

Press freedom tested in South Korea

by UPI

SEOUL -- Unionized employees of a South Korean broadcaster prevented government prosecutors from raiding their workplace Wednesday by blocking the entrance.

The prosecutors were seeking unedited interviews and other material that was used in making a controversial documentary aired last year about the South Korean government's decision to resume U.S. beef imports, the Yonhap News Agency reports.

The South Korean Agriculture Ministry has accused four producers and two writers at MBC, one of the country's largest broadcasters, of distorting facts and exaggerating the threat of mad cow disease associated with U.S. beef.

The documentary, "PD Notebook," suggested that anyone who consumed U.S. beef could contact the human form of mad cow disease.

Prosecutors and investigators presented warrants to detain five members of PD Notebook's production staff, including producers and writers.

MBC has called the action "media suppression" and "anti-democratic."

"We will not yield to such attempts to suppress the freedom of the press," a company release said.

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