

Honduras Takes Opposition TV Channel and 21 Others Off the Air



Tegucigalpa, May 23 (RHC)-- Honduras' National Commission of Telecommunications (Conatel) said on Sunday that it will be taking 21 TV channels off the air, allegedly because they failed to renew their licenses.

Opposition channel Globo TV condemned the decision, calling it a reprisal for constantly criticizing the government in its TV shows -- and a violation of freedom of expression.

Soraya Solabarrieta, head of the Association of Telecommunications Firms, said that the decision was ambiguous: "On the one hand, the government ordered technicians to take off the air all the operators who were allegedly operating without license," she said. "On the other hand, it gave them 10 days to present their plea along with a request to renew the license."

One of Globo's top journalists, David Romero, known for exposing corruption at the Honduran Institute of Social Security, was sentenced to a 10-year prison sentence earlier this year. He was accused of defamation against Sonia Galvez Ferarri, wife of joint attorney Rigoberto Cuellar.

Romero faced the charge shortly after he helped to reveal the major corruption scandal known as “La Linea,” which involved many state officials, including current President Juan Orlando Hernandez.

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