



N O R D I C C O N T E N T P R O T E C T I O N

Landmark ruling by Swedish court hands down prison sentences and record €20m fines to ATN pirate broadcast operation, representing significant victory for beIN MEDIA GROUP and Digitalb Sh.A

STOCKHOLM, PARIS and LONDON – July 4, 2018 – In what has been a highly symbolic and precedential case challenging for the first time in the Swedish courts the piracy of international broadcast rights, record prison sentences and huge fines have been handed down to three perpetrators behind the Advanced TV Network AB (ATN), the operator of the largest Arabic internet pirate television provider (IPTV).

Nordic Content Protection, the anti-piracy industry group for Nordic broadcasters, originally filed the complaint against ATN to Sweden's Intellectual Property Crime at National Operations Department and the International Prosecution Office in 2016. The three defendants were tried for various crimes under Swedish law including Violation of the Decoder Act, Violation of the Copyright Act, Crimes against the Offensive Weapons Act and Crime against the Trademark Act; and received prison terms ranging from one year to two and a half years, subject to appeal. The defendants were also ordered to pay a total of EUR 18.8 million in damages (plus interest and legal costs) to beIN MEDIA GROUP and EUR 1.4 million in damages (plus interest and legal costs) to Digitalb Sh.A, the two legitimate broadcasters who were victims of the piracy.

ATN is based in Malmö, Sweden but also has operations in the United States, Greece, Denmark and Canada. Its activities consist of appropriating the reception and then decoding, packaging and re-transmitting television broadcasts to its own paying clientele. The pirate network has provided its customers with access to illegal pirate streams of over 2,000 channels, with a focus on channels emanating from the Middle East and Turkey. The ruling announced today has dealt a significant blow to ATN's ability to operate moving forwards; and sends a resounding message to pirate broadcast operations around the world that enforcement authorities are applying the full force of the law to extinguish the illegal operations.

As a sign of the inter-connectivity and audacity of the pirate ATN operation, during the course of the FIFA World Cup 2018 in Russia, ATN has restreamed FIFA-owned content from another pirate channel, beoutQ, which emanates from Saudi Arabia. beoutQ has received significant international condemnation for its high-profile piracy of sports content from beIN MEDIA GROUP, distributing that content on the Riyadh-based satellite provider Arabsat. beIN MEDIA GROUP supported Nordic Content Protection in its case against ATN, including providing expert witness testimony. The trial judgment is appealable.

Speaking about the ruling Anders Braf - CEO of Nordic Content Protection said, "We are delighted that the Swedish courts have taken a strong stance against the industrial piracy perpetrated by ATN. Our membership is comprised of the leading broadcasters and content makers in the Nordic region and we all share a common concern about the growing rate and sophistication of broadcast piracy. Not only does it present a serious threat to the funding of the television and film industries, it also threatens the funding of sports and entertainment rights holders. The prison sentences and record fines handed down in this case send a clear message to broadcast pirates – the industry is taking action and we will use the full extent of the law to see offenders brought to justice."

Cameron Andrews, Senior Legal Counsel - Anti Piracy, of beIN MEDIA GROUP said, "This legal case is hugely significant in the fight against illegal broadcast piracy and we sincerely thank Nordic Content Protection for bringing the case. We are witnessing a growing technological sophistication amongst broadcast pirates, as seen by our ongoing battle with beoutQ, and this will only get worse unless all actors across our industry take a stand. Now is the time for collective and concerted action to detain



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and punish those responsible. It is viewers who ultimately suffer as it is the monies paid by companies like beIN MEDIA GROUP to purchase broadcast rights that fund the global sports and entertainment that we all love.”

Mr. Alban Jaho, CEO of Digit-Alb SH.A said, “Today’s ruling sets a clear precedent that those responsible should repay the significant financial losses that are incurred by the rightful owners of the content they are stealing. Piracy is theft – plain and simple – and it is only right that those responsible are punished. In this case, record fines and prison terms have been issued and we hope that this sets an example for other authorities around the world to follow.”

Nordic Content Protection is the leading anti-piracy organization working for the Television Industry in the Nordic countries.

Nordic Content Protection has supported its members for 17 years with a range of specialized solutions covering technical advisory, enforcement actions, criminal case investigations, law enforcement collaboration, claims settlements and court hearing testimonials.

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