



Networking for Rights
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உரிமைகளுக்கான வலையமைப்பு

Exile network for media and human rights in Sri Lanka

Press release/ 25 March 2011

Sri Lanka: Website linked to minister incites violence against Dr. Wikramabahu Karunaratna

Networking for Rights is disturbed and shocked over comments posted on the Ada Derana website against the leader of the New Left Front Dr. Wikramabahu Karunaratna calling for his death. This is all the more disturbing as the website is run by the Derana TV channel which is owned by the family of Dr. Sarath Amunugama, a senior minister in the Sri Lankan government.

The comments have been posted in response to a petition; "Petition against Police inaction on Vickramabahu attack <<http://www.adaderana.lk/news.php?nid=12492>> " The responses which border on hate speech and a sample of which we cite, calls for the death and torture of Dr. Karunaratna *"We too protest. Why not police shoot this; Thank you police for doing a great job by ignoring the attack on this traitor. Why is this paaharaya's legs are still not broken? Shoot this man.he is a traitor. i salute the police for not taking any action. . . . good job IGP you are a real hero, A single axe would have done the job with this axis of evil man who is a betrayer".....*

NfR wishes to point out that the Ada Derana website is violating basic media ethics by allowing such posts.

Comments such as these clearly incite and glorify violence against free expression and human rights. Moderators of the Ada Derana website must be held accountable for allowing such hateful comments to be posted, and NfR challenges the website owners to publicise its policy on website postings. Furthermore, we wish to remind the website moderators and owners that they would be held responsible for any future physical attack on Dr. Karunaratna.

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Steering committee : Kshama Ranawana (Canada), Lionel Bopage (Australia), Nadarasa Sarawanan (Norway), Nadarajah Kuruparan(UK) Padmi Liyanage (Germany), Raveendran Pradeepan (France), Rudhramoorthy Cheran (Canada), Saman Wagaarachchi (USA), Sunanda Deshapriya (Switzerland)

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In fact on the same day Ada Derana site blocked comments on another news item. This news item was related to state media being ordered to pay SLR. 50 million to a opposition lawmaker as a compensation for a wrong news item published. This shows that the comments are moderated on the site and pose the question that why these hateful comments were not moderated.

Additionally, NfR calls upon the Sri Lanka Press Institute and its media ethics monitoring body, the Press Complaints Commission, to be vigilant of such violations and take appropriate action.

NfR condemns Ada Derana for its irresponsible behaviour and calls upon all those who support true democratic freedoms to do the same. Strengthening democratic discourse is vital in ensuring the basic rights of the people of Sri Lanka.

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