

Venezuela's "Guaido Threat": Safeguarding Telesur Is Our Obligation, Academics and Intellectuals

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Attacks on Venezuelan TV station Telesur are an example of the "arrogance of the powerful" trying to stop people from hearing the truth, campaigners warned today.

Intellectuals and academics from across Latin America penned an open letter in support of the Caracas-based media organisation, which has been threatened with closure by hapless Venezuelan opposition figure Juan Guaido.

They branded him a "lackey of the empire" after he said that he planned to block Telesur's TV signal, claiming without evidence that it supported terrorists.

Mr Guaido — who was recently deposed as speaker of the National Assembly — is planning to set up a parallel news outlet "following dictates from Washington," the signatories warned.

As exposed in a freedom-of-information request by the Morning Star last year, the British government has been funnelling money into opposition media organisations and "yellow unions" in a bid to undermine the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro.

It continues a tradition in the region, with declassified papers revealing that the Foreign Office had been paying Reuters for Latin American news reporting via a front company in the late 1960s.

The letter to Telesur president Patricia Villegas said that the latest attempt to silence it "only reaffirm the certainty of the value of this station in the battle of the peoples for their right to truth."

"Only through Telesur have we been able to learn about the merciless and lethal action of capitalism, the strength of the resistance of leaders and popular movements and the events that have opened up real gaps in imperial domination that have marked the history of our peoples," the letter stated.

But it warned that the "arrogance of the powerful" does not support transparency and the exposure of the "transnationals and their dirty dealings" along with the spotlight being shone on the manipulation of the media.

Because of this it is essential that the platform, one of the greatest achievements of former Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, is not silenced, the signatories said.

They recalled the December 2004 meeting which established the Network of Intellectuals, Artists and Social Movements in Defence of Humanity and issued the “Caracas call” to “support the establishment of a television station of the South and independent television and radio media at the service of the interests of our peoples.”

“Safeguarding Telesur, its philosophy, its ideals and its work is not just a position, it is also our obligation,” the letter said.

“Telesur is a child of the battle of ideas and of the fathers of this new continental era; commanders Fidel Castro Ruz and Hugo Chavez Frias. We will win, without a doubt.”

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