

Thamil Creative Writers Association (TCWA)

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April 03, 2013- Uthayan Tamil newspaper and TNA leaders are under attack by Government Goons in the North. We unreservedly and unequivocally condemn the attack on the Uthayan Tamil newspaper office at Kilinochchi on April 03, 2013. This attack comes on the heels of another attack on TNA MPs and party activists holding a meeting at Sritharan MP's Office at Kilinochchi on March 31, 2013 to discuss forthcoming Northern Provincial Council election. This by no means is the first time such brazen attacks have taken place openly and during day light. Although the four MPs escaped unhurt, the attackers inflicted injuries to at least 13 persons and 2 personnel from the Ministerial Security Division (MSD) before walking away from the scene. Among the attackers were army intelligence operatives and CIDs from the Police! Three were caught red-handed, but the Police let them go. These planned attacks could be the beginning of a new wave of violent government campaign to intimidate and disrupt TNA and its supporters. The latest attack on Uthayan Tamil newspaper office at Kilinochchi causing widespread damage to property is one of several earlier attacks on Uthayan editorial staff, reporters and employees. They have faced deaths, threats and intimidation before and continued to do so now.

It is no exaggeration to state the Uthayan newspaper establishment has paid dearly in defence of a free press.

On May 26, 2006 3 employees of the Uthayan newspaper were attacked and killed by unidentified gunmen.

On August 15, 2006 Uthayan newspaper driver S. Baskaran was shot dead at Puttur.

On April 29, 2007 Uthayan Reporter S. Rajavarman was shot dead while returning to the newspaper office.

On June 21, 2007 V. Nimalaraj of the Uthayan editorial board was abducted and there is no news about his disappearance till now.

On May 28, 2011 Kathiravan Uthayan reporter was attacked while in his office. On July 29, 2011 there was an attempt on the life of Uthayan Assistant News editor G. Kugathan. He was warded at the ICU of Jaffna hospital for 3 days fighting for his dear life.

On February 7, 2013 S. Sivakumar was attacked with iron bars and his motorcycle set on fire by goons suspected to be minions of the ruling party.

At least 34 journalists have been killed in Sri Lanka since 2005 and three others have gone missing. Sri Lanka enjoys the dubious distinction of being placed 162 out of 179 countries by Reporters Without Borders.

There is a climate of absolute impunity in the North where killers are not caught by the long arm of the law. Or when caught and handed over, they are allowed to go scot free. In short, there is no law, only the law of the jungle prevails in Jaffna.

It appears UNHRC resolutions seem to have no effect as far the Sri Lankan government is concerned. Sri Lanka is going backwards in democracy. It has descended into a militaristic, authoritarian and dictatorial state bent on ethnic repression. Talks of freeing the people from the tyranny of Tamil Tiger terrorism goes on even as goons intimidate political opponents and media staff. Rule of law is quoted even when the highest officer of judiciary is impeached through a suspect process. Criminalization politics has gained upper hand. The government openly supports Sinhala - Buddhist fanatical groups like the Bodu Balaya Seva (BBS) and saffron clad monks go on the rampage to destroy mosques and business places of Muslim. Otherwise, the government want act in the way it is behaving defying world opinion.

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We call up on all those who believe in a free press, the right to free speech and media freedom to condemn these attacks and hold Sri Lankan government accountable for such dastardly attacks on Uthayan newspaper and TNA leaders.

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