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Daily News



RCTV CEO ASKS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TO ADVOCATE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN VENEZUELA

Marcel Granier, CEO of RCTV, a TV channel the broadcasting license of which the Venezuelan Government refuses to renew, Monday asked for solidarity from the European Parliament vis-à-vis the violations of freedom of expression taking place in the country.

Granier, together with some leaders of opposition Primero Justicia party, met on April 23-24 with representatives of the conservative European Popular Party, Socialist Party and Green Party to the European Parliament.

In a news conference, he told reporters that "the threat of closure (the TV channel is facing) because of President Hugo Chávez' decision is an overwhelming violation of article 13, Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, under which discrimination, reward and punishment of reporters and media outlets because of their editorial stances are prohibited," Efe reported.

Further, he stressed that parallel to non-renewal of RCTV broadcasting license, up to 148 reporters of RCTV have been attacked by "government-supported gangs," and there have been two failed attempts at setting RCTV headquarters on fire. According to Granier, these actions are leading to the installation in Venezuela of a "self-censorship regime" among the media.

Granier, who branded RCTV as an "independent" and "tolerant" media outlet, said the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Chilean Parliament have voiced deep concern about RCTV case, but Chávez has disregarded their calls.

When asked whether he would like the European Parliament to take a stance similar to that of IACHR and the Chilean Parliament, he replied: "It would be very useful that everyone believing in democracy, human rights and freedom of expression makes a statement."

On Wednesday, Granier is visiting Brussels, where he is scheduled to meet with representatives of the European Commission, the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and members of non-governmental organization Reporters Without Borders.

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