



**International
Federation
of Journalists**

JIM BOUMELHA
President

AIDAN WHITE
General Secretary

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Dear Mr. Ambassador,

I write to you on behalf of the International Federation of Journalists, representing over 600,000 journalists worldwide, to express our concern about the recent decision by the government to close down Radio Caracas Televisión (RCTV), the oldest and most important broadcaster in your country, by not renewing its broadcasting concession for what are essentially political reasons.

This decision was especially troubling because it was done by Presidential decree that did not allow the station any legal recourse to contest the decision. Earlier this month at our World Congress in Moscow, the IFJ's members condemned the systematic attacks by the current government on freedom of expression and the elimination of RCTV as a free and independent television channel.

We are also aware that under President Hugo Chávez Frías' government, our Venezuelan colleagues have faced numerous challenges: verbal and physical attacks, the shut down of sources of information and legal actions against journalists. The government has also enacted the Law of Social Responsibility in Radio and Television and the reform of the Penal Code-- laws that limit freedom of expression and the right to be informed.

The IFJ believes that punishing broadcasters for editorial independence only hurts freedom of expression and the spectrum of political views that is necessary in democratic society.

Today, on National Journalists' Day in Venezuela, we are calling on you to urge President Chávez to revoke this measure taken against Radio Caracas Televisión and to guarantee that our Venezuelan colleagues can freely exercise their profession.

Kind regards,

Aidan White
General Secretary