NfR release - 27 July 2012

Report: Violation of Freedom of Expression Rights in Sri Lanka

Period: March 2012 – July 2012

23 July 2012: Film Magazine banned for criticizing pro government film director
The distribution of the magazine called “Chitrapata” (Film) has been stopped due to the criticism of the movie and the Rajapaksa government in the article written by one Ranjith Perera.
http://sunandadeshapriya.wordpress.com/2012/07/25/chitrapata-magazine-banned-for-criticizing-kusa-pabha/#more-6998

23 July 2012: Web site charged under Obscene Publications (Amendment) Act
The CID has informed the Colombo Magistrate’s Court that they have found material violating the Obscene Publications Act from the computers seized from the office premises of SrilankaMirror website. http://www.srilankamirror.com/news/557-srilankamirror-charged-under-obscene-publications-amendment-act

11 July 2012: Websites registration fee imposed
GoSL imposed a first off registration fee of Rs. 100,000 would be levied from each website, and that there would be a 50,000 rupee annual fee on all news casting websites. Local and International press freedom organisations condemned the move.

25 July 2012: CID questions Uthayan Editor
The Editor of the Jaffna based Uthayan newspaper was questioned by the CID following a news story referring to Army Commander Jagath Jayasuriya. The Editor of the newspaper Mr. Premanand had represented the news paper during the inquiry which lasted 4 hours, sources said.

18 July 2012: Director News website questioned for forth day by CID
Director editorial of Sri Lanka X News and former director editorial of Sri Lanka Mirror, Ruwan Ferdinandis was summoned to the CID for the forth day for questioning.
http://sunandadeshapriya.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/ruwan-ferdinandis-once-more-at-the-cid/#more-6980

16 July 2012: Death threats issued to journalists in Mannaar
Two newspaper reporters in Mannaar, S.R. Lambert and ASM Faszmi have been issued death threats for their reporting on inciting violence at Koonthai-piddi jetty recently.
http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=35394

17 July 2012: Six Sri Lankan journalists sue over their arrests
Six Sri Lankan web journalists of www.srilankamirror.com filed a court case Tuesday seeking for their arrests last month to be declared illegal and demanding compensation.

C/O, 19447, Victory Blvd, #2, Reseda, CA 91335, USA  NFR.SriLanka@gmail.com
Steering committee : Kshama Ranawana ( Canada), Lionel Bopage ( Australia), Nadarasa Sarawan (Norway), Nadarajah Kuruparan(UK) Padmi Liyanage (Germany), Rapeendran Pradeepan (France), Rudhamoorth Cheri (Canada), Saman Wagaarachchi ( USA), Sunanda Deshapriya ( Switzerland)
07 July 2012: Defense secretary tells editor: They will kill you

05 July 2012: Journalist escape form an abduction attempt
An abduction attempt was made on Shantha Wijesooriya, 48 journalist of Lanka X news website at Nugegoda, suburb of Colombo city. He was able to break free and escape in a three wheeler taxi. He left the country soon after. http://www.srilankabrief.org/2012/07/shantha-makes-written-complaint-to-igp.html

08 July 2012: Stay order against Jaffna magistrate by Appeal court
A stay order was issued by the Appeal Court today against the Jaffna Magistrate from taking steps to make the Editor of the Uthayan newspaper to apologize in court over an article which appeared in the Jaffna based newspaper. http://colombogazette.com/stay-order-in-support-of-uthayan/

01 July 2012: Sri Lanka seals office of pro-opposition websites
Police sealed an office from which two pro-opposition news websites operated, arrested nine workers and seized computers and documents. A court order enabled the sealing. http://nfrsrilanka.wordpress.com/2012/07/01/sri-lanka-seals-office-of-pro-opposition-websites

29 June 2012: Magistrate summons Uthayan newspaper editor
Uthayan Editor Thevanayagam Premananth was on Friday June 29 summoned to court by Jaffna Magistrate Manikavasagar Ganesaraja over an article published in the newspaper. http://sunandadeshapriya.wordpress.com/2012/07/01/jaffna-magistrate-compels-editor-to-apologise-in-courts-over-article-in-tamil-newspaper/

26 June 2012: Govt imposes necessary registration of websites
Sri Lanka’s Ministry of Mass Media and Information published an application form which the news websites operating within or outside the country publishing news on Sri Lanka and its citizens will have to use to register the site under the Ministry. http://www.news360.lk/politics/sri-lanka-starts-website-registration-program-application-is-issued-online

26 June 2012: Five Tamil language web sites banned

13 June 2012: Ceylon Today editor in chief forced to quit

15 June 2012: Journalist/ media activist receive threats to his life
Sujith Mangala de Silva, a journalist attached to ‘Lankadeepa’ newspaper and the president of the United Media Forum, a media rights group complained to the police headquarters that two unidentified men had visited his home and threatened him. http://english.srilankamirror.com/2012/06/lankadeepa-journalist-complains-about-threats-to-his-life/

05 June 2012: Channel-4 journalist deported form Colombo
Shirani Sabaratnam, who works at the London-based Channel-4 TV Station as an editor and a presenter, was detained on arrival and later deported to Britain. http://www.dailymirror.lk/news/19181-channel-4-journalist-deported.html

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Face book : NFR Sri Lanka
28 May 2012: Muslim journalist assaulted
An official employed by the Sri Lankan Minister of Industries and Trade, Rishard Badurdeen, assaulted a 72-year-old Muslim journalist, MA Cader, for having taken part in a prayer expressing solidarity with Mannaar Bishop. [http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=35234]

12 May 2012: Journalist writes to IGP alleging plot against him
Senior journalist C.J. Amaratunga has written to the police chief alleging a plot by a section of the government against him using the police. The IGP has not responded to the letter send by the senior journalist. [http://english.srilankamirror.com/2012/05/journalist-c-j-amaratunga-writes-to-igp-alleging-plot-against-him/]

17 May 2012: Sri Lanka’s Supreme Court reject the Internet Restrictions case
A three-member bench of Sri Lanka’s Supreme Court, declined to give leave to proceed in a case filed by FMM under the country’s fundamental rights provisions against the blocking of certain websites. [http://sunandadeshapriya.wordpress.com/2012/05/17/ifj-disappointed-by-sri-lankas-supreme-court-decision-on-internet-restrictions/]

02 May 2012: CCD detains journalists
The Colombo Crimes Division (CCD) detained two journalists, Indika Sri Aravinda and Randiva newspaper photographer Sajeewa Chinthaka for taking visuals and images outside the CCD office in Dematagoda. [http://colombo gazette.com/ccd-detains-journalists/]

29 April 2012: Govt. officials forcefully delete TV visuals
Officials from the Urban Development Authority (UDA) forcefully detained a TV cameraman and a producer of Sihatha TV abused them and deleted the visuals they had taken of some stalls being removed at the Pettah fish market. [http://sunandadeshapriya.wordpress.com/2012/04/29/govt-officials-forcefully-delete-tv-visuals/]

04 April 2012: Slander campaign against journalist union leader
A campaign of slander and vilification was launched against the leader of the Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association (SLWJA) Gnanasiri Koththigoda, president of the SLWJA through state-controlled media. [http://sunandadeshapriya.wordpress.com/2012/04/04/halt-the-slander-campaign-against-sri-lankas-journalist-union-leader/]

March 23 2012: Govt censors BBC Tamil, Sinhala services
Sri Lankan state-run Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), which relays BBC’s Tamil and Sinhala services in the island, avoided airing Sadeshya, the BBC Sinhala service on Sunday. On 24th of March 2012 the Sinhala service was not aired at all as it carried a story quoting an exiled journalist Poddala Jayantha, who was forced to leave the island after being abducted and tortured. [http://tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=35035]