

Press Release

Descripción

Caracas, May 7th 2024

To the public opinion

Armando.info rejects in the most categorical manner the accusations launched today by Tarek William Saab, the Attorney General appointed in 2017 by the unlawful Chavista Constituent Assembly, against two of our partner-directors, journalists Roberto Deniz and Ewald Scharfenberg, whom he intends to involve in the corruption scandal known as Pdvsa-Cripto.

On May 3rd **Armando.info** made public its intentions to launch on US public television a documentary, produced in conjunction with the *Frontline* program, which tells the story of the Alex Saab case. This case already led to the exile in 2018 of four of our journalists.

Four years in the making, the documentary "A Dangerous Assignment: Uncovering Corruption in Maduro's Venezuela" ("Una pauta peligrosa: Descubriendo la corrupción en la Venezuela de Maduro") presents new revelations about Alex Saab's business dealings and connections. Our partner in the project, *Frontline*, is the longest-running and most prestigious investigative documentary series on U.S. television, governed - like **Armando.info** - by the highest journalistic values, and recent winner of the Academy Award in the "Best Documentary" category. The documentary will be broadcast starting May 14th on PBS, the public television network in the United States.

Alex Saab is Nicolás Maduro's favorite contractor and alleged frontman who, after returning to Venezuela last December as result of a prisoner exchange agreed between Washington and Caracas, has gained even more power in Maduro's entourage. The accusations fabricated by Tarek William Saab from the Public Prosecutor's Office, a body he has placed at the service of the Executive Branch, only ratify the importance of Alex Saab in the corrupt environment of Nicolás Maduro and constitute evidence of a new and desperate attempt on his part to prevent the circulation of relevant information about the Colombian-born merchant.

This is undoubtedly a very clumsy and improvised maneuver that the regime has concocted to try to discredit **Armando.info**, to intimidate its journalists in order to prevent the dissemination of the documentary and, in short, to silence our media, an independent voice that is about to celebrate its tenth anniversary uncovering the biggest corruption scandals of the regime.

The assertions of Prosecutor Tarek William Saab are not only laughable, but implausible. Long before his office denounced the existence of this scheme, **Armando.info** had already denounced, with evidence of verified facts, how state-run

PDVSA, in an effort to evade the sanctions imposed by the United States, had handed over to several

intermediaries close to the government the commercialization of oil belonging to all Venezuelans.

We have also revealed, for at least seven years, the shady business dealings and connections of Samark López with high-ranking officials of the self-styled “bolivarian revolution”, which makes even more absurd the accusation of the Attorney General's Office, based on an alleged “confession” of López himself, alleged frontman and accomplice of the arrested and indicted Tareck El Aissami.

In the hours that have passed since Prosecutor Tarek William Saab pronounced his defamatory words in a press conference broadcast on TV, the international civil society and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have surrounded the informative work of **Armando.Info**. So have colleagues and free press media from all over the hemisphere. We are grateful for these expressions of support, which in these times is crucial and decisive to overcome the disinformation and stigmatization campaigns against the exercise of independent journalism and, in this case, against **Armando.info**.

The strategy of criminalizing the practice of journalism, a trademark of Nicolás Maduro's regime, has recently reached heights never seen before in Venezuela's modern history. But **Armando.info** will not cease in its effort to continue doing investigative journalism, with international standards and without responding to particular interests, to inform its users and followers on issues of obvious collective and historical interest.

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