



FMM Media Release 08 January 2012

Three years(03) after Lasantha's murder, no move to punish those responsible

Today (January 8) marks the third death anniversary of Lasantha Wickramatunge, a journalist who fought for the freedom of the press and relentlessly pursued what he believed was right. On January 8, 2009 he was brutally murdered by unidentified assailants in close proximity to a high security zone in the greater Colombo area.

A group of around eight men, riding motorcycles attacked him with iron rods and fled the scene, leaving the passers by to rush him to the Kalubowila hospital, where he later died.

The Free Media Movement (FMM) is concerned that even three years on and despite assurances by the government that the perpetrators would be brought to justice, no credible investigations have been carried out into the murder.

Whatever investigations that were carried out have turned out to be a charade, with no real intention to find the real killer. From time to time police have said they were on the verge of a breakthrough, but unfortunately no breakthroughs have been made public so far. Also despite the existence of numerous witnesses, no accurate description of the attack was ever made public by the police.

The FMM calls up the government to stop the charade and begin credible investigations, not only into murder of Lasantha Wickramatunge, but also into the murders of Sivaram and all other journalist who have made the supreme sacrifice in pursuit of truth and justice.

The FMM also reminds the government of the other incidents against the media, specifically the firebomb attack on the Sirasa/MTV studios and the brutal attacks on then Rivira editor Upali Tennakoon and Sri Lanka Working Journalist Secretary Poddala Jayantha, the involuntary disappearance of Prageeth Eknaligoda and numerous other incidents and demands serious, honest and meaningful investigations in these incidents.

We also call upon the international community to urge the Sri Lanka Government to hold a proper independent investigation into, not only Lasantha's murder but all the other attacks against the media during the tenure of this government and to sincerely, effectively and meaningfully deal with issues of accountability that now plague our nation. At the same time we also urge the public rise up against the injustices and demand conclusive investigations into the murders, abductions and attacks against the media.

Sunil Jayasekara

Convener, Free Media Movement