

Argentinean President Pushes Ahead with Controversial Media Reform



Buenos Aires, January 5 (RHC)-- Despite mass protests against plans to change Argentina's media law aimed at discouraging monopolies, President Mauricio Macri on Monday reformed the measure by emergency decree, removing the cap on the number of media outlets one company can control.

The president also merged two media regulatory bodies into one, run by a Macri ally, in an attempt to drive out officials appointed by the former president, Cristina Fernandez. The body will have the power to grant licenses to media companies.

Argentina's media law was originally passed in 2009 with overwhelming support from Congress, setting off a battle between Fernandez and the country's biggest media conglomerate, Clarin.

By creating a single liberal market for television, internet and telephone companies to compete, Macri said he aims to prevent "inefficiency and distortion, as well as juridical insecurity," reported Pagina Doce.

Under the modified law, companies can expand freely, with the ability to sell and buy licenses for "those that meet acceptable conditions" without a cap on their reach and later expiration dates. They can also

change hands more easily, with little regulation.

Macri also formed a commission to discuss further reforms. In the meantime, though, the single media body will be dominated by members from the executive. The decrees allows the executive to remove members of the body, Enacom, “directly and without declaring a reason,” reported AFP.

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