nature. The proceeding was filed as per a request filed by the Ombudsman. The measure was revoked two days later for the other media but the gag order continued for Tal Cual and El Nacional. On August 2, 2013, the daily informed that the trial against it had ended and the decision of the court is being awaited. The media's representatives informed that they are hoping that the suit be declared unfounded.</p>	<p><b>IPYS Venezuela:</b> <a href="http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=3546&amp;y=2013&amp;m=07">http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=3546&amp;y=2013&amp;m=07</a></p>
01/09/2006	<p><b>Columnist prevented from referring to the President's daughter</b> The National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (Cndna) notified Tal Cual newspaper of the start of an administrative proceeding against it for the alleged violation of the right to the honor, reputation and private life of minor Rosinés Chávez Rodríguez, the youngest daughter of the president of the republic Hugo Chávez due to an opinion article written by humorist Laureano Márquez published in the media on November 25, 2005. The measure prevented Márquez from publishing any type of article and/or performing any public act alluding directly or indirectly to the daughter of the President. It also prohibited the director of the newspaper, Teodoro Petkoff, from publishing or airing the abovementioned article in any media.</p>	<p><b>IPYS Venezuela</b> <a href="http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2579&amp;y=2006&amp;m=01">http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=2579&amp;y=2006&amp;m=01</a></p>

## JOURNALISTS SUED FOR BEING “DESTABILIZING ELEMENTS”

At least 3 journalists have been signaled out for their alleged responsibility in the violent events which broke out in Venezuela on the days after the presidential elections when citizens went out on the streets all over the nation to express their discontent with the results of the presidential elections, in which the National Elections Council proclaimed Nicolás Maduro as the winner.

In Mérida, Horacio Contreras, radio show host and the director of Studio 102.7 FM and Leonardo León, radio show host at ULA FM 107.7 and correspondent for the El Nacional newspaper were criminally sued. These legal actions were promoted by the state’s governor, Alexis Ramírez, backed by the PSUV, who made criminal accusations against the journalists for alleged slander, a crime set forth in article 442 of the Criminal Code, according to the criminal complaint. The regional authority also publicly accused León and Contreras of being destabilizing elements because in their radio programs they aired denunciations of violent events which took place in the city of Mérida in April (<http://ipys.org.ve/search.aspx?search=Alexis+Ram%C3%ADrez+2013+m%C3%A9rida++demanda>).

A criminal court heard on these cases. However, criminal proceedings -for the issuing of an information or opinion- are deemed to run counter to the provisions in articles 57 and 58 of the national constitution. “Based on the jurisprudence of the Inter American Court on Human Rights, criminal sanctions are the most severe ones one can resort to, and do not seem to be appropriate for the purposes of exercising freedom of expression”, according to the analysis made by Héctor Faúndez.

On the other hand, on July 4, 2013, the public prosecutor called journalist Nelson Bocaranda, the director of web news portal Runrun.es and radio show host at Unión Radio, to appear as a witness before the court investigating the violent events which ensued after the April 14 presidential elections. Simultaneously, Pedro Carreño, congressman to the national assembly for the PSUV political party, accused Bocaranda of being the “intellectual author” of the violent events which took place throughout the nation due to the discontent of a large portion of society regarding the results of the elections.

Bocaranda attended the second subpoena on July 11, 2013. The motive of this meeting was a tweet he aired on his Twitter account [@Nelsonbocaranda](#). The journalist informed the media that the proceedings went off normally but that he could not give details on the questions he was asked to respond.

He added: “I left it very clear that the tweet I posted on April 15 alerting the CNE on an election irregularity in a CDI in Zulia state (“I am informed that in the CDI of La Paz in Gallo Verde, Maracaibo, there are voting ballots which have been hidden and the Cubans who are there do not let them come out” link) produced no damages to that center nor any other in that state (...). My tweet made no call whatsoever to take any violent action or of any other nature (...) I reiterated that the actions taken by third parties cannot be attributed to me since I ignore if something happened and if it did I have no idea who or why they would have done it”.

Later on, in an interview published in the Ciudad Caracas newspaper, Luisa Ortega Díaz, referring to Bocaranda, said: “He made an affirmation on the presence of ballot boxes inside an integral

diagnostics center. What we wanted to find out was how did he know for certain that that was happening. One has to be responsible in what one says and does. If you are a journalist and you have a privileged spot to communicate from with many persons, you must inform based on the truth because information can generate a crisis or conflicts in society” (<http://www.minci.gob.ve/2013/07/a-tres-meses-de-su-ultimo-ataque-se-mantiene-latente-la-caras-mas-violenta-del-fascismo/>).

Bocaranda analyzed: "This is all payback time because I informed the nation about the truth regarding President Hugo Chávez. The government is making me pay for it". Nelson Bocaranda on several occasions offered off-the-record information, with data from off-the-record sources on the opacity which was kept around this topic in Venezuela regarding the ailments of President Hugo Chávez, who passed away on March 5, 2013,.

### **ECONOMIC MEASURES AGAINST MEDIA OWNERS ABOUND**

Two measures to block bank accounts, which may be deemed as indirect actions, were issued in July against media owners. With charges for alleged events which are deemed as crimes in the national legislation, justice-dispensing institutions have advanced proceedings seeking to exert pressure and limit the activities of two private media which maintain acute critical stances to the current government's performance: El Nacional and Sexto Poder.

Based on information furnished by the public prosecutor, charges against these media authorities have taken place because they are businessmen, and not for exercising freedom of expression. Nevertheless, these two newspapers based in Caracas have stated that these are measures which seek to asphyxiate the printed media, through financial punitive measures.

One of the cases is that of Miguel Henrique Otero, editor of El Nacional, who the attorney general of the republic ordered that his bank accounts be frozen and be banned from disposing of his property on July 27, 2013,. Based on information furnished by the public prosecutor, this measure was based on a civil lawsuit filed against Otero by Alfredo Peña, former mayor of the Venezuelan capital. For this reason, it has been said that the process does not correspond directly to the media's performance. However, Otero commented that this is an arbitrary measure, with direct repercussions on his functions as a media authority, seeking to silence him (<http://ipys.org.ve/alerta?id=3548&y=2013&m=07>).

In its web page, the judiciary institution posted: "on Wednesday June 19, 2013, the public prosecutor received a request from court 21° on civil and mercantile matters of the AMC, which urged the investigation to see whether there is a punishable action in the complaint filed by Alfredo Peña against the editor of the El Nacional newspaper" (<http://bit.ly/18G6mbB>).

The public prosecutor added: "Peña's lawsuit against Otero is for the collection of 3.5 million dollars, and we consider that these events could be of a criminal nature since we do not know from whence the public official obtained that sum of money nor do we know why the defendant (Miguel Henrique Otero) owed that sum, the attorney general of the republic quipped".

In turn, on July 23, 2013, the public prosecutor agreed a measure to freeze the bank accounts nationwide and abroad of Grupo Sexto Poder, a private media corporation, and its president



Leocenis García, for alleged tax evasion. That same day, the media's representatives announced the closing of the company due to economic difficulties to continue operating, and this was made a concrete fact on August 5th, as informed to the media.

The Grupo Sexto Poder is the legal representative of weekly newspaper 6to Poder; newspaper El Comercio, the Fin de Semana magazine, the [6topoder.com](http://6topoder.com) web page and other supplements.

Meanwhile, on August 1st, 2013, the public prosecutor ordered the arrest of Leocenis García, who was charged with the alleged crime of legitimization of capitals, as per the Organic Law Against Organized Crime and the Funding of Terrorists. On July 30, 2013, he was arrested by officials of the military intelligence unit (DIM), a state security corps, when he was walking around Caracas accompanied by his sister María Lucía García.

The public prosecutor informed that this measure was linked to an alleged crime of illicit obtention of funds, and is out of the bounds of the tenets of freedom of expression since -as per the official information- the motives would have no relationship to news or opinions issued by the media or its journalists. IPYS Venezuela is documenting and following up on this case.

However, this event is summed to the legal precedents Leocenis García has had to face.

#### **JUDGE CENSORED IN SOCIAL NETWORKS**

An unprecedented case is the gag order in social networks issued against María Lourdes Afiuni, a judge who faces criminal proceedings for exercising her functions as a jurist. Afiuni was accused in 2009 of supposed corruption, accomplice to abscond and leave the country unlawfully, abuse of power and criminal conspiracy as a result of the decision she made as a judge of granting parole to businessman Eligio Cedeño, charged with alleged corruption in managing state-regulated dollars.

On June 15, 2013, court 17 on trials of Caracas issued a precautionary measure prohibiting Afiuni from expressing herself in social networks. Simultaneously, the prohibition of declaring to national and international media was ratified. This measure was granted within the framework of the decision granting parole to the judge for health reasons.

The gag order was ratified on July 31st, when "the appeals court dismissed the appeal filed by the defendant-appellant to the prohibition of writing in social networks, considering that *Twitter* and *Facebook* are mass media", attorney Thelma Fernández told the media.

Afiuni remained active on *Twitter* through the account [@Mariafiuni](https://twitter.com/Mariafiuni) while she was deprived of her freedom. In the messages, she recounted her life events and impressions during the legal proceedings and gave opinions on the performance of the Venezuelan justice-dispensing entities.

This is the first formal gag order in social networks issued by a court in Venezuela. Also, in the past 2 years, judicial institutions have investigated and processed several citizens for issuing opinions in social networks.

The public authorities in Venezuela have been very attentive and had followed closely the actions of citizens through the social networks, and on several opportunities have expressed their disgust at the comments and opinions issued on platforms such as Twitter.

After the April presidential elections, Luisa Ortega Díaz, the attorney general of the republic, announced that her office shall investigate the alleged messages inciting to violence sent by users of social networks, within the framework of the street protests which happened after the results of the presidential elections. So far, no results are known regarding any concrete measure taken resulting from these cases.

This announcement goes hand in hand with the actions taken by judicial institutions against the media and journalists to attempt to shut them up and intimidate the voices that are not to the liking of the nation's authorities. This puts in jeopardy the plurality and diversity of opinions that enrich and strengthen a democratic society.