

## 'Pro-Tamil' broadcasting station attacked in Sri Lanka

A private radio and television station on the outskirts of Sri Lanka's capital has been attacked by an armed gang, causing extensive damage to the studio complex and interrupting its broadcasts, a spokesman for the station said Tuesday.

A gang of 15 to 20 men stormed the Maharaja TV and Maharaja Broadcasting Corporation at Pannipitiya, 20 km southeast of the Colombo, holding the staff at gunpoint and assaulting some of them before causing the damage early Tuesday, the spokesman said.

'The attackers opened fire inside the building, lobbed grenades and went on the rampage, damaging office furniture, equipment and the mobile vehicle used for outdoor broadcasts in an attack that lasted 45 minutes,' the spokesman said.

The attackers were unidentified. In recent months, government politicians have accused the station of airing pro-Tamil rebel programmes.

The television and radio station has become one of the most popular private broadcasters in the country.

TV and radio programmes have been interrupted at the station, but management said they were making temporary arrangements to resume broadcast services.

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