

Global media body to ULFA: withdraw threat to channel

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Wednesday asked the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) to withdraw its threats to a private satellite channel in Assam.

Guwahati-based North East Television (NETV), the only private TV channel in India's northeast, last month reported that the state government had paid money to buy peace with ULFA for the smooth conduct of the National Games Feb 9-18. This week ULFA has withdrawn its call to boycott the games.

According to NETV, the ULFA told its station director Manoranjana Singh to prove allegations that the group was working with the government or stop broadcasting and leave Assam or 'face dire consequences'.

After protests from the IFJ, ULFA leaders said they did not mean to threaten NETV but had thrown down a challenge to the channel to prove its allegations.

The TV channel is standing by its story.

The IFJ has now urged the militants to stop making threats and instead take its complaints to industry regulators, an INEP report said.

'If there is a genuine complaint it can be dealt with through normal channels of accountability,' IFJ general secretary Aidan White was quoted as saying. 'What is not acceptable is to try to bully media with threats of violence.'

The IFJ, which represents over 500,000 media persons in more than 100 countries, is the world's biggest journalists' organisation.

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