



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TAMIL JOURNALISTS

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Assassination and harassment of media personnel continuing in Sri Lanka

TAMIL NEWS INFORMATION CENTRE - JAFFNA

The recent continual assassinations and death threats faced by the Journalists and members of Tamil News Information Centre, Jaffna – Srilanka, should be considered as an absolute challenge to the freedom of Media in the entire Country.

We kindly request all the International Media and Organisations to come forward and condemn this violation of fundamental human right of the media personnel.

Tamil News Information Centre, which is guided by a board of directors, including professors of Jaffna University, Senior Journalists, Lawyers, Reverend fathers and several intellectuals, was registered as an Independent Media Organization under the laws of the Socialist Democratic Republic of Srilanka and performs its activities abiding by the regulations of the Government.

In addition to the death threats issued via anonymous telephone calls, unidentified gunmen rampaged into the office of TNI centre and forced the staff at gun point to provide information of its Media Coordinator J. Barathy and the International Coordinator Kandeepan who are the most active journalists working to bring the abductions of paramilitaries, to light. Their personal details and photographs were removed from the office, and their houses were raided on the following days. This has been reported to the police and the Human Right Commission in Jaffna. They also violated the freedom of media by destroying the documents, videos and essential evidences which were kept in the office of TNI centre.

Above all, one of its directors, Mr. Sivamaharaja, former MP was brutally assassinated for being involved in this Organization. In the same manner, one of its patrons and the head of cooperative union Mr. S.T. Gananathan was shot dead by paramilitaries after being publicly criticized and threatened by the “Ithayaveenai” the official Radio of paramilitaries, on 31 Jan 2007. Further more, in order to justify their assassinations, they are trying to tarnish this independent organization by branding it as an intelligent network of LTTE, which is operated by the direct guidance of the Chief of Intelligent Wing of LTTE.

This clearly identifies the murders beyond any doubts and predicts the potential danger to the lives of other Journalists and other members of the Tamil News Information Centre who are on their hit list. Therefore, we hereby request all the international Media, on behalf of the **Union of Journalist – Jaffna** and **International Association of Tamil Journalists (IATAJ) - London**, to raise their voice against this atrocity in order to protect the lives of all other Journalists in Sri Lanka.

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