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Freedom of Speech in Venezuela Example

Freedom of Speech is gladly something that we can practice in the United States, but unfortunately, other countries, even though they have the right to express freely what they want, have people that would punish them for their expression, a country that does that is Venezuela.

It is known world-wide that Venezuela is currently facing a social, economic and political crisis, and for the average Venezuelan it's harder to express themselves when they are going to suffer consequences just to practice their own right. The first example would be with the newspaper El Nacional, according to the CSMonitor, El Nacional is the last independent newspaper in Venezuela, and it could be considered as the opposition newspaper. Unfortunately, it is harder to publish their stories because they do not have any paper to print it. The paper in Venezuela is monopolized by the state, and it would be obvious not to give paper to the opposition newspaper. In addition, printing equipment, and ink are scarce, which has as result the reduction of the circulation and even the number of pages in the newspaper.

To make things worse for El Nacional, in 2015 it was sued by Diosdado Cabello, head of Venezuelas powerful Constituent Assembly, after El Nacional re-published an article by the Spanish Newspaper ABC reporting that

Cabello was under investigation for drug trafficking by the US authorities. While pro-government newspapers like Ultimas Noticias operate freely in Venezuela, El Nacional often finds itself in the crosshairs of Mr. Maduro's ruling Socialist party (CSMonitor).

Internet has a similar story, the content that you are allowed to see is very censored. President Maduro and his government have the power to block any website, and of course they take the opportunity to do it. Websites like CNN.com, Dollartoday, InfoBAE, and even the New York Times are banned. As internet was banned, citizens started to use SMS messages to send any kind of information about the protests, or something new that was happening with the government. President Maduro found out, and they started an investigation against the phone company Movistar, claiming that they were helping the opposition against the government. Currently, if you want to get in any website that criticizes the Venezuelan government you need to access it through a proxy, just like in China (The Register).

Radios and television network are suffering too. The president can give national broadcast with his messages, and all the channels and radios must broadcast it. This happens a few times per week. Also, there are many television networks that years before have criticized the government, and when their permits were expired, the government decided not to renew their permits because they were against the republic.

At the moment, close to 200 protesters have been murdered in Venezuela, and thousands have been arrested, punished or hurt in any way, by the government. The Journalist Nicholas Casey from the New York Times cannot enter to Venezuela because he wrote several articles about the crisis and the protests, and the Venezuelan government did not like it (New York Times). In the article 57 and 58 of the Constitution of Venezuela it is established that any person has freedom of speech, and can express freely their thoughts, ideas or opinions, but that is not the reality of Venezuela