

**Question for written answer E-002141/2021  
to the Council**

Rule 138

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Subject: Freedom of expression in Venezuela: the *El Nacional* ruling

Freedom of the press is an indispensable fundamental right in any full democracy. The recent ruling against the Venezuelan newspaper *El Nacional*, debated by many in the international arena who believe it did not receive a fair trial, is yet another example of the authoritarian practices of Nicolás Maduro's dictatorship, which is progressing in its curtailment of the freedoms of the Venezuelan people.

In a case brought by the then President of the National Assembly, Diosdado Cabello, the editor of *El Nacional* has been fined USD 13 366 800 for printing details of an interview published by the Spanish daily *ABC* with an associate of Cabello who alleged he was involved in illegal activities.

This is the culmination of a string of actions persecuting journalists, managers and shareholders throughout Venezuela's 77-year media history.

In view of the above:

1. How does the Council view this fresh attack on press freedom?
2. Is it considering extending the current sanctions to the Maduro regime and to officials involved in further violations of fundamental rights such as those described above?