

# THREATS TO PRESS FREEDOM VENEZUELA

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Gustavo Azócar was detained for talking about corruption in his website:  
<http://www.gustavoazocar.com/>

## Nov 10, 2009. IAPA - REPORTS SERIOUS DETERIORATION OF PRESS FREEDOM IN VENEZUELA

The 65th General Assembly of the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA) denounced on Tuesday in Buenos Aires that freedom of expression "keeps deteriorating" in Venezuela and that "attacks on journalists and independent newspapers, radio and TV stations have worsened."

It also "denounces and rejects charges against journalist Rafael Poleo, editor of 'El Nuevo País' newspaper and 'Zeta' magazine, and Guillermo Zuloaga, the president of private TV news station Globovisión, as well as the imprisonment of journalist Gustavo Azócar, **the exile of journalist Patricia Poleo and the repeated threats and political persecution against journalists and media outlets.**"

[http://english.cluniversal.com/2009/11/10/en\\_pol\\_esp\\_iapa-reports-serious\\_10A3032491.shtml](http://english.cluniversal.com/2009/11/10/en_pol_esp_iapa-reports-serious_10A3032491.shtml)

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Below a few of the Venezuelan government attacks to journalists and media during 2009 4



**The final resolution of the press group assembly "reports that the laws enacted by President Hugo Chávez, which violate democratic principles and are also contrary to international laws, violate human rights, freedom of expression and access to information," DPA reported.**

## Nov 11, 2009. IAPA - LAWS IN LATIN AMERICA SEEK TO WEAKEN THE MEDIA

Enrique Santos Calderón, the president of the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA), warned on Monday against an emerging legal system in the Latin American region, "whose grassroots, democratic framework is just a pretext to pass laws intended to weaken the media."

Santos, of Bogotá's daily newspaper El Tiempo, said that the regulations approved in Venezuela and a bill presently discussed in Ecuador "set the guidelines of some governments which, on the pretext of ordering the radio spectrum and

protecting citizens from press abuses, **what they really mean is to have judicial instruments to silence the press, accompanied by discrediting campaigns,**" AP quoted.

However, although "the press in the region is being harassed by governments," Santos voiced satisfaction for the IAPA's advocacy of freedom of expression.

"We have been to each country where freedom of expression is endangered. We have held many seminars," he said at the

opening session of the 65th IAPA General Meeting, in presenting his management report as president of the hemispheric association of press editors.

"We can say that the IAPA keeps active and strong, and it is paid much heed wherever is needed."

[http://english.cluniversal.com/2009/11/09/en\\_pol\\_esp\\_iapa-laws-in-latin\\_09A3027531.shtml](http://english.cluniversal.com/2009/11/09/en_pol_esp_iapa-laws-in-latin_09A3027531.shtml)



Rosalba Guerra and Patricia Poleo—Caracas, Venezuela May, 2005—Protest against the Venezuelan Government.

"the exile of journalist Patricia Poleo and the repeated threats and political persecution against journalists and media outlets."

## Nov 09, 2009 IAPA - VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT CONTROLS OVER 700 MEDIA OUTLETS

The Venezuelan Press Block (BPV) denounced during an IAPA meeting the increasing government control over the media in Venezuela. President of the BPV David Natera said that **Hugo Chávez's government is creating new media to "impose its reality" on citizens.**

The government of President Hugo Chávez has control over 238 radio stations, 28 TV stations, 340 newspapers, weekly publications and magazines and 125 websites. Overall, President Chávez has 731 mass media that, apart from the nationwide mandatory radio and TV broadcasts, strengthen the information hegemony, which is one of the goals of the Venezuelan government, and allow

it to spread its "communist ideology."

This complaint was made by David Natera, the President of the Venezuelan Press Block (BPV), when he presented a report about the situation of freedom of speech in Venezuela during the 65th General Assembly of the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA), held last weekend in Buenos Aires (Argentina).

"Venezuela is living under a serious and continuing confrontation between the reality of the country, the reality of the citizens and what President Chávez manipulates and tries to pose as true," Natera said. **Reference was made to the government's decision to create so many media and harass the critical press.**

The editor accused **President Chávez of leading a "regime" that "is destroying human and economic heritage, the conservation of natural and industrial resources, work values and honesty in the administration of state funds."** The editor of Venezuelan newspaper El Correo del Caroní warned that the government is not only managing the media it owns but it is trying to "control more media."

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[http://  
english.eluniversal.com/2009/11/09/  
en\\_pol\\_art\\_venezuelan-  
governmen\\_09A3025371.shtml](http://english.eluniversal.com/2009/11/09/en_pol_art_venezuelan_governmen_09A3025371.shtml)

There is growing awareness that democracy is violated in Venezuela; of human rights abuses; that the president retains all public powers and changes laws on a whim. Venezuela is a pressure cooker and should we not release the exhaust valve, the cooker will end up bursting. Everything will depend on the steps to be taken by Chávez as part of his foreign policy, which most of the time goes to the extent of delusions of grandeur.

**Fernando Gerbasi, expert in foreign affairs**

# REPORT –IAPA—VENEZUELA MARCH 2008

## VENEZUELA

Report to the Midyear Meeting

Caracas, Venezuela

March 28 - 30, 2008

### Acts of Judicial Terrorism against journalist

Through lawsuits, prosecution and persecution — have aroused even more anger and made professionals even more determined to uphold their commitment to inform, investigate and denounce. On November 4, 2005, journalist Patricia Poleo was ordered to be taken into custody for allegedly “masterminding” the killing of a prosecutor. Under the charges Poleo would have been forced to remain in jail while the case was under investigation. She was convinced by her friends and colleagues to leave the country to escape torture, pressures and abuses.

### Harassment to journalists by the Venezuelan President.

On December 5, President Chávez called Hernán Lugo García, a reporter for El Nacional newspaper, “excrement” for his article on Chávez’s defeat in the referendum.

Pro-government activists insulted journalist Rafael Fuenmayor of Globovisión and accused him of “destabilizing the Chavez government” because he asked questions that displeased the pro-government group that took over the headquarters of the Caracas archdiocese last February 27.

### Harassment to the media and their employees by pro-government forces

The National Union of Press Workers issued a statement on February 28, 2008 expressing its “condemnation and rejection of the flagrant harassment of media outlets and their employees by pro-government forces.” Journalists Beatriz Adrián and Diana Carolina Ruiz of Globovisión and Francia Sánchez of RCTV International were assaulted on October 16, 2007, while covering a session of the National Assembly at the Teresa Carreño Theater. On November 11, 2007, reporter Jorge Eliécer Patiño and photographer Luis Barrios of the newspaper Diario de los Llanos in the state of Barinas were beaten by police while covering a demonstration at a university.

### Government supporters denying the truth

The government’s supporters — some out of conviction, others for convenience — devote themselves to denying the truth, concealing actual events, and attempting to break the ethical resistance of honest

journalists and media outlets, in order to keep unfiltered news from reaching the people and to keep the people from realizing the historical failure of totalitarianism.

### Harassment to TV stations

The harassment against Globovisión still going on. We continue to see court cases and rulings, administrative penalties pursued by the regime, and harassment targeting the Globovisión news channel.

### Refuse to disclose information to media outlets not under his control.

The Chávez administration has repeatedly refused to disclose information to media outlets not under his control. Independent journalists are also denied access to government sources and events controlled by government entities.

### The government controls more than 85% of the TV stations

The government now controls 85% of all television stations, 3,000 community radio stations, and 100 Web sites, according to a study directed by Adolfo Herrera, dean of the School of Communications at the Central University of Venezuela.

### Venezuelan Radio Broadcast - takeover by the government

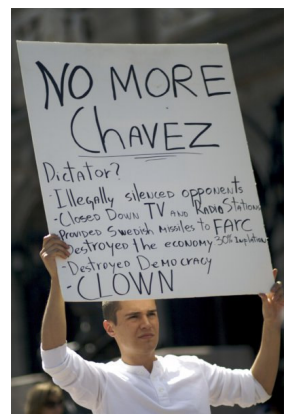
Venezuelan Radio Broadcast. Communications specialists said in February that “the government’s takeover of the media to further its authoritarian political aims, the reduction of space for expressing a variety of ideas, and multiple restrictions on free speech are just some of the steps taken by the executive branch in the field of communications during the first nine years of the rule of Hugo Chávez.”

### Close down a TV station—RCTV

On May 27, 2007 the government shut down RCTV television and its broadcasting equipment seized by the government. This TV station was the country’s longest-running and most widely viewed channel. This closure was opposed by the vast majority of the Venezuelan people.

<http://mercury.websitewelcome.com/~sipiapa/informe.php?id=300&idioma=us&asamblea=5>

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Boston, Sept 4th, 2009—Protest around the world



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## Mission Statement:

www.vdebate.org: works to strengthen Venezuelan Democracy. Our organization will work with other organizations and volunteer experts, in defense of Venezuelan Human, Political, and Civil Rights. www.vdebate.org is not affiliated to any political party.



## BELOW A FEW OF THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT ATTACKS TO JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA DURING 2009



The majority of the journalists were beaten on the head. (Cadena Capriles/Jesús Gil)

### APRIL

Pro-government group attacked the Newspaper “El Carabobeño” from the city of Valencia. The city mayor says that the attack was due to the newspaper’s criticism against the Government.

### MAY

The house of the President of the TV Station Globovision Guillermo Zuloaga, was raided.

Pro-government group attacked again “El Carabobeño” and “Notitarde”

### JUNE

Pro-government group attacked again “El Carabobeño” and “Notitarde”

The Venezuelan Government starts a lawsuit

and prosecution against Patricia Poleo’s father, Rafael Poleo, editor of “El Nuevo Pais”.

### JULY

Pro-government group attacked again “El Carabobeño” and “Notitarde”

Government agency CONATEL, a telecom regulator, prohibits to radio and TV channels to broadcast ads paid by CEDICE (Center for the Dissemination of Economic Knowledge, according to its Spanish acronym) in defense of private property.

Supreme Court’s judge Alicia Torres denounced that she was being pressured to indict Guillermo Zuloaga. She was removed from office.

Journalist Gustavo Azocar was detained because he denounced corruption in his website.

CONATEL closed 34 radio stations.

### AUGUST

IAPA, SIP, OAS and UN make public statements against the closing of 34 radio stations, declaring to be “worry about freedom of the press in Venezuela.”

Pro-government group attacked 13 journalist of newspaper “Ultimas Noticias”

because they were protesting a the New Education Law.

On August 3, a Pro-government group led by Lina Ron, a revolutionary pro-Chavez icon, attacked the building of the TV station Globovision Station with 40 motor bikers carrying guns, grenades, and tear gas. Two people were injured and numerous workers severely affected.

### SEPTEMBER

CONATEL open Lawsuit # 6 against Globovisión.

IAPA holds emergency meeting in Caracas to discuss the increasing incidents against Press Freedom.

### OCTOBER

“El Carabobeño” journalist, Francisco “Pancho” Pérez was indicted for writing articles criticizing Valencia’s Mayor.

### NOVEMBER

IAPA declare 2009 the worst year in Venezuela against Press Freedom, 107 recorded attacks to the media and Journalists.