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| AMR 51/9251/2025 - USA - Date: 10 April 2025 |
| URGENT ACTION |  | UA 037/25 |
| Protect freedom of press |
| USA |

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is an independent U.S. government agency authorized and overseen by Congress to implement and enforce U.S. communication laws. Since President Trump appointed Brendan Carr as FCC Chairman, the FCC has weaponized routine procedures – such as threatening license revocation and launching investigations – against independent media outlets that President Trump has repeatedly attacked in public to discredit and silence. The FCC has used its regulatory power to undermine freedom of the press. Call on the FCC to maintain its independence and respect and protect the human right to freedom of expression.

According to the Federal Communications Commission’s («FCC») website, the FCC «regulates interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. An independent U.S. government agency overseen by Congress, the Commission is the federal agency responsible for implementing and enforcing America’s communications law and regulations».

The FCC is meant to be a regulatory, independent agency separate from the executive’s agenda. Instead, it appears to be using its regulatory power invested by Congress to enact a specific political agenda against media outlets and journalists, particularly those that President Trump has publicly criticised and targeted.

* On 18 February 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14215, «Ensuring Accountability for All Agencies» which aims at making all agencies, including independent regulatory agencies that by law are accountable to Congress, like the FCC, to be instead accountable to the president. The following is a list of examples, demonstrating a concerning and growing trend:
* On 21 January 2025 Chairman Carr announced the termination of DEI initiatives within the FCC following Trump’s executive orders terminating all DEI efforts in the federal government.
* On 22 January 2025 the FCC re-opened a complaint and investigation into CBS for supposed «news distortion» regarding a Kamala Harris interview after the complaint had recently been dismissed on 16 January 2025 (four days prior to President Trump’s inauguration). In October 2024, President Trump filed a lawsuit against CBS over a «60 Minutes» interview that it had aired with then-Vice President Kamala Harris. Trump claimed that CBS engaged in «unlawful acts of election and voter interference».
* On 29 January 2025 Chairman Carr announced an investigation into National Public Radio («NPR») and Public Broadcasting Service («PBS») for allegedly violating commercial laws as non-commercial educational broadcast stations. The previous year, President Trump called NPR a «total scam» to be de-funded by the government. NPR and PBS receive funding appropriation through Congress since they pro-vide critical resources for communicating with marginalized and rural communities. As such, they are prohibited from airing advertisements.
* On 11 February 2025 Chairman Carr sought to enforce the termination of DEI initiatives upon private entities as a form of FCC regulation. Chairman Carr opened an investigation into two big telecommunication companies, Comcast and NBC Universal, accusing them of violating FCC and civil rights laws. The targeting of these private entities is to deliberately send a chilling effect across the industry to «aid the Commission’s broader efforts to root out invidious forms of DEI discrimination across all of the sectors the FCC regulates».
* On 27 February 2025 Chairman Carr announced the FCC would be investigating Verizon for its hiring practices related to DEI while it is awaiting FCC’s approval to purchase and merge with telecommunication company Frontier.

These incidents demonstrate concerning examples of the U.S. government’s weaponization of independent agencies to suppress and control the media, creating a chilling effect on the freedom of the press. These examples also specifically cite Trump’s executive orders as their legal framework despite being an «independent U.S. government agency overseen by Congress».

States have a duty to protect journalists and not to persecute them in an effort to control the free flow of information. A free media is not only beneficial, but necessary in a free society. By exposing human rights abuses and uplifting the voices of marginalized communities, the media can at its best encourage the proper application of justice and stimulate debates that can defuse situations that might otherwise lead to conflict. The FCC must urgently maintain its independence from the administration to ensure the continued freedom of the press in the U.S.

TAKE ACTION

* Write an appeal in your own words or use the **model letter** on **page 2**.
* Please take action before **14 July** 2025.
* Preferred language: **English**. You can also write in your own language.
* **INFO POSTAGE**: Post delivery is possible to almost all countries. Please check at the Swiss Post whether letters are currently being delivered to the destination country.
If not, please send by email, fax or social media and/or via the embassy with the request for forwarding to the named person. Thank you !

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| APPEALS TO | COPIES TO |
| Chairman Brendan Carr Federal Communications Commission (FCC)45 L Street NE Washington, DC 20554USAEmail: brendan.carr@fcc.govWebsite: [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov) | Botschaft der Vereinigten Staaten von AmerikaSulgeneckstrasse 19, 3007 BernFax: 031 357 73 20E-Mail: bernpa@state.gov ; bern-protocol@state.gov Twitter/X: /USEmbassyBernFB: /USBotschaftBern |
| ⭢ **Social media guidance** see online: [amnesty.ch](https://www.amnesty.ch) 🔍**UA 037/25** |

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Chairman Brendan Carr
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554
USA

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To Chairman Carr,

**The FCC has a responsibility to respect and protect the human right to freedom of expression, including freedom of the press.** Congress established the FCC as an independent commission held accountable to the legislative branch with limited authority to prevent interference with the right to freedom of expression. However, recently, the FCC has taken actions that appear to be politically motivated to target certain media organizations the President has attacked, undermining the free press.

First, in early 2025, the FCC reopened a dismissed complaint against the outlet CBS News for allegations regarding its editing choices of its interview with former Vice President, and then-presidential candidate, Kamala Harris. This case follows a lawsuit by President Trump accusing CBS of election interference.

Subsequently, the FCC launched an investigation into independent public media stations National Public Radio («NPR») and Public Broadcasting Service («PBS»), for allegedly violating their non-commercial terms. President Trump has called for NPR to be defunded, and on 29 January 2025, you also questioned why Congress should continue their funding. NPR and PBS provide crucial communication resources, including to rural and marginalized communities.

Lastly, the FCC's demand that private media organizations eliminate their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs for the retention and approval of licenses and/or business deals, sets a dangerous precedent where the FCC leverages licensing and other decisions to interfere in independent media companies’ operations, impacting their right to freedom of expression. This is clear overreach by the FCC.

These actions reflect a dangerous misuse of government authority to intimidate media outlets that report on the executive and risk creating a chilling effect on all independent media. Independent journalism is essential to hold governments accountable, and the FCC is undermining press freedom by targeting them.

**We call on the FCC to reaffirm its commitment to independence and service to the public by:**

* **Protecting and respecting the human right to freedom of expression, including free press and closing politically motivated investigations that weaponize FCC authority.**
* **Conduct investigations with transparency, impartiality and independence.**
* **Ending interference with the independence of media outlets and their internal DEI programs.**

Sincerely,

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**Copie**

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