

# *Associated Press sues White House staff over access restrictions*

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Washington, February 23 (RHC)-- The Associated Press, one of the world's oldest news agencies, has filed a lawsuit against three senior White House officials, accusing them of violating press freedoms by barring its reporters from covering President Donald Trump's activities.

The White House imposed restrictions on AP after it refused to use the term 'Gulf of America' instead of 'Gulf of Mexico.'

The complaint was submitted on Friday to the U.S. District Court in Washington, DC. The news agency, whose journalists have been part of the presidential press pool for over a century, said that it was blocked

from press events at the White House and Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence, as well as from traveling on Air Force One.

"The press and all people in the United States have the right to choose their own words and not be retaliated against by the government," AP said in its lawsuit, which names White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles, Deputy Chief of Staff Taylor Budowich, and press secretary Karoline Leavitt as defendants.

"This targeted attack on the AP's editorial independence and ability to gather and report the news strikes at the very core of the First Amendment. This court should remedy it immediately," the lawsuit said.

On January 20th, President Donald Trump issued an executive order renaming the Gulf of Mexico the 'Gulf of America.' AP refused to revise its style guide, stating that it would continue to use the internationally recognized name.

"As a global news agency that disseminates news around the world, the AP must ensure that place names and geography are easily recognizable to all audiences," the agency said in a statement last month.

The White House responded by telling AP's presidential correspondent Zeke Miller that the news organization would be barred from certain press areas unless it complied with Trump's order.

Budowich later announced on X that AP would be indefinitely barred from the Oval Office and Air Force One. In an email to AP, Wiles argued that the outlet had "misused" its influence to promote a "divisive and partisan agenda."

"We're going to ensure that truth and accuracy are present at the White House every single day," Leavitt has said.

Trump has often accused media organizations of bias and spreading "fake news" about him and his policies. "We're going to keep them out until such time as they agree that it's the Gulf of America," he told reporters earlier this week.

Several media organizations, including CNN, Fox News, The New York Times, and The Washington Post, have signed a letter in support of AP, urging the White House to lift the restrictions.

[ SOURCE: RUSSIA TODAY / RT ]

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