INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TAMIL JOURNALISTS
சர்வதேச தமிழ்ச்செய்தியாளர் ஒன்றியம்
P.O Box 54079, London SW20 9WR Reg. No: 06470424

London, 26.03.2009

Condemns the continuing violence against the media

The International Association of Tamil Journalists is concerned that the offices of the Tamil daily Uthayan was bombed yesterday (25/03/09) by an armed gang. This premises is in the Jaffna High Security Zone, where there is a heavy military presence. No activity here goes unobserved or gets pass the eyes of the military.

This is not the first time this newspaper has been targeted. Two of its staff lost their lives in previous attacks. Two months ago, the editor of this daily, Mr Vithyatharan was arrested and detained on the very flimsy ground of allegedly receiving a telephone call about an air attack. He has been detained and subjected to torture. No charges have been framed against him, and he continues to be still in detention.

Another political analyst and commentator Mr Tissanayagam has been detained for over a year without any charges being brought against him so far. He is in poor health, with failing eyesight. It is learnt that he does not receive adequate medical treatment. The government continues to threaten, intimidate, attack and detain journalists who refuse to toe the line.

The long line of violence against the media, in many cases resulting in murder, goes unabated under this government. The number of journalists killed continues to rise. So far no attempts have been made to bring any of the culprits to book, thus giving the impression that the government is co partnering such events. The defence secretary has been gloating about the arrest of vidyadaran and the violence against other media personnel and property. He expressed the view that any criticism of government policy or action is anti patriotic.

IATAJ very strongly condemns the continuing violence against the media and the intimidation tactics by the government to silence it. IATAJ calls upon the International community to impress upon the government of SriLanka, that freedom of the press is an integral part of a healthy democracy. and take immediate action to release all detained media persons.

இவ்வண்ணம்,
திருமதி. ஆனந்தி சூரியப்பிரகாசம்
தலைவர்
President

T. Kugathasan
Secretary

President:
Anandhi Suriyaprakasam
Tel: 00442085437226

Secretary:
Kugathasan Thambipillai
Tel: 004572134810

Website: http://www.iataj.org Mail: iataj@iataj.org