

US condemns attack on reporter, British embassy official

The US Tuesday condemned the assault on a journalist and a British high commission officer and asked the Sri Lankan authorities to bring the perpetrators to book at the earliest.

'The US condemns the brutal and unprovoked attack on a member of the British high commission staff and an official of the Sri Lankan Press Institute June 30. We call on the authorities to bring the perpetrators of this crime swiftly to justice,' the US embassy said in a statement.

Media rights groups here said that Mahendra Ratnaweera, political officer of the British mission, was severely injured in the Monday evening attack in Colombo. His friend and freelance journalist Namal Perera also suffered serious injuries when a group of men, who came in a van, blocked the car in which they were in and assaulted them.

'We are deeply concerned by a series of recent incidents involving members of the Sri Lankan media. We note the recent formation of a ministerial committee to ensure the independence of the media, inquire into complaints of harassment and death threats against media personnel and intervene where warranted, and hope this leads to a more conducive environment for the practice of journalism in Sri Lanka,' the US embassy statement said.

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