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Incorporated by Act no 46 in 1987 / Trade Union Registration No 8528

NO.276/3, PRADEEPA MAWATHA, MALIGAWATTA, COLOMBO – 10, SRI LANKA

16 July 2026

Mr. Anura Kumara Disanayaka
Presidential Secretariat,
Colombo 01.

HE President,

Immediately Stop the Harassment of Journalists by the Military and Police!

The Sri Lanka Working Journalists' Association (SLWJA) vehemently condemns the inhumane and unlawful harassment perpetrated yesterday (July 15) by the military and police against journalist Mr. Lahiru Doloswala—who is the Web Editor of 'The Morning' newspaper, the official Sri Lanka News Coordinator for Turkish State Television (TRT), and a member of our association—as well as his family members. It is Lahiru Doloswala that the security forces, who are legally bound to maintain law and order in the country, are trampling upon the fundamental rights of civil citizens and journalists in this manner.

Mr. Lahiru Doloswala was driving home with his wife and two children after completing his professional duties when a Land Cruiser motor vehicle, bearing license plate number යු 18035, crashed into the rear of his vehicle. The vehicle involved was traveling as an escort vehicle to the Army Commander's official vehicle (යු 0001) and bore the three-star insignia denoting the rank of Major General.

Following the accident, when Mr. Doloswala attempted to record the scene on his mobile phone, a Commando (Major) officer acting as the security officer of the escort vehicle aggressively ordered him to stop recording and issued severe threats, warning him not to report the incident to the media. Due to this coercive behavior, Mr. Doloswala's wife and two young children, who were inside the car, were deeply traumatized and left in a state of severe shock.

When Mr. Doloswala went to the Welikada Police Station to lodge a complaint, a military contingent of about 30 personnel, including the Army Commander's security officers, arrived at the station and, in collusion with the police, threatened him and obstructed him from filing a complaint against the army driver.

Although a complaint was eventually recorded under reference number AIB 396/183 following the intervention of senior officers at the Welikada Police, the police distorted the statement under intense pressure and threats from the military officers. Mr. Doloswala was subsequently coerced into signing this altered document. Furthermore, the video footage of the incident on his mobile phone was forcibly deleted under intimidation by both military and police officers. He was warned

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of grave consequences if any footage of the accident was shared with any media organization. The mental trauma inflicted upon Mr. Doloswala and his family during this four-hour ordeal has still not subsided.

Such unlawful threats and acts of coercive violence unleashed by certain military and police officers against journalists and the general public only reaffirm that the rule of law has collapsed, and the country is heading towards anarchy under the current administration.

Therefore, as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, the Sri Lanka Working Journalists' Association requests the President to immediately intervene as the Head of State to take necessary measures to prevent such chaotic and unfortunate situations from recurring. We demand that a formal inquiry be launched immediately against all military officers involved in this unlawful act—who abused their official powers as well as interfered with the official duties of the police officers, intimidated the journalist Mr. Lahiru Doloswala, and brought disrepute to the army—and that strict disciplinary action be taken against them.

The Sri Lanka Working Journalists' Association firmly expects impartial justice to be served regarding this incident to safeguard media freedom and civil rights in this country. We are carefully monitoring further actions and also request that our association be kept informed of the subsequent steps taken regarding these threats.

Yours faithfully,

President
Ranga Bandaranayake

General Secretary
Mithun Jayawardhana

CC:

- Minister of Public Security
- Minister of Mass Media
- Commander of the Army
- Inspector General of Police

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