



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TAMIL JOURNALISTS

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IATAJ condemns threats to Tamil newspapers in Sri Lanka

The International Association of Tamil Journalists issued a statement today condemning the reported banning of distribution of two Tamil language newspapers by an armed group.

'Thinakkural' and 'Sudaroli' are pro nationalist Tamil newspapers with a wide circulation amongst Tamils.

The publishers of the 'Thinakkural' and 'Sudaroli' newspapers suspended their circulation in Batticaloa yesterday after an alleged threat by an armed group.

Newspapers are the voice of the voiceless. In a democracy, they have the fundamental right to function without threats, fear and interference. The threat against Thinakkural and Sudaroli are a breach of the freedom and the rights of the press. Threats against newspapers are not acceptable in any civilised society.

The International Association of Tamil Journalists strongly condemns this act of violence against the two Tamil newspapers by an armed group and urges the government to take immediate action to bring the guilty group to justice.

If this trend of attacking newspapers and killing journalists is not brought to an end, all newspapers, be it Tamil, Sinhalese or English will suffer the same fate and this will be a tragedy in a democracy.

It has become routine to attack press officers, threaten and kill journalists (especially Tamil journalists) if newspapers publish anything unpalatable to interested parties.

The government should act immediately to stop this and the International Association of Tamil Journalists urges the International Community to put pressure on the Sri Lankan government to stop such acts of violence against newspapers and journalists.

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