



# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TAMIL JOURNALISTS

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## IATAJ condemns the imprisonment

The International Association of Tamil Journalists is deeply concerned about the imprisonment of journalist J.S.Tissanayagam. On 31/08/09 he was sentenced to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment by a High Court in Sri Lanka. He was indicted under the infamous PTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) and Emergency Regulations, and charged on three counts including editing, printing and distributing the monthly magazine North Eastern Herald. The very next day three journalists, Shalika Wimalasena, Daya Nathasinghe, and Ravindra Pushpakumara working for JVP's journal 'Lanka' were arrested and detained for filming a construction site of a very important person. On the same day Dr Pakiasothy Saravanamuthu, an eminent political analyst was detained and questioned at the airport by Terrorist Investigation Division for writing articles questioning the policies of the government.

The Sri Lankan government continues its policy of suppression and submission of the media by threatening, attacking, harassing, arresting, imprisoning, and even killing journalists. Mr. Tissanayagam's detention without charges for over a year has taken its toll on his physical and mental health. His eye sight is failing. All pleas for his release have been disregarded by the Sri Lankan government which continues to throttle press freedom.

The IATAJ calls upon the International Community to exercise its influence and put maximum pressure on the Sri Lankan government to adhere to the democratic principles of a civilized society and allow the media to go about doing their duties without fear or hindrance.

IATAJ also requests the International Community to do its utmost to persuade and pressurize the Sri Lankan Government to release J.S.Tissananyagam, and other journalists imprisoned by it.

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