

Media workers attack Sri Lankan minister Mervyn Silva

Colombo, 27, 12. 2007

Mervyn Silva, the Sri Lankan Minister of Labour in the Sri Lankan government, was held captive and attacked by media workers Thursday. He was surrounded when he reportedly went amok against a news editor, P.M.D Chandrasekara, of the state owned Rupawahini cooperation, for "failing to broadcast" a video footage of his appearance in a meeting in Matara on Wednesday. Mr. Mervyn Silva, beaten by the media workers, was later freed by the Police security out of the Rupawahini premises located in the high security Bauddhaloka Mawatha after a mediation attempt by non-cabinet minister of media, Lakshman Yapa Abeywardena, failed.

The Sri Lankan minister, already known for racial slurs against the Tamils and for verbally abusing and assaulting journalists, refused to tender a public apology as demanded by the media workers. The thug leader from the South, with alleged links to the underworld in Colombo, said he would have no problem with tendering an apology if the authorities at the state-owned television claimed that he had made a mistake

The media workers who surrounded the Sri Lankan minister inside the television station had locked him inside an executive office and demanded justice from the government against the "abusive minister" and demanded a public apology. He was also beaten by the media workers. His bodyguard was severely attacked inside the television station. Media workers who were employed by the JVP in the state-owned media had led the violent attack on the abusive minister.

In September 2007, Mervyn Silva walked into the Canadian High Commission, despite the security guard's protests, with a pistol in his hand, to demand a visa for his son who had assaulted and threatened an accountant earlier.

In August 2005, Up-Country Tamils protested against the ethnic slurs directed at their community by Mervyn Silva.

He is a national list MP of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).

The General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) Maithripala Sirisena has reportedly said that the party would look into the allegation by the media workers. A similar pledge extended by the party secretary on earlier occasions had no effect in practice, the journalists complained.