

Television presenter Sri Ranga receives death threats

It has been brought to the attention of the Free Media Movement (FMM) that the deputy inspector general of police in charge of Colombo, Pujitha Jayasundarra, informed the MTV/MBC network that J. Sri Ranga, the head of Shakthi TV, is facing death threats.

Shakthi is the Tamil language TV channel of MTV/MBC network. J. Sri Ranga has worked at Shakthi for many years and presents the weekly popular talk show "MINNAL", covering many political issues of a sensitive nature.

On 12 November 2006, the MINNAL talk show discussed the assassination of Tamil National Alliance parliamentarian Nadraja Raviraj in Colombo. It was after the broadcast of this programme that the police conveyed information about a threat made on J. Sri Ranga's life.

This is not the first time that the journalist has received death threats. To date, reports made to relevant authorities about the threats have elicited no response and the results of any investigations into these reports have not been made public. FMM has little reason to believe that the authorities have made any progress in these investigations.

The FMM views this situation as extremely disappointing and disturbing, especially in light of this most recent and credible threat to his life.

Considering the dangerous situation media and journalists are facing in Sri Lanka and the general erosion of media and press freedom, the FMM takes this death threat seriously and urgently requests the government and relevant authorities to take immediate steps to ensure J. Sri Ranga's protection. FMM also calls for a full investigation into these death threats and for these investigations to be made public, in order that the threat of violence will not stifle the voice of media personnel in Sri Lanka.