



The Hague, 29 September 2011

Mr. Frank La Rue
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and the protection
of the right to freedom of opinion and expression
United Nations
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 12
Switzerland

Dear Sir,

This letter is written in support of the letter sent to you by the American Statistical Association (ASA) on 11 August 2011 in which your attention was drawn to the continuing and escalating attacks by Argentine authorities against a group of statisticians and allied professionals contrary to international law.

The International Statistical Institute (ISI) is an international society of professional statisticians in all disciplines of statistics. It was founded in 1885 but its origins go back to the first international meeting of statisticians in 1853. The ISI was for a long time in the forefront of international cooperation between government statistical agencies by facilitating collaboration and encouraging uniformity in statistical definitions, methods and practices. That role was later taken over by the United Nations and its specialized institutions in the field of statistics. At present, the main activities of the ISI are to foster communication between statisticians in various disciplines in different parts of the world, to organize international conferences, most notably the biennial ISI World Statistics Congress, to support international promotion and dissemination of research on the theory and practice of statistics, and to support the development of statistics in the developing world. The ISI has about 2,000 individual members in 111 countries.

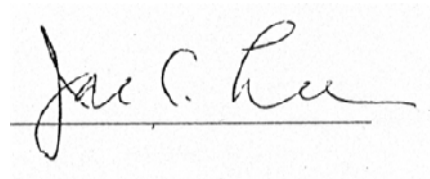
Lately, a number of ISI members and Argentine statisticians have raised their concerns with the ISI about interference by the Government of Argentina in the work of statisticians compiling the Argentine consumer price index (CPI) according to international scientific standards and about serious threats by the Government of punishment when publicly making alternative views of the CPI. Hence, the plight of Argentine statisticians involved in the compilation of the official consumer price index or compiling alternative price indicators was discussed at the recent ISI World Statistics Congress in Dublin in August 2011. These discussions were based on the Declaration of Professional Ethics of statisticians as adopted by the Council of the ISI in 2010, as well as on the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 1994.

All available evidence, as presented by the ASA in its letter to you, shows that the Argentine statisticians and related professionals involved have been subject to harassment by Argentine authorities for expressing their professional views on the Government interference in the compilation of the CPI and for compiling and publishing alternative measurements of the development of consumer prices. More recent information shows that this harassment is continuing. Through these actions, the individuals involved are being prevented from working according to international scientific standards and expressing their views and findings according to their professional ethical principles.

For this reason, the Council of the ISI decided unanimously to support the initiative of the American Statistical Association in appealing to your offices to come to the support of the Argentine statisticians involved. The ISI Executive Committee has also posted on its website a statement in response to concerns about consumer price statistics and the statistical profession in Argentina. This Statement is enclosed with this letter.

The ISI joins the plea made to you by the ASA that you use your good offices to safeguard the statisticians involved and dissuade the Government of Argentina in making and carrying out threats against the individuals and organizations that they have targeted for expressing views and findings on the price developments in Argentina that are contrary to those promoted by the Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jae C. Lee", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and fluid.

Jae C. Lee
President
International Statistical Institute

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