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2008 ATTACK ON SRI LANKAN LAWYER

LAWASIA, the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific expresses its serious concern over the recent incident in Sri Lanka where Sri Lankan lawyer, Mr JC Weliamuna and his family were subject to a grenade attack, thought to be related to his appearance as counsel in a number of sensitive cases.

As an association of legal professionals, LAWASIA draws attention to the Basic Principles of Role of Lawyers, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 27 August-7 September 1990. These universally-accepted principles confirm that is the right of counsel to discharge professional duties “without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference” and that “where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.”

LAWASIA calls upon the government of Sri Lanka to take urgent steps to investigate this incident thoroughly and to identify and prosecute the perpetrators. Furthermore, it calls on Sri Lankan authorities to be immediately active in providing effective protection not only to Mr Weliamuna but to all lawyers who have been threatened and intimidated as a result of discharging their professional duties in Sri Lanka.

MAH WENG KWAI

PRESIDENT