

Media Release

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International Integrity Award Winner Assassinated

Transparency International Sri Lanka expresses deep sorrow and dismay at the assassination of Lasantha Wickramatunga, the Editor of the Sunday Leader. Mr Wickramatunga was a pioneering journalist who bravely battled corruption through the media, even when his life was under threat.

In 2000 Mr Wickramatunga's work was appreciated internationally when he was a recipient of the first ever Integrity Award from Transparency International.

The assassination of Mr Wickramatunge is a terrifying blow against the freedom of expression in the island. Free media is a key component of a democratic state and an absolute prerequisite for good governance. Any attack on journalists and their institutions will only further erode good governance in this country, ultimately resulting in an unsafe environment for all Sri Lankans.

The assassination of Mr Wickramatunge and last Monday's attack on the MTV/MBC studio complex paint a dark future for democracy in Sri Lanka. The continuation of such events places the burden of responsibility firmly on state machinery and only a speedy and impartial investigation can absolve the Government of guilt or complicity.

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