

# Thaksin's TV channel gagged

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Voice TV announced yesterday it will seek an Administrative Court injunction against a 15-day National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) suspension order and have threatened to sue the broadcasting watchdog for over 100 million baht in compensation.

Saying that the broadcaster had aired content causing confusion and inciting divisions, the NBTC board yesterday suspended the operating licence of Voice TV, a digital TV station that belongs to the Shinawatra family, for 15 days, effective from today, said Lt Gen Perapong Manakit, a member of the NBTC subcommittee governing TV content and programming.

The NBTC said it had acted on 34 rule breaches committed by the TV station since 2015 and had issued several warnings and suspensions during that time.

Cited in this latest order was prohibited content broadcast in its *Tonight Thailand* show on Dec 16, last year, and its *Breaking News* programme on Jan 21, 28, 29 and Feb 4, Lt Gen Perapong said, adding that the suspension was intended to allow Voice TV time to improve its content.

If it still continues to broadcast prohibited content once it returns to air, the NBTC will consider tougher action against it, according to Lt Gen Perapong.

He said the suspension was in response to repeated offences and insisted that the NBTC had acted lawfully without any political interference.

He said the administrative order was issued under sections 16, 37, and 64 of the Broadcasting Act. Voice TV technically has 30 days to file an appeal with the Central Administrative Court against the suspension order.

Voice TV chief executive officer Makin Petplai said yesterday the TV station will lodge a case with the Central Administrative Court to seek a temporary injunction against the order and it is prepared to sue the NBTC for more than 100 million baht in damages.

"Voice TV has been treated unfairly several times and it is now time to defend ourselves via legal channels so the NBTC will subsequently exercise its power in line with the rule of law and respect for the freedom of the media", Mr Makin said.